

In Pro-Life Victory, US Supreme Court Strikes Down Abortion Buffer Law

The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday struck down a Massachusetts law that offers a buffer zone around abortion clinics.

The 2007 law violates freedom of speech of pro-life protesters under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment, the High Court decided on a 9-0 vote, by forcing them off the sidewalk and prohibiting them from speaking to people who are entering the abortion mills.

The Massachusetts law was enacted in part because of safety concerns highlighted by violent acts committed against abortion providers in the past. In 1994, two abortion clinic workers were killed outside a clinic in Brookline, Mass.

"Americans have the freedom to talk to whomever they please on public sidewalks," says Alliance Defending Freedom allied attorney Mark Rienzi, professor of constitutional law at Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law and lead counsel in *McCullen v. Coakley*.

"That includes peaceful pro-lifers like Eleanor McCullen, who just wants to offer information and help to women who would like it. The Supreme Court has affirmed a critical freedom that has been an essential part of American life since the nation's founding."

Two other states, Montana and Colorado, have similar laws. Municipal ordinances and court injunctions have also been used in various states to create similar buffer zones.