

Pro-Life Activists Settle over Arrest for Praying

Pro-life activists have reached a settlement with a North Carolina city in which officials agreed to allow them to demonstrate peacefully on public sidewalks, including during public health emergencies.

Love Life, also known as Global Impact Ministries, and other pro-life activists sued the city of Greensboro and Guilford County, NC, after they were arrested in March 2020 while praying outside A Woman's Choice, an abortion clinic in Greensboro. Their arrest occurred at a time when state and local governments had implemented lockdown orders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alliance Defending Freedom, a law firm representing the pro-life activists, filed a lawsuit against Greensboro and Guilford County in April 2020 in response to the arrests, arguing that the punishment of the pro-life activists was unconstitutional.

ADF Senior Counsel Denise Harle, director of the ADF Center for Life, says that she believes "this case was never about public health and safety." She concludes that instead, "It was about the government silencing people because it didn't like what they had to say."

"That said, we commend the city for finally agreeing to respect the free speech rights of Love Life members and acknowledge their freedom to pray and speak in the public square," she adds.

Although the plaintiffs argue that they had taken certain public health precautions to comply with public health orders issued by the city and county, such as limiting their gathering to ten people and standing six feet apart, the

activists were nevertheless arrested and threatened with fines of up to \$1,000 for their actions outside the clinic.

County officials reached a settlement with the pro-life activists, paying \$15,000 in attorneys' fees and agreeing to respect the First Amendment rights of the activists in the future.

MICHAEL GRYBOSKI, taken from The Christian Post.

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