

**United States House of Representatives**  
**Committee on the Judiciary**  
**Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government**  
**“From Tool to Weapon: The FACE Act and the Dangers of Federalizing Criminal Law”**  
**Testimony of the National Abortion Federation**  
**April 28, 2026**

The National Abortion Federation (NAF) is the professional association of abortion providers. NAF unites, supports, and represents abortion providers and the people they serve, in pursuit of accessible and equitable abortion care. Since 1977, NAF has compiled statistics on anti-abortion extremist violence, allowing us to track patterns and trends. Last year we released our 2024 violence and disruption report, a copy of which is attached to this statement. An interactive version is available at [naf.news/2024violence](https://naf.news/2024violence). Our report on 2025 incidents is forthcoming.

From 1977 through 2024, there have been 11 murders, 26 attempted murders, 42 bombings, 203 arsons, 570 assaults, 505 clinic invasions, and thousands of other criminal incidents targeting abortion patients, abortion providers, and abortion volunteers. In the last several years, there has been sustained and consistent harassment and violence, even as many clinics have closed and abortion keeps getting harder to access in some regions of the country. In 2023 and 2024, providers reported 3 arsons, 28 cases of assault or battery, 777 cases of obstruction, 621 cases of trespassing, and 296 death threats.

A couple of points worth noting. One: These numbers are an undercount. There is likely underreporting due to provider fatigue, staff turnover, and some clinics not having the staff or capacity to monitor or report protesters or other anti-abortion activity, especially as they manage

surges in patients. Two: These incidents happened even when there was vigorous enforcement of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE) Act. We are hearing from providers that they have seen an increase in violence since January of 2025, as extremists test what they can get away with under an administration that has pardoned those convicted, including by juries, of FACE Act violations and has explicitly stated it will not enforce the FACE Act at abortion facilities except in the most extreme circumstances. Several of the FACE defendants who received pardons in 2025 went on to participate in a clinic invasion mere months later.

No one should fear violence at the workplace or when seeking health care, yet abortion providers, patients, and volunteers face violence and harassment every day. In 2022, there was a 100% increase in arsons compared to 2021. One of those arsons was at a clinic set to open in Casper, WY, in June 2022. But in May, shortly after the Supreme Court's draft decision in *Dobbs* became public, an arsonist broke into the clinic and set it on fire. The arson devastated the staff, delayed the clinic's opening by nearly a year, and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in repairs. A few months earlier, an anti-abortion extremist stood outside a NAF member clinic on the east coast with a flaming torch, holding a photo of one of the clinic's abortion providers including his full name, personal information, and the word "WANTED" printed on it. Through a megaphone, they shouted details about his family: his wife's name, how many children he had. They then posted a video of these threats on a public social media page, ensuring that their menacing message reached a wide audience.

The use of that "WANTED" poster was not singular or new. That extremist tactic harkens back to the terrifying circumstances surrounding Congress's passage of the FACE Act in 1994. For many years, anti-abortion extremists had used clinic blockades to intimidate and prevent access to abortion clinics; the first clinic arson was in 1976, followed by a series of

bombings in 1978, and the attacks and threats escalated. In the 1990s, anti-abortion extremists began using butyric acid attacks and anthrax threat letters. In 1993, Dr. David Gunn was murdered outside his clinic—the first abortion provider killed by anti-abortion extremists. He too was featured on a “WANTED” style poster before his murder, as were other now-slain abortion providers. Since Dr. Gunn’s murder, there have been 10 more murders and 26 attempted murders, most recently in Colorado Springs in 2015.

It was in response to this escalating violence that Congress passed the FACE Act in a bipartisan manner, and the law has been an important tool in addressing extremist violence over the last three decades. Every administration - Republican and Democratic alike - has enforced the FACE Act. But for decades, abortion providers and their patients have still faced escalating harassment and violence; in the post-*Dobbs* world, that atmosphere has only intensified, making the FACE Act and the protections it offers all the more critical.

Providers are facing some of the greatest hurdles when it comes to their ability to provide care, whether it is because they can no longer provide abortion as a result of state bans, there is an influx of patients traveling long distances to access care, or they are having to address their own or staff’s post-pandemic burnout. Anti-abortion extremists continue to perpetrate high levels of violence and harassment against abortion providers, including arsons, obstructions, assaults, constant picketing, death threats, and other activities meant to intimidate and terrorize abortion providers. Even with clinics closing in states that have banned or restricted access to abortion, extremists are traveling—or even moving—to states where abortion remains legal. There, they protest, intimidate, harass, and even attack abortion providers to interfere with people’s access to abortion care.

Providers should not have to constantly worry about their own safety, harassment of their staff and patients, or destruction of their clinics. The FACE Act is the bare minimum. If anything, *more* protections are desperately needed to ensure that abortion providers and those receiving abortion care are kept safe. But at the very least, we must ensure that this existing legislation remains in place and that it is vigorously enforced.