

Ill. Mayor Escalates Assault on Mobile Pregnancy Services

An Illinois city near Chicago is waging a legal battle against a pro-life organization providing free ultrasounds and support to pregnant women via its mobile facility.

Within hours of receiving an additional 30 days from the judge to explore settlement of the case, the city of Elgin, Ill., filed its appeal of the court's Aug. 8 injunction order. The court's decision had called Elgin's "effort to curtail private entities from providing free and valuable services to its young women ... ill-advised" and permanently enjoined Elgin's code restrictions, which had been used to halt the Life Center's (TLC) mobile pregnancy services.

In March, the court had found that the young women of Elgin were likely to suffer irreparable harm if Elgin's zoning restrictions were applied to deny them access to the free services and support TLC's mobile ultrasound facility provides. The city then filed a motion to dismiss the case, but the city's motion was denied in its entirety on Aug. 8. Instead, the court permanently enjoined Elgin from enforcing its "temporary land use" law, which it had used to shut down the mobile ultrasound facility.

"We are confident that at the end of the day, the welfare and rights of young women to be fully informed and have access to free pregnancy services will prevail over municipal zoning interests," says TLC's John W. Mauck. "Unfortunately, Elgin taxpayers are going to be paying for the city's ongoing opposition to the rights of a charitable service that is otherwise welcomed in the community."

TLC's board chairman, John Juergensmeyer, adds, "In September and October of last year, TLC wrote the city to implore it to

accommodate our charitable services to young women. Had Elgin showed it cared for our services, this whole matter could have been avoided at no cost.

“We regret that Elgin has rejected our multiple attempts to resolve any city concerns and forced us to file this case. While they say they want to resolve our dispute, today’s appeal points in the other direction.”

With the injunction still in place while the case goes up on appeal, TLC’s mobile pregnancy services will continue to operate at the usual locations, Evangelical Covenant Church of Elgin on Fridays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and JB’s Pub and Bar on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. It may expand its mobile pregnancy services to other locations.