

75-Year-Old Diabetic Woman in Wheelchair Sentenced to 2 Years in Prison for Praying at Abortion Clinic

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The recent sentencing of 75-year-old Paulette Harlow for her involvement in a peaceful pro-life protest epitomizes the glaring double standards in our legal system. Harlow, a Roman Catholic from Kingston, Massachusetts, took part in a non-violent “lock and block” protest at the Washington Surgi-Clinic in October 2020.

Alongside nine other activists, she entered the clinic, chained herself to others, and prayed, hoping to save unborn children from abortion. This act of civil disobedience, which the activists claimed were rooted in deep moral and religious convictions, has now resulted in a 24-month prison sentence under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act.

On May 31, 2024, U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly (pictured below) handed down the harsh sentence to Harlow, despite her significant health issues, including debilitating diabetes and severe back pain that confines her to a wheelchair. In a display of blatant judicial bias, Kollar-Kotelly, known for her leftist bench activism, not only sentenced Harlow but also mocked her and her husband for their pro-life beliefs.



When Harlow’s husband expressed concern that his wife might die in prison, Kollar-Kotelly flippantly remarked that she hopes Harlow will “make an effort to remain alive” because that is a “tenet of [Harlow’s] religion,” according to one news report.

This callousness highlights the deep-seated prejudice within the judiciary against pro-life advocates. The FACE Act, which ostensibly aims to protect access to reproductive health services, has been weaponized to disproportionately target pro-life activists. While leftist groups like Black Lives Matter, PETA, and various environmental activists regularly engage in disruptive protests—blocking roads, entrances, and even entire city centers—without facing such draconian penalties, pro-life demonstrators are met with the full force of the law for far less intrusive actions.

The hypocrisy is staggering. Peaceful protest has always been a cornerstone of American democracy, yet it appears that only certain political ideologies are afforded this protection. From a purely legal perspective, perhaps they could have been charged with trespassing, but the FACE Act is a direct attack on the pro-life movement making Christians a target of political and social warfare.

Consider the rampant inconsistency. When left-wing activists block highways or occupy buildings, they’re often hailed as champions of their cause, exercising their First Amendment rights. Yet, when pro-life advocates like Harlow engage in peaceful demonstrations, they are vilified, arrested, and sentenced to years in prison. This selective enforcement is not only unjust but also reveals a blatant bias within our judicial system. It’s as if the government has decided that some lives—those of the unborn—are less worthy of protection, and those who dare to defend them must be punished severely.

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Harlow's sentencing is a grim reminder of how the FACE Act is used to silence and intimidate the pro-life movement. This elderly woman, whose only crime was to stand up for the voiceless, now faces the prospect of spending her final years behind bars. Her health conditions make this sentence particularly cruel, effectively turning a two-year prison term into a potential death sentence. Meanwhile, those who engage in far more disruptive and violent protests continue to enjoy leniency and, often, tacit support from the very institutions that seek to crush pro-life activism.

In a country that once prided itself on freedom and justice, the treatment of Paulette Harlow is nothing short of a travesty. Her case should serve as a wake-up call to all Americans about the dangerous path we're on when peaceful, moral dissent is met with such disproportionate retribution. If we do not stand up against this selective enforcement and defend the rights of all to protest peacefully, regardless of their political stance, we risk eroding the very freedoms that define us as a nation.