

HEADLINE

Anti-Abortion Protesters Dare Sessions to Enforce the FACE Act

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Anti-abortion activists think the Trump administration will ignore their intentional targeting of abortion clinics, patients, and providers for harassment. They may be right.

On Friday, September 15th anti-abortion extremists descended on three cities in a unified effort to apparently violate the Federal Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, the law designed to protect access to abortion clinics. **The protests are part of a renewed effort by anti-abortion activists to push the limits of those protections** and to curb access to legal abortion as much as possible. The question now is: What, if anything, will Attorney General Jeff Sessions do about them?

According to anti-abortion supporters, activists entered clinics to “talk to women scheduled for abortions.” Those **protesters refused to leave the clinics when told to do so by law enforcement**, who eventually arrested the protesters for trespassing.

Entering clinics is a form of blockading access to abortion services, which fits the the FACE Act’s prohibition on “physical obstruction to prevent people from obtaining or providing reproductive health-care services.”

Protests like the this are the kind of anti-abortion harassment that preceded the murder of Dr. James Britton by Paul Hill, a former Presbyterian Minister in 1994. Hill began as one of those activists. His final words be-

fore his execution in 2003 were to instruct others members of the anti-abortion community to **use violence to support their belief that abortion is murder.**

The anti-abortion community has clearly been **emboldened by the evangelicals stacked in the Trump administration** and are willing to test the limits of federal law protecting clinics. This is a sentiment that goes all the way to “mainstream” anti-abortion advocacy groups such as The Susan B. Anthony List.

A vigorous prosecution of these protesters should be a no-brainer, given the blatant violation of federal law by each activist. But under this administration, it’s not. **Sessions is a man willing to prosecute protesters for heckling him during his confirmation hearing** for disorderly conduct, but unwilling to support the civil rights of transgender students, campus assault survivors, voters of color, and immigrant communities.

If Sessions is willing to go after the constitutional protections guaranteed to historically politically vulnerable communities, **there is no reason to think he will take seriously the constitutional protections afforded to abortion patients and providers.**

Edited for space and content. Read the full article at <https://rewire.news/article/2017/09/18/anti-choice-protesters-dare-sessions-enforce-face-act/>