



PRESS RELEASE

Ohio Woman Pleads Guilty to Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act Violation for Damaging Pregnancy Center

Friday, December 8, 2023

For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

An Ohio woman pleaded guilty today to a misdemeanor charge under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, which prohibits a person from intentionally damaging or destroying the property of a facility because that facility provides reproductive health services.

According to court documents and statements made in court, on April 15, Whitney M. Durant, aka Soren Monroe, 20, of Worthington, intentionally damaged the property of HerChoice, a pregnancy center located in Bowling Green, Ohio, by defacing the clinic's building, spray painting the words, "LIARS," "Fund Abortion," "Abort God," and "Jane's Revenge." Durant was a Bowling Green State University student at the time of the incident.

"Defacing facilities that provide reproductive health services will not be tolerated in our society," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Justice Department is committed to enforcing the FACE Act to protect all patients who seek reproductive health services and all persons and facilities that provide such services."

"As reflected by today's guilty plea, the United States will enforce federal laws that protect uninterrupted access to all clinics providing reproductive health services, whether they provide women with options that include abortion care or whether they solely encourage women to

consider non-abortion alternatives,” said U.S. Attorney Rebecca Lutzko for the Northern District of Ohio. “Here, the vandalized clinic did not provide abortion care, but that did not give the defendant license to deface the clinic’s property in protest, violating federal law in the process.”

“The First Amendment provides a constitutional right to peacefully protest, but Ms. Durant’s actions of defacing a reproductive health care center crossed a line,” said Special Agent in Charge Greg Nelsen of the FBI Cleveland Field Office. “The FBI and our partners will continue to aggressively investigate FACE Act violations and protect every American’s access to reproductive health care services.”

A sentencing hearing will be scheduled for April 9, 2024. Durant faces a maximum penalty of one year in prison for the misdemeanor charge. A federal Magistrate Judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The FBI Cleveland Field Office, Toledo Resident Agency and Bowling Green Police Department investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Angelita Cruz Bridges and Wood County Prosecutor and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul Dobson for the Northern District of Ohio are prosecuting the case.

Anyone who has information about incidents of violence, threats and obstruction that target a patient or provider of reproductive health services or damage and destruction of reproductive health care facilities, should report that information to the FBI at www.tips.fbi.gov.

For more information about clinic violence, and the Justice Department’s efforts to enforce FACE Act violations, please visit www.justice.gov/crt/national-task-force-violence-against-reproductive-health-care-providers.

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Topic

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