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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

June 27, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Christopher A. Wray
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

Director Wray:

I write to express concern with a recent wave of violence perpetrated by pro-abortion extremist individuals and groups across the country. These attacks have become prevalent since the leak of the Supreme Court's draft decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, later issued on June 24, 2022, that returns the regulation of abortion to the states. As we discussed previously, I want to ensure that these violent attacks are recognized by the FBI and are being properly investigated for what they are – cases of abortion-related violent extremism.

In the wake of the leaked opinion on May 2, 2022, the Department of Homeland Security released a bulletin which predicted that "the volume of violent threats targeting Supreme Court Justices, members of Congress, other public officials, clergy, healthcare officials and providers... may increase leading up to and following the issuing of the Court's official ruling."¹ Unfortunately, this prediction has proved strikingly true. There have been at least 40 violent attacks on crisis pregnancy centers, religious institutions, and other pro-life entities since the *Dobbs* leak and before the Court even issued its final opinion.² This violence continues to cause injury, damage to property, and interruption of constitutionally protected worship services all across the nation. In fact, it substantially accelerated last weekend, after the opinion was issued.

Perhaps most concerning are organized violent groups like *Jane's Revenge* and *Ruth Sent Us*. *Jane's Revenge* has distributed flyers around the Washington, D.C. area calling for riots after the Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*. The flyers explicitly call for a "night of rage" and encourage supporters of *Jane's Revenge* to "hit the streets" and "riot."³ It also makes threats to "oppressors" – stating that "if abortions aren't safe, you're not either."⁴ Their words have matched their actions. They've taken credit for fire bombings of crisis pregnancy centers in Madison, WI; Amherst, NY; Buffalo, NY; and Gresham, OR.⁵

¹ Luke Barr, *Domestic violent extremists infiltrating abortion debate: DHS official*, ABC NEWS (May 17, 2022), <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/domestic-violent-extremists-infiltrating-abortion-debate-dhs-official/story?id=84785471>.

² SUSAN B. ANTHONY PRO-LIFE AMERICA, *Pro-Abortion Vandalism, Violence, and Interruptions of Worship*, (May 2022), <https://s27319.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/6.15.22-Pro-Abortion-Vandalism-Violence-Interruptions-Of-Worship.pdf>.

³ The Editorial Board, *A 'Night of Rage' on Abortion*, WALL ST. J. (June 20, 2022), https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-night-of-rage-on-abortion-janes-revenge-fbi-merrick-garland-roe-v-wade-dobbs-v-jackson-11655664242?mod=hp_opin_pos_3#cxrecs_s.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Judith Levine, *Beyond Revenge, What Does Jane's Revenge Want?*, THE INTERCEPT (June 16, 2022), <https://theintercept.com/2022/06/16/janes-revenge-abortion-rights/>.

These attacks have also been perpetrated in my home state of Iowa,⁶ which I addressed with you in a recent phone call. In conjunction with their destruction, the group has frequently spray painted phrases like “revenge” and other threatening statements on the remaining structures.⁷ In addition to the violence against crisis pregnancy centers and religious institutions, *Ruth Sent Us* has organized illegal⁸ protests outside the homes of Supreme Court Justices Barrett, Alito, Kavanaugh, and Roberts.⁹ Moreover, the group has made calls to religious organizations to “stuff your rosaries and your weaponized prayer” because “we’ll be burning the Eucharist to show our disgust...”¹⁰

Instances of abortion-extremist violence have been directed towards our democratic institutions as well. A suspect was recently arrested outside Justice Brett Kavanaugh’s home in Maryland.¹¹ The suspect traveled from California with burglary tools, a knife, a firearm with two magazines of ammunition, a pair of boots designed to remain quiet when walking on hard surfaces, zip ties, and duct tape.¹² Thankfully, the assailant called the police on his own after spotting two federal marshals patrolling the home. He admitted he intended to kill Justice Kavanaugh, and was charged with attempted murder.

In this past weekend since the Court’s final ruling, violence has increased. There was an arson at a Colorado pregnancy center.¹³ Another arson occurred at a Catholic Church in Reston, Virginia.¹⁴ Both were also vandalized with pro-abortion graffiti. Some were arrested for violence and disorderly conduct at protests, including ten in Eugene, Oregon. A crowd of 75 in the familiar “black bloc” of Antifa—black clothes, hoods, masks, and umbrellas—threw smoke bombs and fought with officers.¹⁵ A concerning early feature of these protests has been the observable presence of black-bloc clad groups. These are a familiar sight from the 2020 riots including those surrounding the Portland courthouse, where rioters relied on similar clothing to evade detection and arrest. Also concerning is the use of violence against law enforcement officers. A small violent group within a pro-abortion protest in Los Angeles began throwing makeshift weapons at police, with one subject even being arrested for the attempted murder of a police officer.¹⁶

⁶ Todd Magel, *Group claims responsibility for vandalism at Des Moines pregnancy counseling center*, KCCI DES MOINES (June 14, 2022), <https://www.kcci.com/article/des-moines-iowa-agape-pregnancy-counseling-center-vandalized/40278284#>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ See 18 U.S.C. § 1507.

⁹ Ruth Sent Us (@RuthSentUs), Twitter, (May 12, 2022, 9:14 AM), <https://twitter.com/RuthSentUs/status/1524739745670172676?cxt=HHwWiMC4uYyu-6gqAAAA>.

¹⁰ Ruth Sent Us (@RuthSentUs), Twitter, (May 7, 2022, 10:13 AM), <https://twitter.com/RuthSentUs/status/1522942814895546370>.

¹¹ Kaelan Deese and Jerry Dunleavy, *911 records show a man accused in plot to kill Kavanaugh called police on himself*, WASHINGTON EXAMINER (June 10, 2022), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/crime/911-man-accused-plot-to-kill-kavanaugh-called-police-himself>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Brad, Dress, *Colorado pregnancy center fire investigated as arson*, HILL (June 26, 2022), <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/3537343-colorado-pregnancy-center-fire-investigated-as-arson/>.

¹⁴ *Roe v. Wade-related arson, graffiti investigation underway at Reston church*, INSIDE NOVA (June 26, 2022), https://www.insidenova.com/headlines/roe-v-wade-related-arson-graffiti-investigation-underway-at-reston-church/article_d8f38d72-f590-11ec-8f61-f3da0d569785.html.

¹⁵ AP, *Eugene police arrest 10 in protest after Roe v. Wade overturned*, OREGON LIVE (June 25, 2022), <https://www.oregonlive.com/pacific-northwest-news/2022/06/eugene-police-arrest-10-in-protest-after-roe-v-wade-overturned.html>.

¹⁶ Lawrence Richard, *Supreme Court abortion protests: LAPD arrests suspect for attempted murder of police officer*, FOX NEWS (June 26, 2022), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/supreme-court-abortion-protests-lapd-attempted-murder-police>.

I understand that the FBI specifically tracks a form of extremism known as pro-abortion violent extremism. I understand from a recent FBI bulletin shared with my office that the FBI is investigating many of the instances I have described above as instances of domestic violent extremism. As such, you are evaluating numerous available federal charges, including hate crimes against religious pro-life institutions. I encourage the FBI's efforts to bring accountability to those who would terrorize places of worship, judges in courts of law, pregnancy centers that assist mothers in need, and our very streets. Our law enforcement officers are obliged to duly enforce the laws of our country – not just those that are politically suitable to the current administration. I will remain steadfast in ensuring that the law is being enforced equally across the ideological spectrum. Current threats from abortion extremists are impending, serious, and dangerous.

Unfortunately, it is likely that this wave of violence will continue. I am concerned we may even see a recurrence of the violence of the summer of 2020, in which the FBI opened over 800 domestic terrorism cases. The FBI was not prepared for the torrent of leftwing violence that was unleashed the summer before last. Responding to the current threat of pro-abortion violent extremism will require the FBI to continue its efforts to identify and investigate cases of abortion-related violence across our country at a high rate. I request a briefing from the FBI on your preparedness to counter another potential summer of riots and your efforts thus far to combat this wave of abortion-related violence. Please reach out to my staff as soon as possible to arrange this briefing.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary