

Pro-Life Leaders Voice Alarm at Church Closures, Pastor's Arrest, While Abortion Facilities Remain Open in 47 States

America's pro-life leaders today voiced alarm that churches were being forced to close down—and a pastor was jailed for holding Sunday worship services—while abortion clinics are allowed to stay open in every state, except Texas, Oklahoma and Iowa, during the COVID-19 lockdown.

“How dare they jail pastors and close the doors of the church while the abortion industry remains open to spread the virus and put our lives at risk?” said Janet Porter, president and founder of Faith2Action ([link](#)) and the author of the original pro-life Heartbeat Bill.

“While free speech and freedom of religion are being banned, Planned Parenthood continues to get away with murder,” said Mark Harrington, president of Created Equal ([link](#)), a pro-life group. “The cure is now worse than the disease.”

Florida pastor Rodney Howard-Browne was arrested and booked into a local jail on Monday after holding Sunday worship services at The River at Tampa Bay Church. Howard-Browne was charged with unlawful assembly and violating the county's stay-at-home order. He was later released on bail.

Meanwhile, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio threatened to close churches and synagogues “permanently” if they refused to shut down during the pandemic. And Virginia Governor Ralph Northam declared that church gatherings of 10 or more could result in a \$2,500 fine and up to a year in jail.

'Deadly Double Standard'

"In a pandemic, a double standard is deadly," Porter said. "Either there is a threat or there isn't. We must either close the doors of the abortion business or open the doors of the church."

"By definition, the surgeries abortion centers perform are *elective*—that's why they call it 'choice,'" said Harrington.

To classify abortion as "essential medical care" during the current crisis is "preposterous," said Mark Crutcher, founder and president of Life Dynamics (), a Texas-based pro-life organization.

"Abortion providers don't care that there's a pandemic," he said. "All they care about is killing babies. There can be no sacred cows in a pandemic. It is indefensible."

"I join more than 100 leaders and 30,000 health professionals in calling on President Trump to shut the door to the coronavirus by shutting the doors of the abortion industry before the virus spreads even further across state lines and across the country," said Porter.

Abortion Clinics 'Defy Orders'

Texas just won its court appeal overturning a lower court order, and all Texas abortion clinics remain closed. Likewise, Oklahoma and Iowa have stopped abortions, while governors of several states—including Ohio, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Indiana—have issued direct orders to close abortion facilities in their states, Porter said. Judges have blocked those orders from being enforced.

"The abortion industry continues to defy state orders and national health directives, putting us all at risk of the deadly COVID-19 virus. Until the abortion centers are closed, none of us are safe," said Porter.

More than 100 prominent pro-life leaders—including Dr. James

Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family—support the call for immediate action to stop the COVID-19 spread. Other supporters include Tim Wildmon, president of American Family Association, and Tom DeLay, former majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives. They are joined by 30,000 medical professionals at .