



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WEEKLY

from

Americans for Freedom of Religion

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Department of Justice - New Actions to Protect Religious Freedom

In their 2024 AND 2025 reports on the state of religious liberty in the United States, the bishops' Committee on Religious Liberty of the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) advised of varying threats to the religious freedom of all Americans.

Their first concern in the 2024 report was attacks on houses of worship. FBI reports showed an alarming increase in violence and attacks against houses of worship that increased by 100% from 2021 to 2023. Almost none of over 200 attacks were ever prosecuted.

The assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Harmeet Dhillon, says there is now a Dept. of Justice focus on keeping Americans safe to worship freely in their churches, synagogues, temples and mosques through an expanded and focused civil rights enforcement. The Dept. of Justice has secured convictions in several high profile cases and is actively pursuing more such investigations.

The Face Act, used extensively to prosecute and imprison peaceful pro-life demonstrators while neglecting to investigate and prosecute most perpetrators of the attacks on pro-life centers and pro-life activists, is being challenged for repeal by Congressional Republicans. Dhillon says that this administration will not prosecute pro-lifers who demonstrate without blocking clinic entrances. Further, she urges pro-life centers who did not present their cases before the previous administration to come forward to the Dept. of Justice before the statute of limitations expires. Also, this Dept. of Justice has dropped several cases brought by the previous administration against pro-lifers.

In defense of the Catholic church's rights the Dept. of Justice has a lawsuit against a Washington state law requiring priests to break the seal of the confessional by reporting any suspected child abuse revealed during confessions. Because Canon Law forbids the priest to reveal any information from confessions upon pain of excommunication, the Bishops of Seattle, Spokane and Yakima have filed suit against the law to protect religious freedom rights.

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