

Pro-Lifers Silenced With Draconian ‘Shouting’ Law

Liberty Counsel on Thursday filed a federal lawsuit against the city of West Palm Beach, Fla., and three members of the West Palm Beach Police Department on behalf of Susan Pine and Marilyn Blackburn, two pro-life Americans who offered help to women facing crisis pregnancies outside the Presidential Women’s Center (PWC), an abortion facility in West Palm Beach.

The city has enacted an ordinance that bans all “shouting” and amplified sound within 100 feet of the property line of “health care facilities,” regardless of the volume used and regardless of whether the sound causes any disturbance. Any and all noise coming from a car radio, an iPod, a television inside an adjoining residence or anything else with a volume button is absolutely banned, regardless of its volume and even if the listener is wearing headphones.

The city and its police department, however, are only enforcing this draconian ordinance against Pine, Blackburn and their pro-life colleagues. Pine has already been fined once for using a megaphone outside PWC, and the city and police have threatened further enforcement and punishment. In the meantime, PWC is free to use its own loudspeakers, passersby are free to use their radios and iPods, and the nearby Wendy’s and Pollo Tropical restaurants are free to use their drive-thru speaker systems, even though all of them violate this ordinance.

PWC lobbied for the ordinance and was its chief proponent. Moreover, in 2010, PWC persuaded U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to file a federal lawsuit against Pine under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, alleging that Pine “obstructed” the entrance to PWC. Liberty Counsel defended Pine, the lawsuit was dismissed and the Department of Justice

was required to pay \$120,000 for its abuse of power. Federal judge Kenneth Ryskamp suspected there was “a concerted effort between the government and PWC ... to quell Ms. Pine’s activities.”

“The conspiracy to silence pro-life Americans continues unabated in West Palm Beach,” says Mathew Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel. “This ordinance is not only overly broad but also viewpoint-discriminatory and is, therefore, flatly unconstitutional.

“Liberty Counsel will not stand idly by while government officials—whether it be the attorney general or the city of West Palm Beach—harass these law-abiding Americans for their pro-life beliefs.”