

**NEWS**

# Pro-life leader accuses Biden DOJ of weaponizing FACE Act to cover up infanticide

Five of the original nine defendants are currently on trial, with each facing up to 11 years in prison if convicted on federal charges for an October 2020 rescue effort to save unborn babies in a downtown Washington, D.C., facility run by notorious late-term abortionist Cesare Santangelo.



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WASHINGTON, D.C. ([LifeSiteNews](#)) — A “progressive” pro-life activist is calling out the Department of Justice for weaponizing the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act against peaceful pro-lifers in order to cover up infanticide committed by notorious abortionist Cesare Santangelo.

Five of the nine original defendants are currently on trial, with each facing up to 11 years in prison if convicted with federal charges for a rescue effort to save unborn babies at the [Washington-Surgi Clinic](#) in downtown Washington, D.C., in October 2020, run by Santangelo.

Progressive Anti-Abortion Uprising (PAAU) director [Lauren Handy](#), 28; [Jonathan Darnel](#), 40; [Jay Smith](#), 32; [Paulette Harlow](#), 73; [Jean Marshall](#), 72; [John Hinshaw](#), 67, [Heather Idoni](#), 61; [William Goodman](#), 52; and pro-life heroine [Joan Bell](#), 74, were charged with conspiracy against rights and violation of the FACE Act for what the DOJ described as a “blockade” of the abortion mill.

[Herb Geraghty](#), a 25-year-old woman who identifies as a man but staunchly opposes abortion, was charged separately for her involvement in the same rescue effort.

The pro-lifers say their efforts were entirely peaceful, and aimed at saving babies’ lives.

Thomas More Society senior trial counsel Martin A. Cannon has pointed out to [The Epoch Times](#) that, while the FACE Act violation “under the circumstances charged is a misdemeanor,” the conspiracy charge, if proven, “is a felony,” which he called “a lot of overcharging.”

Shortly after her arrest, Handy, who heads up the “anti-capitalist” PAAU, said that while “[m]edia reports have stated that we ‘invaded’ the abortion center and ‘disrupted’ women from exercising their ‘reproductive rights’... that is not what we did.”

“We entered the clinic and sought to love the women who were already there for their abortion procedures,” she said. “We tried to offer them help so they would choose life. We non-violently defended the unborn who were about to be exterminated – the innocent, the most vulnerable, killed in horrific acts of violence and treated as so much trash.”

Only five days before the arrest of the defendants in 2022, Handy, together with fellow PAAU pro-lifer Terrisa Bukovinac, said they had obtained a box of discarded dead babies from Santangelo's facility from an anonymous truck driver who was allegedly about to transport boxes to the Curtis Bay Medical Waste incineration facility.

The boxes reportedly contained the remains of roughly 100 aborted children, including five extremely late-term babies. PAAU had shared at the time that the women "privately arranged for the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Police homicide unit to pick up" the remains of the five late-term aborted babies "for forensic examination."

Numerous physicians have suggested that at least some of the babies may have been killed after being born alive. Santangelo previously said in a 2013 undercover video that he would not save a baby born alive.

Despite evidence that the babies may have been killed in violation of federal law, which prohibits abortionists from murdering babies born alive after failed abortions, D.C. authorities stated they would not launch any investigations or conduct autopsies on the infants since they say the babies were "aborted in accordance with D.C. law."

Instead of investigating Santangelo, the DOJ had Handy and her fellow pro-lifers arrested by the FBI shortly after her discovery for their 2020 rescue effort at Santangelo's mill. Some pro-lifers have suggested that the arrest and charges are at least in part an attempt to obscure potential federal law violations by Santangelo.

Pro-life Catholic priest Father David Nix has questioned the timing of the arrest, asking regarding Handy and Bukovinac, "Could their reporting of infanticide be the entire motive for a raid happening nearly two years after their sit-in at an abortion center?"

Kristin Turner, Director of Community Organizing for the group Progressive Anti-Abortion Uprising (PAAU), told LifeSiteNews senior correspondent Jim Hale Tuesday evening that she believes the charges against Handy and the others are indeed a "cover-up" attempt.

When asked by Hale what message she had for Biden's DOJ, Turner replied, "The FACE act does not protect infanticide. And Joe Biden should not be using it to defend infanticidal abortionists like Cesare Santangelo who is using the FACE Act to cover up the crimes he committed against his victims."

Turner described the ongoing trial of the nine pro-lifer activists as "the biggest case since *Roe v. Wade*."

"This case is going to determine whether or not we can treat unborn people like human beings," and "if we're allowed to love the unborn as we love each other," the PAAU activist added.

According to Turner, the radically pro-abortion Biden administration sees the current pro-life movement as a threat to their death agenda.

“They’re seeing a resurgence of [people] who are standing up and saying...we’re willing to risk 11 years in prison if it means defending the unborn.”

“We see a wider movement,” she continued. “I think that that scares them because they know we’re willing to risk a lot for the unborn non-violently.”

While the group is dedicated to fighting abortion, PAAU does not take a religious stance, and supports LGBTQ ideology. Its founder, Bukovinac, describes herself as an “atheist” and a “leftist.”

Defendant and seasoned pro-life activist Will Goodman compared the prosecutorial state in this case to the U.S. government during the days of legal slavery.

“Peaceful pro-lifers committed to non-violent direct action in the American tradition of civil disobedience are being treated like ‘enemies of the state’ and are being refused any legal opportunities to advocate for the constitutional civil rights of the preborn humans in the womb,” Goodman told LifeSite.

“This unprecedented attack on rescuers by the federal government, including terrorizing raids and potentially draconian prison sentences, has not been seen in this country since the enforcement of the immoral Fugitive Slave Act.”

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