



## PRESS RELEASE

# Final Defendant Sentenced for Federal Conspiracy Against Rights and Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act Convictions Related to 2020 D.C. Clinic Invasion and Blockade

Friday, May 31, 2024

**For Immediate Release**

Office of Public Affairs

Paulette Harlow was sentenced today to 24 months in prison following her convictions for federal conspiracy against rights and Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act offenses in connection with the blockade of a Washington, D.C., area reproductive health clinic on Oct. 22, 2020.

Previously, Lauren Handy was sentenced to 57 months in prison, John Hinshaw was sentenced to 21 months in prison, William Goodman was sentenced to 27 months in prison, Jonathan Darnel was sentenced to 34 months in prison, Herb Geraghty was sentenced to 27 months in prison, Jean Marshall was sentenced to 24 months in prison, Joan Bell was sentenced to 27 months in prison and Heather Idoni was sentenced to 24 months in prison. A 10th defendant, Jay Smith, was sentenced to prison following his guilty plea to a felony FACE Act offense on March 1, 2023.

“These 10 defendants have been held accountable for using force, threatening to use force and physically obstructing access to reproductive health care in the District of Columbia,” said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. “The

Justice Department will continue to protect both patients seeking reproductive health services and providers of those services. We will hold accountable anyone who seeks to unlawfully obstruct or block access to reproductive health services in our country.”

“Today, the final defendant was sentenced in an elaborate conspiracy by 10 people to intentionally and forcibly block patients and workers from accessing a reproductive health clinic while streaming it live online,” said Assistant Director Michael Nordwall of the FBI’s Criminal Investigative Division. “The FBI will not stand for anyone who violates federal laws causing destruction, injury and violent attacks like this one. We are dedicated to protecting the rights of all Americans to safely access medical services and ensuring providers can perform their duties freely.”

These defendants were convicted following three separate trials in 2023. Idoni is scheduled to be sentenced in a separate matter on July 30, following conspiracy and FACE Act convictions in an unrelated clinic blockade from Tennessee.

Evidence presented at trial established that the defendants used force and physical obstruction to execute a clinic blockade that was organized by the group’s leaders, Handy and Darnel. The defendants planned and organized the clinic invasion using social media, text messages and telephone calls, and several co-conspirators, including defendants Hinshaw, Goodman, Geraghty, Marshall, Bell, Harlow, Idoni and Smith traveled from northeast and midwestern states to participate in the blockade. Prior to the clinic incursion, the defendants met with other co-conspirators to plan their crime, which included making a fake patient appointment to ensure the group’s entry into the clinic, using chains and locks to barricade the facility and passively resisting their anticipated arrests to prolong the blockade. The clinic invasion was advertised on social media as a “historic” event that was live-streamed on Facebook. The defendants’ forced entry into the clinic at the outset of the invasion resulted in injury to a clinic nurse. During the blockade, one patient had to climb through a receptionist window to access the clinic, while another laid in the hallway outside of the clinic in physical distress, unable to gain access to the clinic.

The FBI Washington Field Office investigated the case.

Prosecutors from the Civil Rights Division and U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia prosecuted the case.

*Updated May 31, 2024*

## Topic

## CIVIL RIGHTS

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