

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 7, 2022

The Honorable Merrick Garland  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Garland:

We write to request information about how the Department of Justice is addressing the disturbing trend of harassment, intimidation, and violence against religious and other pro-life organizations and individuals in the aftermath of the leaked draft opinion in the Supreme Court case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. While churches and crisis pregnancy centers have been vandalized, pro-life offices in Oregon and Wisconsin have been targeted by arsonists.<sup>1</sup> We are deeply concerned that this trend will continue should the Supreme Court overturn *Roe v. Wade* in the coming weeks unless the Department of Justice, the FBI, and U.S. Attorneys' Offices take a firm public stance and proactive response against these violent threats.

Last October, the Department of Justice wasted no time in publicly responding to threats of violence against educators and school administrators related to COVID-19 policies. You issued a memo in which you stated, "While spirited debate about policy matters is protected under our Constitution, that protection does not extend to threats of violence or efforts to intimidate individuals based on their views."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the Department created specialized training and guidance for local school boards and school administrators to help "potential victims understand the type of behavior that constitutes threats, how to report threatening conduct to the appropriate law enforcement agencies, and how to capture and preserve evidence of threatening conduct to aid in the investigation and prosecution of these crimes."<sup>3</sup> The Department also took steps to improve coordination between the FBI, the U.S. Attorneys' Offices, and local law enforcement to "open dedicated lines of communication for threat reporting, assessment, and response."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan Foley, "Spate of churches, pro-life offices torched, vandalized nationwide since Supreme Court leak: list", The Christian Post, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/churches-pro-life-offices-burned-vandalized-since-supreme-court-leak-list.html>, 26 May 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Merrick Garland, "Partnership Among Federal, State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Law Enforcement to Address Threats Against School Administrators, Board Members, Teachers, and Staff," <https://www.justice.gov/ag/page/file/1438986/download>, 4 October 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Attorney General, "Justice Department Addresses Violent Threats Against School Officials and Teachers," <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-addresses-violent-threats-against-school-officials-and-teachers>, 4 October 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Garland, 4 October 2021.

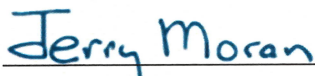
Yet in comparison to the current climate, in which multiple acts—not just threats—of violence have been documented, we have not seen the commensurate public response from the Department of Justice that the moment demands. The criminal acts perpetrated against those who oppose legalized abortion are a clear effort to intimidate or coerce individuals who hold pro-life values. We call on the Department of Justice to take these actions seriously and work to prevent violence and, when such acts are perpetrated, investigate and prosecute them as appropriate.

We are dismayed that the open and public urgency with which the Department of Justice undertook efforts in the name of public safety last year is not being replicated currently to protect religious and other pro-life organizations and individuals. We seek answers to the following questions:

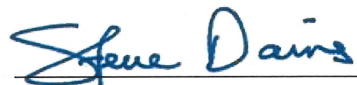
1. What is the Department of Justice's strategy to prevent violence and threats of violence against private organizations and individuals who oppose legalized abortion?
2. What resources does the Department of Justice need to publicize and implement this strategy successfully?
3. What role has the Department of Justice played in investigating and prosecuting individuals committing violence against pro-life organizations and individuals?

The Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs* is imminent, and thus we ask for a response to these questions by June 10, 2022. Thank you for your service to our country and your attention to this important matter.

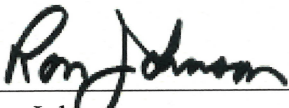
Sincerely,



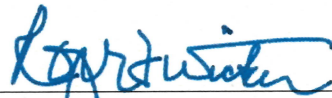
Jerry Moran  
United States Senator



Steve Daines  
United States Senator



Ron Johnson  
United States Senator




Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.  
United States Senator



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator




John Boozman  
United States Senator



Deb Fischer  
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator



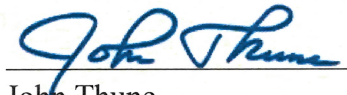
James E. Risch  
United States Senator



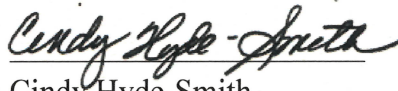
James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator



Ted Cruz  
United States Senator



John Thune  
United States Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith  
United States Senator



Mike Braun  
United States Senator



James Lankford  
United States Senator