

NEWS



Abortion Clinic and Security Face Lawsuit after Christendom College Student Injured

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By John-Henry Westen

WASHINGTON, DC, May 4, 2005 (LifeSiteNews.com) - The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), specializing in constitutional law, filed a civil lawsuit Friday in Washington, D.C. against Planned Parenthood and a security guard on behalf of a pro-life college student who said he was tackled and injured when attempting to exercise his free speech rights outside an abortion clinic in 2004.

"It is simply unacceptable for citizens of the United States, who are on public property, to be tackled or knocked to the ground by security guards," said Jim Henderson, Senior Counsel in the ACLJ's Washington office. "In this case, a college-aged Catholic sidewalk counselor was attacked from behind and thrown to the ground on a public sidewalk for no other reason than seeking to offer his message of hope and help to women approaching the Planned Parenthood facility."

The ACLJ filed suit in the Superior Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of Daniel Heenan, a Virginia resident who attends Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia. The suit contends that Heenan, who participated in Saturday prayer vigils and sidewalk counseling outside the Planned Parenthood clinic on 16th Street NW in Washington for three years, was injured by a security guard who tackled Heenan in May 2004 knocking him to the ground.

The incident occurred, according to the suit, after Heenan approached the clinic and crossed a painted black line on a sidewalk outside the clinic - a marking that applied only to a group of defendants in a federal lawsuit - and not to Heenan.

The suit contends that Heenan was forcefully shoved to the ground and tackled by a security guard after crossing the line. According to the suit, Heenan did nothing to provoke the assault - never said or indicated that he was going to enter the clinic and

never expressed aggression or intimidation toward the security guard. The suit also contends that the incident was witnessed by several officers of the Metropolitan Police Department who refused Heenan's request to press charges against the security guard. No police report was made concerning the incident.

The suit names as defendants Harry James, the security guard, and Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, Inc. The suit contends that James and his employer, Planned Parenthood, committed battery against Heenan which resulted in both physical and emotional injury to him. The suit asks the court to order the defendants to pay compensatory and punitive damages in the case. The suit also requests that the court protect the constitutional rights of Heenan and grant injunctive relief barring the defendants from having any physical contact with Heenan in the future. The lawsuit requests a trial by jury.
