

Senators: DOJ Not Doing Enough to Protect Churches

The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, a 1994 law meant to protect access to abortion clinics was amended prior to its passage to also ensure the security and religious liberty of churches and other places of worship in the U.S.

U.S. Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Mike Lee (R-Utah) have been pressing the Department of Justice and Attorney General Loretta Lynch for more than six months over whether or not the department is favoring abortion clinics over churches. They have demanded that federal law enforcement agencies take steps to “ensure the rights of all American citizens” are protected under FACE, not just those that carry favor with the current administration.

They wrote a letter Tuesday to Lynch, accusing her and the Department of Justice of a double standard in enforcing the FACE Act. They point to the fact the department has pursued 25 cases involving actions to safeguard access to abortion clinics, but not a single one to protect access to churches or places of worship.

In particular, they pointed out protests at the Los Angeles Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints against the Mormon church’s support for Proposition 8 that overturned a court ruling “legalizing” same-sex “marriage” in California and restored biblical marriage. More than 1,000 protesters shouted angry slogans and blocked entrance to the building.

Cruz and Lee wrote:

Demonstrations like this were part of a larger campaign of intimidation and harassment carried out against the Mormon Church for its support of California’s Proposition 8. This

campaign of hate was covered extensively by the press; for example, stories ran in major newspapers like the Los Angeles Times, and on national news networks like CNN and CBS.

The DOJ's explanation for its inaction on this issue, that the matter "had not previously been brought to our attention," simply lacks credibility. In short, it would appear the DOJ's process for tracking violations of religious liberty is either woefully inadequate or purposefully biased.

In their letter, the senators asked a series of follow-up questions, and have repeated several questions that were not answered in a previous letter sent in March. They said the information is necessary to conduct oversight of the Department of Justice and to determine whether or not it is "doing everything it can to protect the rights of all American citizens."