

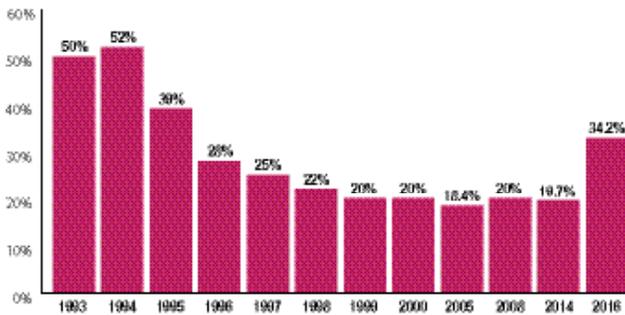


Campaign to Adopt-a-Clinic

OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN'S HEALTH CLINICS

Since the 1970s, anti-abortion extremists have targeted women's health care providers as a part of an orchestrated campaign of violence and intimidation. Many clinics have suffered arson, butyric acid attacks, and death threats, as well as demonstrations and harassment. In the 1990s, anti-abortion violence turned deadly and claimed the lives of nine people.

From its peak in 1994, anti-abortion violence steadily decreased until 2008 as a result of tougher federal and state laws and massive reproductive rights organizing to support clinics.



Following the 2008 election, however, extremist anti-abortion leaders vowed to "return to the streets." Tragically, on May 31, 2009, women's healthcare provider Dr. George Tiller was murdered by an extremist in Wichita, Kansas. Protests and threats against vital women's health clinics increased in Alabama, California, Florida, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia.

In the summer of 2015, a new anti-abortion group, the Center for Medical Progress, began releasing deceptive and surreptitiously recorded videos falsely accusing Planned Parenthood of operating an unlawful tissue donation program. Anti-abortion violence and threats abortion providers have escalated nationwide in the wake of these misleading videos. On November 27, 2015 an anti-abortion extremist shot and killed three people and wounded nine others at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, CO.

Anti-abortion violence and intimidation threatens access to abortion services as well as a host of comprehensive sexual and reproductive



health care services. Most reproductive health clinics provide a whole range of services including gynecological and prenatal care, routine cancer screening, HIV testing, menopausal treatment, infertility treatment, sexually transmitted infection screening and treatment, and adoption and family planning help.

According to the Feminist Majority Foundation's 2014 National Clinic Violence Survey, one in five clinics experience unacceptably high levels of anti-abortion harassment and violence. Alarming, over 51% of clinics reported higher levels of threats and targeted intimidation of doctors and staff than in prior years of this survey. Our 2016 Survey showed a dramatic increase in severe violence and threats to clinics jumping from 19.7% in 2014 to 34.2% in 2016. Incredibly, nearly half of all abortion providers in the country (49.5%) experienced some form of severe violence, threats of violence and harassment in 2016, up from 43.3% in 2014. Some 63.2% of women's health clinics nationwide experience frequent and regular anti-abortion activity.

FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AGAINST ANTI-ABORTION VIOLENCE

In 1994, national abortion rights advocates won passage of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE). FACE creates federal civil and criminal penalties for anyone who intentionally uses force or the threat of force to injure, intimidate or interfere with access to reproductive health services. However, the federal FACE Act is not always enough. California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin have enacted tougher state FACE laws to provide even greater protection for reproductive health care providers.



Many states, counties and cities have passed buffer safety zone laws as well as laws prohibiting residential picketing for additional protection. Buffer safety zones create limits prohibiting anti-abortion protesters from “congregating, picketing, patrolling, demonstrating or entering” a specific area around a clinic. Colorado, counties in New York State, and Montana all have buffer safety zone laws. Residential picketing laws help keep clinic doctors, staff, and family members safe from intrusive and harassing picketing.

CURRENT ATTACKS

In 2016, violence and threats of violence escalated. You can learn more about what is happening now at FMF’s Campaign to Expose Anti-Abortion Violence website, which features updates on the latest threats and all of our clinic violence surveys: feminist.org/anti-abortion-violence.

In July 2015, the Center for Medical Progress (a new anti-abortion group) began releasing deceptive videos that falsely claimed Planned Parenthood was operating an unlawful tissue donation program. These misleading and surreptitiously recorded videos, together with incendiary political rhetoric and actions by state and federal officials, have fanned the flames of violence and threats against women’s health clinics, doctors, and staff nationwide.

Since the first misleading video was released, arsonists set fire to Planned Parenthood clinics in Louisiana, California and Washington. Moreover, the number of death threats against doctors and clinic workers has increased. Just this year, an extremist associated with the Army of God was arrested for making death threats against three different facilities in Illinois and Indiana; he is also suspected of making death threats against several clinics in Michigan. Last year, a California clinic suffered a serious arson attack; several clinics across the country have had suspicious packages deposited near their entrances that proved to be hoaxes intended to inspire fear.

Clinics in Maryland, California, Ohio, and several other states have reported incidents of serious vandalism. Recent examples of severe vandalism include a car attack on a New Jersey clinic, a Cleveland, Ohio clinic repeatedly attacked with bricks that destroyed several large

windows, and day time incident resulting in a shattered clinic door in Louisville, Kentucky.

An Operation Rescue affiliated group in California called The Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust has “declared war” against Planned Parenthood and announced a new campaign of intimidation and terror called “The Irregulars” – a “group of soldiers or warriors... that employ irregular military tactics” including small hit and run engagements to harass and sabotage Planned Parenthood clinics.

Then, on November 27, 2015 Robert Lewis Dear shot and killed three people and injured nine others at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs. Dear has been charged with 179 felony counts, including eight counts of first-degree murder and 131 counts of attempted first-degree murder. Dear’s rampage was one of the worst acts of violence carried out by an anti-abortion extremist in the United States. Dear used the language “no more baby parts” upon his arrest, leading many to believe that his motivation for attacking the clinic was related to the release of the misleading videos.

Even before the videos, clinics and doctors were experiencing higher levels of threats and intimidation. For example, the only currently operating clinic in Mississippi, the Jackson Women’s Health Clinic, was attacked by a vandal who destroyed clinic property just days before several national anti-abortion extremist groups targeted the facility with demonstrations.

In Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Los Angeles, California extremists have targeted physicians at their homes, private offices, clinics, and hospitals with WANTED-style flyers and giant posters labeling them as “Killers Among Us” and featuring their photographs, names, home addresses, and other private information. Another extremist group launched a #COTK or Call Out the Killers Campaign to target physicians.

In Louisiana, Florida, and North Carolina, anti-abortion extremists from Operation Rescue/Operation Save America targeted doctors with WANTED-style flyers. They continually single out Mississippi’s only abortion clinic. Some extremist groups include individuals advocating “Justifiable Homicide,” the murder of doctors.

¹The Supreme Court in 2014 declared unconstitutional a Massachusetts law requiring a 35-foot buffer zone around clinic entrances in the state. Massachusetts then passed a law similar to the federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act that also grants police authority to disperse gatherings that impede access to or departure from a clinic. Colorado state law creates an 8 foot no-approach bubble zone around any person within a 100 foot buffer zone. Montana’s law creates an 8 foot cease-and-desist bubble zone within a 36 foot buffer zone.



These kinds of flyers and stalking tactics have been used to target doctors in the past that were ultimately murdered, including Dr. George Tiller of Wichita, Kansas, who was assassinated in 2009 by Scott Roeder, an anti-abortion extremist. Roeder participated in many Operation Rescue-led actions that relentlessly targeted Dr. Tiller before carrying out his execution.

After Tiller's murder, Operation Rescue began to focus its efforts on doctors that had worked closely with him in Wichita. For example, Dr. LeRoy Carhart of Nebraska, who worked with Dr. Tiller, vowed to continue his work and began to provide services at a clinic in Germantown, Maryland as well as his own facility in Nebraska. Immediately, Operation Rescue launched a "Keep It Closed" and "Kick Carhart Out of Maryland" Campaign.

In Albuquerque, New Mexico, Operation Rescue operatives teamed up with local anti-abortion extremists to target the Southwestern Women's Options clinic where two of Dr. Tiller's former colleagues now practice, as well as the University of New Mexico's Center for Reproductive Health.

When the South Wind Women's Center opened in the same building that housed the former practice of Tiller, Operation Rescue and extremists associated with Roeder threatened the clinic director at her home and neighborhood, distributing WANTED-style flyers and holding signs in front of her house reading, "WHERE'S YOUR CHURCH?" and "PREPARE TO MEET THY MAKER." Dr. Tiller was killed in his church.

Operation Rescue also launched a new website called AbortionDocs.org, a website to collect detailed information—photographs, medical licenses, video, clinic addresses, etc.—on doctors, staff, and facilities that provide medical or surgical abortions. Some of the providers identified on the site have been stalked by anti-abortion extremists. In response to the increase in violence, threats and intimidation, FMF launched a bold new initiative: "When did the right to life become the right to terrorize?" taking on Operation Rescue and its president Troy Newman.

In May 2017, eleven people were arrested for FACE violations in Louisville, Kentucky as part of a blockade conducted by Operation Save America, another anti-abortion group. And in the Fall of 2017, in a series of coordinated actions, anti-abortion protestors in different clinics in several states simultaneously invaded clinic waiting rooms, harassed patients and staff, and refused to leave, resulting in multiple arrests and subsequent convictions for trespassing.

What is happening to doctors and clinics across the country is unacceptable harassment and intimidation – but you can make a difference. Since 1987, the Feminist Majority Foundation has trained over 64,000 volunteers - especially college students - to defend and assist women's health care providers under siege by anti-abortion extremist groups.

ADOPT-A-CLINIC CAMPAIGN

Women's reproductive healthcare providers are the targets of an orchestrated campaign of harassment and intimidation. Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances and affiliates can help by adopting their local reproductive health clinic. Mobilizing for reproductive rights is crucial to reducing anti-abortion violence and harassment. By adopting your local clinic, you will help improve law enforcement response to anti-abortion harassment, bolster the morale of your local clinic and its staff, and bring community attention to anti-choice bullies. Your grassroots mobilization will make a difference!

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: Contact your National Campus Organizer to locate the nearest women's health clinic that needs assistance. Your National Choices Campus Organizer will coordinate with the Feminist Majority Foundation's National Clinic Access Project to facilitate with the clinic and your adopt-a-clinic campaign.

STEP 2: Your National Campus Organizer will assist your student group by:

- Calling the clinic and identifying your group as affiliated with the Feminist Majority Foundation.
- Asking if the clinic director or a representative could come to meet with your group to talk about what services they provide and issues they have with anti-abortion protesters.
- Letting them know that your student group wants to show their support for the clinic, and ask what kind of help they need. Not all clinics will want or need community support, so we will ask them how your group can be of help.

STEP 3: Develop a Plan of Action.

The clinic director or staff will have a very clear idea about what would help improve safety, security, and the morale of staff and patients. After talking to the clinic director, it should be clear what type of support is needed, what the director wants, and what she does not want. Discuss the following types of support:



Campaign to Adopt-a-Clinic

WWW.FEMINISTCAMPUS.ORG

WWW.FEMINIST.ORG

- **Legal Observing:** Experience shows that when protesters believe their activities are being systematically observed and recorded, they are more likely to tone down their actions. The clinic may need your help videotaping, documenting, and photographing anti-abortion protesters and their activities.
- **Escorting:** The clinic may need you to help facilitate the safe passage of patients, staff, doctors, and/or family members of patients into the clinic. The clinic may already have a volunteer escort program which you can join, or you can be trained by FMF.
- **Mobilizing Public Opinion for the Clinic:** The clinic may need you to help call press attention to the problems the clinic faces. They may want you to meet with the local newspaper, circulate campus petitions in support of the clinic and strong law enforcement action, organize community events such as rallies, or help build community support for the clinic.
- **General Volunteer Work:** The clinic may not be under any severe or constant threat, but may still very much need your help inside the clinic, or with activities including outreach to the community or local campuses.
- **Community Support:** A clinic may want you to come and publicly show your support for the clinic by holding signs supporting abortion and birth control access, particularly on days of high activity by protestors. Your presence and the presence of your campus group makes a statement that there are reproductive rights supporters in your community, helps the patients cope with anti-abortion extremists, and shows extremists that the clinic and its patients have strong support.



- **Clinic Support:** Even if the clinic does not need you to volunteer at the actual location, they would appreciate your support and gratitude. Abortion providers and staff deal with a lot of controversy and harassment, and they like to know that their dedication to women's health is appreciated. Sending a card or other "thank you" gestures may help lift their spirits and remind them that their community is supportive of their work.

STEP 4: [Connect clinics to the services of the Feminist Majority Foundation's National Clinic Access Project.](#) If the clinic would like additional assistance, contact a Choices Campus Organizer right away at 866-444-3652 (East Coast) or 866-471-3652 (West Coast). We'll connect them with the FMF's National Clinic Access Project directly.