

September 26, 2022

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland:

If the shocking reports about the FBI arresting a man Friday in rural Pennsylvania are true, then you have a lot to answer for. These reports state that federal authorities obtained a warrant under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act to arrest Mark Houck for allegedly committing a single count of simple assault by pushing a man near an abortion clinic. Houck contends that he only did so to defend his child against the man, and local authorities have already dismissed a separate criminal complaint against Houck for the same conduct.

Not only did your office turn a local dispute into a national case, but the FBI reportedly executed the search warrant in as extreme a manner as one can imagine. Reports state that the FBI sent as many as 20 to 25 agents to conduct the arrest. And the FBI allegedly arrested Houck at gunpoint early in the morning in front of his seven children. The FBI admitted, in a statement, that as many as 20 agents were present with their guns drawn. As Houck's wife said, when they saw 20 or more agents arrest their father at gunpoint, "the kids were all just screaming." To say the least, using this kind of force to make an arrest for a single charge of simple assault is unprecedented.

The reports are especially shocking given that your office has so far turned a blind eye to the epidemic of violence across the country by pro-abortion extremists against pregnancy resource centers, houses of worship, and pro-life Americans—violent acts that are prohibited by the very same law under which you are charging Mark Houck.

One group reports 104 incidents of extremist violence against pregnancy resource centers, churches, and pro-life Americans since the leak of the Supreme Court draft opinion on May 3.¹ Those attacks include fire-bombings and arsons. Just last week, an 83-year-old woman was shot while engaging in pro-life activism.² Despite my repeated requests, you still have not identified a single prosecution the Department of Justice has taken in response to this epidemic of violence against pro-life Americans.

All of this comes after more than a year of your office repeatedly weaponizing the FBI and other arms of the federal government against political opponents. If you are trying to inspire confidence in your department, you are failing magnificently.

¹ <https://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF22F17.pdf>

² <https://www.foxnews.com/us/elderly-pro-life-volunteer-michigan-shot-heated-conversation-pro-life-group-says>

I believe you must testify, under oath, before the Senate Judiciary Committee about your selective use and apparent political weaponization of the FACE Act.

In addition, within 10 days, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Why were 20-25 armed FBI agents sent to Mark Houck's home to execute an arrest for alleged simple assault?
2. Why did those agents have their guns drawn?
3. Since May 3, 2022, how many charges has your department brought against pro-abortion extremists who have attacked pregnancy resource centers, churches, and pro-life Americans?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Josh Hawley
United States Senator

CC:

Dick Durbin, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee

Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee