
Pro-lifers can pray outside abortion clinics in Mich. during coronavirus shutdown, court rules

By [Michael Gryboski](#) ⁽¹⁾, Christian Post Reporter



The Michigan state capitol building is seen March 17, 2008, in Lansing, Michigan. | Bill Pugliano/Getty Images

Pro-life activists can pray outside abortion clinics in Michigan even as the state has shut down most activities to curb the spread of COVID-19, a court ruled Tuesday.

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Earlier this month, Andrew Belanger of the group ONElife for Life filed a lawsuit against the city of Detroit and Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer over being ticketed for demonstrating outside an abortion clinic.

The suit also named Justin Phillips and Cal Zastrow as plaintiffs and said the state was using its stay-at-home executive order to wrongfully target pro-life demonstrations.

U.S. District Court Judge Janet Neff issued an order ⁽¹²⁾ noting that both parties had reached an agreement that allows for pro-life demonstrations during the lockdown period.

“Defendants agree that Executive Order 2020-21 does not prohibit the conduct of Plaintiffs that is alleged in the Complaint,” noted the order filed Tuesday.

“The City of Detroit shall dismiss the criminal citation issued to Plaintiff Andrew Belanger and any related criminal charges or proceedings that might arise from this citation and the incident related to it.”

In return, explained the order, the pro-life activists will “release the City of Detroit and each of its employees, agents, departments, officers and representatives from any and all liabilities, damages, or claims, arising out of the incident underlying Plaintiffs’ complaint.”

“The parties agree that the above-captioned lawsuit shall be dismissed with prejudice as the provisions of this stipulation resolve Plaintiffs’ claims, and each party shall be responsible for his or her own costs and attorneys’ fees,” it continued.

The pro-life activists were represented by the American Freedom Law Center, a conservative legal group based in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

AFLC co-founder Robert Muise said in a statement released Tuesday ⁽¹³⁾ that the order was “a clear victory for our clients’ rights to freedom of speech and free exercise of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment.”

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“It has been said that all tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent. During this current pandemic, we will not remain silent; we will remain vigilant,” Muise said.

Last month, Whitmer issued an executive order aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus, which resulted in the shutting down of many businesses and social gatherings.

On Mar. 31, Belanger and a small group of pro-life activists were demonstrating outside the Scotsdale Women’s Center in Detroit, [according to the AFLC](#) ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Although the demonstrators were practicing social distancing, police arrived and Belanger was issued a “State of Michigan Uniform Law Citation” for allegedly violating the executive order.

In addition to the legal decision released on Tuesday, the state government also posted a clarification online stating that the executive order does not “prohibit persons from engaging in outdoor activities that are protected by the First Amendment.”

“Persons may engage in expressive activities protected by the First Amendment within the State of Michigan, but must adhere to social distancing measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including remaining at least six feet from people from outside the person’s household,” [it explained](#) ⁽¹⁵⁾.

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Carolina police selectively enforced the state's COVID-19-related stay-at-home order to arrest him during the weekend while he was peacefully standing with pro-life counselors outside an abortion clinic. Sen. Ted Cruz called the arrest "unconstitutional."&source=The%20Christian%20Post

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David Benham arrested for pro-life counseling outside abortion clinic: 'We maintained our social distance'

By [Anugrah Kumar](#) ⁽¹⁸⁾, Christian Post Contributor

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