

Dear Madam Chairwoman and Committee Members,

My name is Julaine Appling, and I am the President of Wisconsin Family Action. Over the past 36 years, Wisconsin Family Action, and its sister organization, Wisconsin Family Council, have effectively informed citizens about legislative issues, advocated for critical policy issues affecting the family, and prepared citizens for elections, all as the law provides.

Sadly, days after the draft U.S. Supreme Court opinion on the *Dobbs* case was leaked, we saw firsthand the cost of dedicating your life's work to your beliefs — at least if you are a conservative — is to be attacked, injured, or worse.

This past Mother's Day on May 8th, the Wisconsin Family Action was attacked in the early morning hours in Madison, Wisconsin. The attacker(s) broke windows, threw two Molotov cocktails into the office, and purposefully lit a fire. Making their views abundantly clear, the attacker(s) graffitied the outside of the building with the message, "If abortions aren't safe, then you aren't either."

Everything in my office was damaged by either fire, soot, ash, or foam. The air was so toxic in my office that inspectors had to wear N95 masks to assess the damage. Every item had to be removed, recorded, and examined to determine if it could be salvaged. We are eternally grateful no one was inside our office that morning. I have included pictures of the damage, taken the day of the attack, for the Committee's viewing.

On May 11th, a group called Jane's Revenge took credit for the firebombing and warned that more attacks on pro-life organizations throughout the country will occur unless their demand of "disbanding all anti-choice establishments, fake clinics, and violent anti-choice groups within the next 30 days" was met.¹

After 30 days passed, the group wrote, "From here forward, any anti-choice group who closes their doors, and stops operating will no longer be a target. But until you do, it's open season, and we know where your operations are."² Subsequent to this message from Jane's Revenge, we received an anonymous message conveying next time, the Molotov cocktails will work.

These attacks are personal.³ We take them seriously. We have devoted more time, money, and intentional action to protect ourselves. But if the intent of our attackers was for us to go away or be quiet, they chose the wrong group. Like any of our sister State Family Policy Councils around the country would respond, we are not yielding to intimidation and bullying.

Wisconsin Family Action is not the only organization that has been attacked in the past two months. And we are deeply concerned that if the government does not do its job, people, not just buildings, will be attacked next. Someone could be seriously harmed.

We are now two months after the attack, and no person of interest has been found. We have not heard much at all directly from the FBI and nothing from ATF. We offered a reward to find the culprit, not because we want revenge, but because we understand that the sooner we can find who committed this crime, the sooner we can stop it from happening to others. If the perpetrator is not found, these attacks will continue to be replicated.

Where is the urgency from the federal government to address this issue? UPS can locate a package within hours, maybe minutes. But can the FBI find those who have overtly attacked us and attacked similar groups? This Committee must ask, "How serious is the government about finding the people who are committing these attacks?"

¹ <https://twitter.com/lwriteOK/status/1523926986883706880>

² <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/letter-abortion-group-janes-revenge-open-season-pro-life-pregnancy-centers>

³ <https://wifamilyaction.org/voice-recordings/>

Our Wisconsin GOP Delegation, led by Senator Ron Johnson and Congressmen Scott Fitzgerald and Tom Tiffany, have sent letters calling for the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate this attack.⁴ These letters and other public pressure led to the FBI telling the media in the middle of June they are investigating- but we still see no real urgency from the U.S. Department of Justice to find out who is responsible for these attacks and why they continue.⁵ We wonder what else might take place before the upcoming election. Why has the Department continued to investigate conservatives, but not taken any overt action to stop these horrific attacks on pro-life organizations across the country- especially in light of this Jane's Revenge group declaring real threats and providing evidence the attacks will continue?

It is this Committee and this Congress's responsibility to protect the American people. These attacks are not sporadic or random. These attacks will continue if the federal government does not do its job. Do not hide your eyes or turn your head the other way. God forbid inaction leads to someone getting hurt.

There is a price that is paid when elected officials fail to do their jobs. These attacks are an example of what can happen when leadership is missing, or when leadership implies that violence is an acceptable tactic to employ.

In 2020, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers basically looked the other way when violence erupted in Kenosha and Madison. That kind of nonresponse fosters attacks like the one against Wisconsin Family Action, leaving Wisconsin citizens who disagree with his policies extremely vulnerable to similar violence.

In fact, Governor Evers' initial response to the attack on Wisconsin Family Action said nothing about demanding a full investigation and criminal prosecution. He later condemned "violence and hatred in all its forms," then told his supporters he'd keep supporting abortion.

Just last week, on July 7th, a pregnancy clinic in Massachusetts was vandalized. The vandalism took place the day after a press release was issued from the Office of Attorney General of Massachusetts.⁶ The press release was an attempt to discredit the work of volunteers across the country who provide women with emotional support, pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, education, material needs such as clothes and diapers, and post-abortion care for women in need. Jane's Revenge, yet again, took credit for the vandalism of the pregnancy clinic.⁶

Let me be clear: The violence needs to stop, and it needs to stop now. A loss at the Supreme Court is no excuse for personal threats. It is no excuse for property destruction. It is no excuse for fashioning a Molotov cocktail. We cannot deal with political disagreements in this country by resorting to violence.

Wisconsin Family Action has strengthened our resolve to work every day to give a voice to the voiceless and stand up for what's right. **Our question to this Committee is, "Will you continue to tolerate this violence? Or will you stand up for what is right and protect the American people?"**

Sincerely,



Julaine K. Appling
President of Wisconsin Family Action
and Wisconsin Family Council

⁴ <https://fitzgerald.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/fitzgerald.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/22.5.11%20Letter%20to%20Garland%20re%20WI%20Family%20Action%20Arson.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jun/17/fbi-investigates-rising-attacks-pro-life-centers-c/>



