



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

April 13, 2012

Attorney General J. B. Van Hollen
114 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707-7857

Dear Attorney General Van Hollen,

We write to strongly urge you to establish a special task force within the Department of Justice to investigate a developing pattern of violent conduct directed at Wisconsin Planned Parenthood clinics, physicians and patients.

In less than a year, two Wisconsin men have admitted to violent, criminal activity against the state's largest reproductive health care provider for women. Nationally, there were 114 violent attacks against abortion providers in 2011, including three physical assaults, one bombing, one incident of arson, 27 counts of vandalism and eight burglaries, according to reproductive choice advocates.

Last week in Wisconsin, a man admitted in federal court to setting fire to the Planned Parenthood clinic in his hometown of Grand Chute on April 1. After he was apprehended the suspect admitted to federal investigators that he "lit up the clinic," according to the criminal complaint. The suspect indicated that he is pro-life, believes in God and disapproves of the activities taking place at the clinic. Only a few days earlier, a Marshfield man was charged in federal court with attempting to use a firearm in May 2011 to kill a physician at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Madison. The suspect had been practicing with his handgun when it discharged a bullet through his hotel room door into the room across the hall. He told police he had a gun "to lay out abortionists because they are killing babies" and that he planned on shooting the clinic's doctor "right in the head," according to the complaint. The suspect also told police he wished he "could line them up all in a row, get a machine gun, and mow them all down," referring to the clinic's doctor and nurses, the complaint said.

While thankfully the violent acts committed by these two suspects did not result in any injuries or deaths, these types of heinous crimes still jeopardize public safety and serve to threaten and intimidate women, doctors, nurses and the citizenry at large. The outcome next time might not be so fortunate. Planned Parenthood patients, doctors, nurses or bystanders could be injured or killed.

Women should be able to obtain legal health care, and doctors should be allowed to provide this care, without fear for their safety or life. When viewed in the context of the current public debate about limiting a woman's access to reproductive health care, the two violent acts mentioned above are not isolated incidents. They are indicative of a widespread, concerted and sometimes violent attack against women's health care and those that provide and receive this care.

As the state's top law enforcement officer you have a responsibility to investigate the developing pattern of violence directed at Wisconsin Planned Parenthood clinics and to use all of the resources at your disposal to fight possible threats to all of its 27 health centers in the state. We must be vigilant and prepared to stop all those who intend to commit violence against health care providers who serve women. To do otherwise would be irresponsible.

Thank you for your consideration. We would appreciate a written reply by Friday, April 20, 2012.

Sincerely,

Jon Richards
State Representative
Assembly District 19

Peter Barca
State Representative
Assembly District 64

Sandy Pasch
State Representative
Assembly District 22

JoCasta Zamarripa
State Representative
Assembly District 8

Terese Berceau
State Representative
Assembly District 76

Penny Bernard Schaber
State Representative
Assembly District 57

Janet Bewley
State Representative
Assembly District 74

Elizabeth Coggs
State Representative
Assembly District 10

Tamara Grigsby
State Representative
Assembly District 18

Gordon Hintz
State Representative
Assembly District 54

Brett Hulsey
State Representative
Assembly District 77

Fred Kessler
State Representative
Assembly District 12

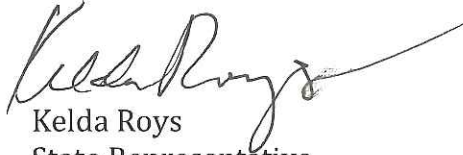
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Assembly District 62

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State Representative
Assembly District 78

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State Representative
Assembly District 79



Janis Ringhand
State Representative
Assembly District 80



Kelda Roys
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Assembly District 81



Christine Sinicki
State Representative
Assembly District 20



Chris Taylor
State Representative
Assembly District 48



Barbara Toles
State Representative
Assembly District 17



Robert Turner
State Representative
Assembly District 61



Jon Erpenbach
State Senator
Senate District 27



Dave Hansen
State Senator
Senate District 30



Chris Larson
State Senator
Senate District 7



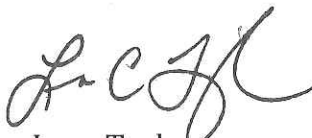
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State Senator
Senate District 24



Mark Miller
State Senator
Senate District 16



Fred Risser
State Senator
Senate District 26



Lena Taylor
State Senator
Senate District 4