



May 20, 2021

Louisville Metro Council
601 W. Jefferson Street
Louisville, KY 40202

Dear Councilmembers,

I write in strong support of Proposed Ordinance O-179-21, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LOUISVILLE/JEFFERSON COUNTY METRO CODE OF ORDINANCES TO ENSURE SAFE, UNOBSTRUCTED ENTRY TO AND EXIT FROM A HEALTHCARE FACILITY. The creation of a “safety zone” around health care facility entrances is an important step in ensuring patients can access health care safely in Louisville, including abortion care.

The National Abortion Federation (NAF) is the professional association of abortion providers. Our mission is to unite, represent, serve, and support abortion providers in delivering patient-centered, evidence-based care. Our member facilities care for many of the people who choose abortion in the United States and Canada each year, including Louisville patients. NAF has compiled statistics on incidents of violence and disruption against abortion providers since 1977; I have attached our most recently published statistics to this letter.¹

Since Roe v. Wade was decided in 1973, anti-abortion extremists have targeted abortion clinics for escalating violence and harassment. Abortion providers and their patients regularly experience aggressive tactics, intimidation when going from their cars to the clinic entrance, and even outright violence as they try to access a facility. Protesters, including those at EMW Women’s Surgical Center (“EMW”) sometimes attempt to create blockades to physically prevent patients from accessing health care. During the 1980s and early 1990s, clinic harassment and violence—including the murder of abortion provider Dr. David Gunn—created such a sense of urgency that Congress passed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, federal legislation attempting to protect abortion facilities, providers, and patients. FACE makes it a crime to intentionally use force, threat of force, or physical obstruction to injure, intimidate, interfere with, or attempt to injure, intimidate, or interfere with someone obtaining or providing reproductive health services. FACE is an important part of protecting both those providing and those receiving reproductive health care, but FACE alone is not enough. As our 2019 violence and disruption statistics demonstrate, aggression and violence towards abortion providers and their patients continue to escalate, with picketing, trespassing, obstruction, and assault and battery all increasing in 2019. Clinic invasions more than doubled that year, as did bomb threats and incidents of hate mail or harassing phone calls.

NAF has worked with EMW for many years as the clinic has faced constant threats, harassment, and violence from anti-abortion extremists. The protesters outside EMW’s doors are often regulars, the

¹ Also available at <https://prochoice.org/our-work/provider-security/>.

president and ceo: The Very Reverend Katherine H. Ragsdale

board chair: Lori Williams, MSN, WHNPc, APRN *board members:* Sue Carlisle, PhD, MD ▪ Lorie Chaiten, JD ▪ Kersha Deibel, MPH, MSW
Angel M. Foster, DPhil, MD, AM ▪ Chrissy France ▪ Melissa Grant ▪ Daniel Grossman, MD ▪ Dalton Johnson, MBA ▪ Julia McDonald, DO, MPH
Suzanne Morris, MD ▪ Tram Nguyen, MHA, MBA ▪ Brenda Pereda, MD, MS ▪ Lisa Perriera MD, MPH ▪ Sarah Ward Prager, MD, MAS
Rolanda Ryan, RN, MHSA ▪ TaRhonda Slydell, BSN, MBA-HCA ▪ Maria Mercedes Vivas, MD, MPH ▪ Katie Watson, JD



same individuals appearing consistently for years to harass and abuse patients attempting to access the health care they need. The clinic reports incidents of physical violence from protesters almost daily. One incident report from August 2020 detailed a protester pushing a patient so hard that the patient fell to the ground, scraping their hands and knees. From a threat assessment perspective, escalation in aggressive behavior like that reported at EMW is likely to result in a major act of violence. Like anti-abortion protesters at many other clinics around the country, the extremists outside EMW know to stop engaging in egregious, illegal behavior when the police appear; unfortunately, the harassment and violence begin again as soon as law enforcement departs. A safety zone, which balances the vital importance of safe access to reproductive health care with the free-speech rights of anti-choice individuals, would help protect patients and providers attempting to safely enter or exit a facility, without relying on a constant law enforcement presence, freeing up law enforcement officers and resources.

For decades, abortion providers and the patients for whom they care have faced ceaseless, escalating threats of harassment and violence. Over the years, many have been injured and even killed by anti-abortion extremists. Most recently, in 2015 Robert Dear invaded a Colorado reproductive health care clinic, holding staff and patients hostage at gun point for five hours and ultimately killing three people and injuring nine more. Every day, NAF members are forced to withstand threats, intimidation, and violence from anti-abortion extremists, never knowing if today will be the day one of those harassers escalates their threats. Providers and patients should be able to offer and access health care without fearing for their safety and their lives, but absent adequate protections, that is far from reality for many people, including those in Louisville. I strongly urge you to vote yes on this important ordinance and help keep the members of your community safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chelsea Wiggins', with a stylized, cursive script.

Chelsea Wiggins

Counsel, National Abortion Federation



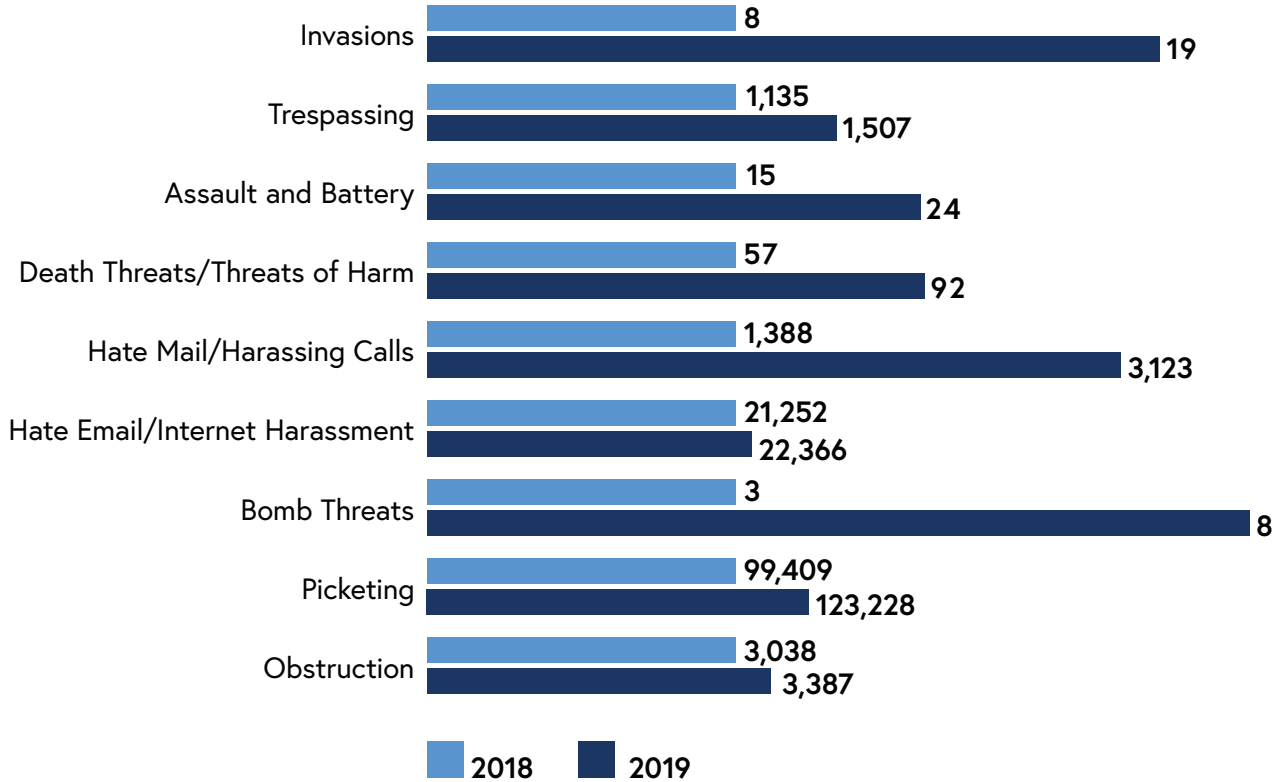
2019 VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTION STATISTICS



NATIONAL
ABORTION
FEDERATION

As states continue to pass and enforce abortion restrictions, anti-abortion extremists are emboldened to disrupt patient services. In 2019, abortion providers continued to report an increase in targeted violence and disruption and incidents of picketing rose from 99,409 in 2018 to more than **123,000 in 2019**. As picketers consistently impede patient access to abortion care facilities, incidents of trespassing, obstruction and assault and battery also rose in 2019.

2019 INCREASES:

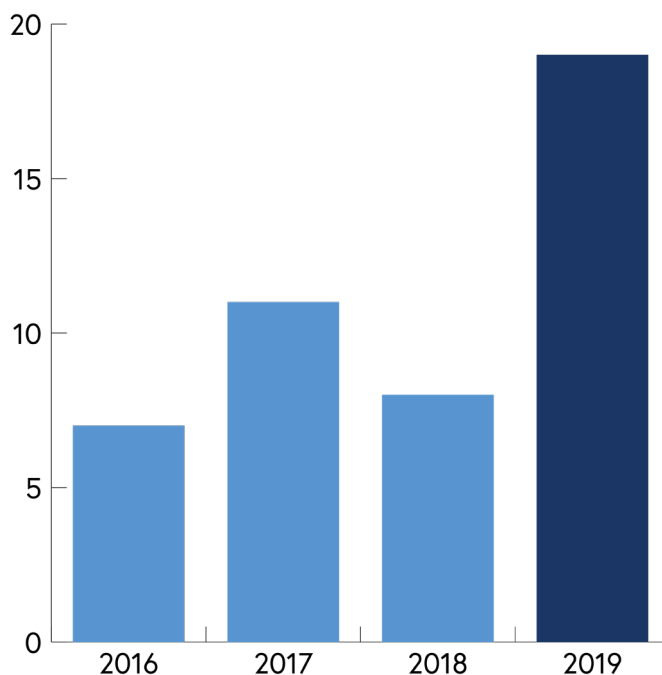


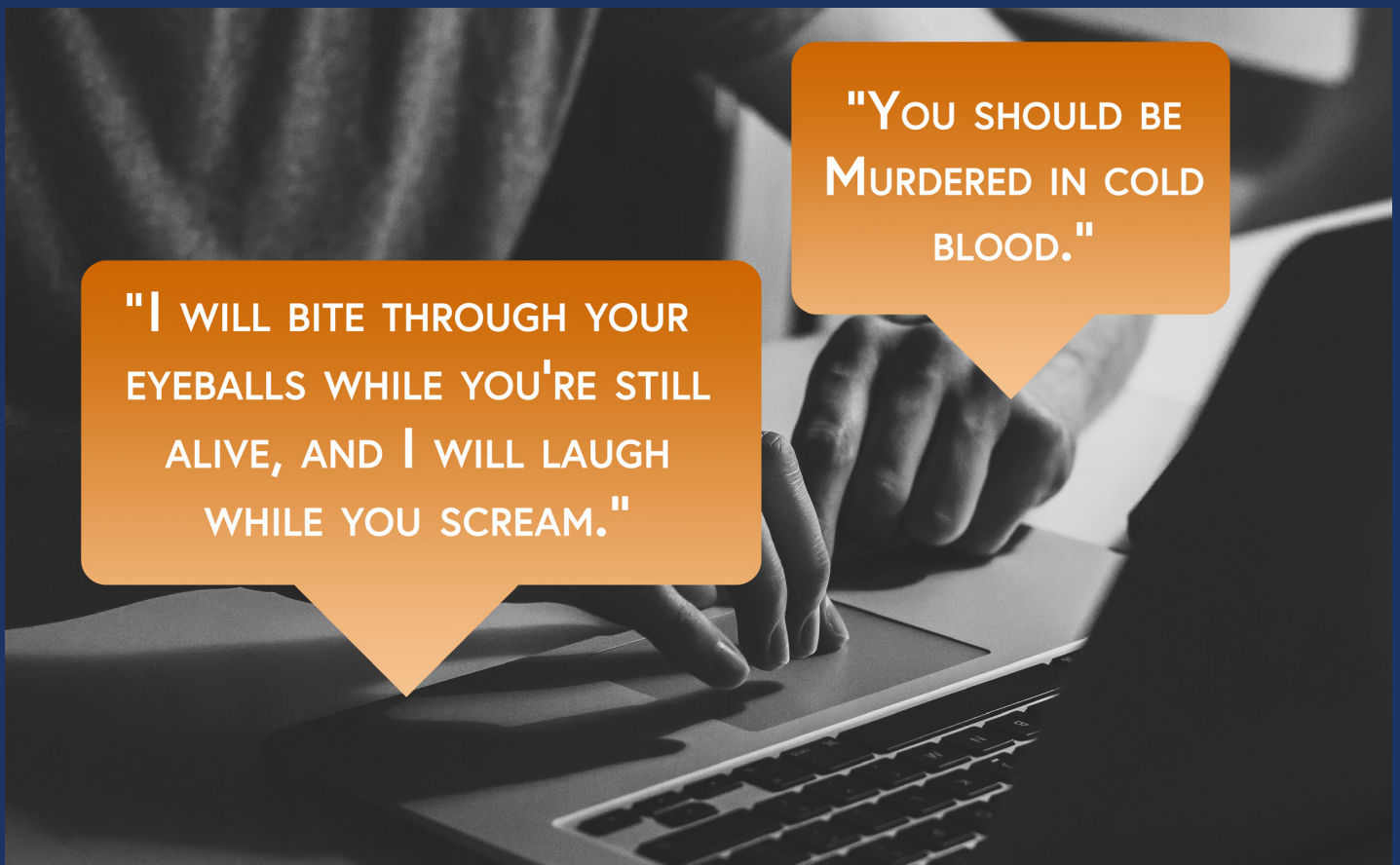
INVASIONS

Invasions more than doubled in 2019 as an anti-abortion extremist group continued to enter clinics and harass patients.

Anti-abortion extremists continued to invade facilities to harass patients in 2019. In June, anti-choice extremists entered a NAF-member clinic and refused to leave. Clinic staff were able to move patients into the hallway to separate them from the invaders. Three invaders left the area before law enforcement arrived. Four other extremists were forcibly removed from the clinic, arrested, and charged with disturbing the peace, trespass, and felony assaulting/resisting/obstructing a police officer. Throughout 2019, the majority of the anti-abortion extremists invading abortion facilities were repeat offenders. Without adequate repercussions for their actions, these invaders will continue to harass patients and attempt to disrupt services. The group behind these invasions has plans to recruit and train other extremists on their invasion protocols. With additional extremists willing to commit these acts, we anticipate the number of invasions to continue to rise.

INVASIONS





"YOU SHOULD BE
MURDERED IN COLD
BLOOD."

"I WILL BITE THROUGH YOUR
EYEBALLS WHILE YOU'RE STILL
ALIVE, AND I WILL LAUGH
WHILE YOU SCREAM."

INTERNET HARASSMENT

Internet harassment rose once again this year and hate mail and harassing phone calls more than doubled. Providers reported:

3,123 targeted incidents of hate mail and harassing phone calls, rising from 1,388 in 2018.

Abortion care providers and staff continued to receive focused threats through phone calls and text messages as well as postal mail and flyers sent not only to health care facilities, but also to their homes. This hate speech often escalates and turns into death threats and threats of harm.

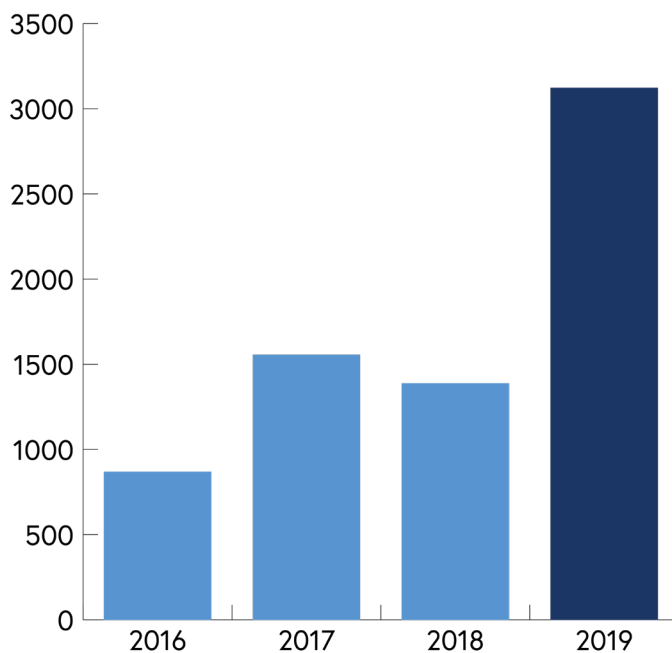
In 2019, abortion providers reported an **increase in death threats and threats of harm, rising from 57 in 2018 to 92 in 2019.**

INTERNET HARASSMENT

In March 2019, an anti-abortion extremist sent several threatening emails to a Massachusetts professor who has published articles in support of abortion rights. The approximately 28 separate email messages included threats such as *"You will have your face ripped off and eaten by me, personally. I will enjoy raping your body after you're dead. And that will only be the start."* and *"I will bite through your eyeballs while you're still alive, and I will laugh while you scream."* Later in the month, the individual sent emails to a professional school within the professor's university. Those emails included the message: *"You people are Evil, putrid, and somebody should [sic] BOMB your school for spreading the idea that it's okay to HATE people because of their race."* A second email stated, *"You should be Murdered in cold blood."*

The extremist was charged with one count of stalking and two counts of transmitting a threat in interstate commerce. He faces a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release, a fine of up to \$250,000, or twice the gross gain or loss resulting from the offense, whichever is greater, and restitution. A plea agreement was filed, and the government will recommend to the court a sentence of 21 months in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine.

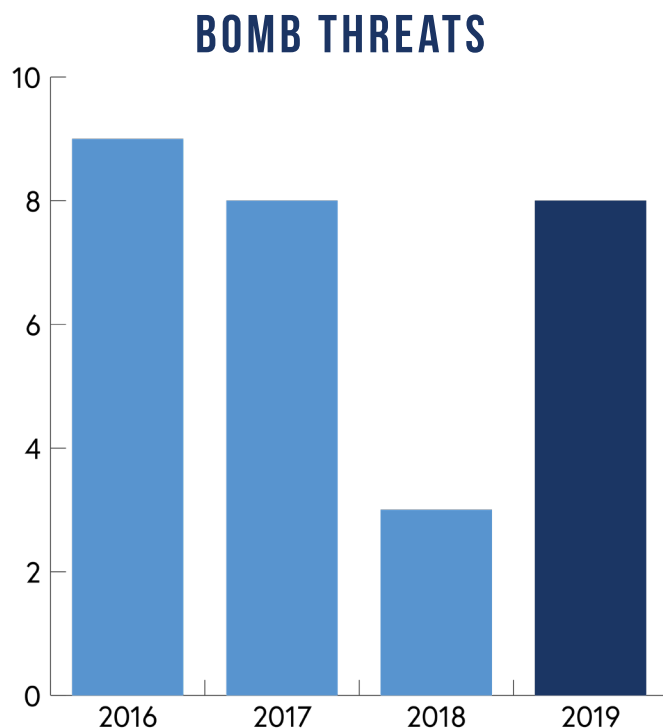
HATE SPEECH



**"YOU WILL HAVE
YOUR FACE RIPPED OFF
AND EATEN BY ME,
PERSONALLY. I WILL
ENJOY RAPING YOUR
BODY AFTER YOU'RE
DEAD. AND THAT WILL
ONLY BE THE START."**

BOMB THREATS

Providers reported an increase in bomb threats in 2019. **Bomb threats rose from 3 in 2018 to 8 in 2019.** In September, a man was arrested in Kentucky after a police search discovered a destructive device located inside his residence. A SWAT team executed the search after the Kenton County Police Department was notified that an individual made a threat to "blow up" a Planned Parenthood facility in Cincinnati, OH. The individual admitted to creating the device and storing it in his home. He has been charged with possession of a destructive device, terroristic threatening, and eight counts of wanton endangerment—one count each for his wife and seven children. Federal law enforcement agencies are involved, and the case is under investigation.




In February 2019, a Texas-based individual posted an online threat to **"commit jihad on an abortion clinic."** Subsequently, the individual was arrested and charged with making a terrorist threat. During a search of the subject's home, several firearms and other evidence were found.

METHODOLOGY

NAF has been tracking incidents of violence and disruption against reproductive health care providers since 1977. NAF conducts outreach to its members and allied organizations encouraging them to submit monthly reports on the anti-choice incidents that they experience. NAF continues to work with an outside security firm to monitor threats, track scheduled anti-abortion events, and develop comprehensive profiles of anti-abortion extremists. NAF collects and compiles this data to detect patterns in anti-abortion criminal activities and appropriately report these trends to law enforcement. Numbers prior to 2013 represent Canada and the United States only. Numbers from 2013-2019 represent Canada, Colombia, and the United States.

NAF is the professional association of abortion providers. We are unique among pro-choice organizations because we represent the providers who make reproductive choice a reality. Our members include private and non-profit clinics, Planned Parenthood affiliates, women's health centers, physicians' offices, and hospitals who together care for more than half the women who choose abortion in the United States and Canada each year. Our members also include public hospitals and both public and private clinics in Mexico City and private clinics in Colombia.



	NAF VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTION STATISTICS (2010 - 2019)										
	INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE & DISRUPTION AGAINST ABORTION PROVIDERS										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Totals 2010-19
Violence											
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Attempted Murder	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	9
Bombing	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Arson	0	1	5	0	1	4	1	1	1	1	15
Attempted Bombing/Arson	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4
Invasion	0	0	0	8	1	6	7	11	8	19	60
Vandalism	22	27	12	5	12	67	109	92	125	70	541
Trespassing ¹	45	69	47	264	78	118	247	823	1,135	1,507	4,333
Butyric Acid Attacks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anthrax/Bioterrorism Threats	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Assault & Battery	4	3	7	0	1	6	36	36	15	24	132
Death Threats/Threats of Harm ²	2	2	6	2	1	94	33	62	57	92	351
Kidnapping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burglary ³	13	8	5	0	1	9	66	34	13	9	158
Stalking ⁴	7	1	6	20	4	9	22	21	14	2	106
Totals	95	114	88	299	99	325	521	1,081	1,369	1,724	5,715
Disruption											
Hate Mail/Harassing Calls	404	365	452	420	367	373	869	1,156	1,388	3,123	8,917
Hate Email/Internet Harassment ⁵	44	17	41	88	91	25,839	42,726	15,773	21,252	22,366	128,237
Hoax Devices/Suspicious Packages ⁶	8	2	7	2	9	35	29	30	4	2	128
Bomb Threats	12	1	1	4	1	4	9	8	3	8	51
Picketing ⁷	6,347	4,780	5,706	5,574	5,402	21,715	61,562	78,114	99,409	123,228	411,837
Obstruction ⁸			79	396	251	242	580	1,704	3,038	3,387	9,677
Totals	6,815	5,165	6,286	6,484	6,121	48,208	105,775	96,785	125,094	152,114	558,847
Clinic Blockades											
Number of Incidents	1	5	6	3	23	45	51	104	43	9	290
Number of Arrests ⁹	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	10	0	0	16

¹ Tabulation of trespassing began in 1999.

² Death Threats, as of 2015, include any reported or discovered "Threats of Harm."

³ This category includes incidents of Burglary, Robbery, and Theft that occurred at a reproductive health facility.

⁴ Stalking is defined as the persistent following, threatening, and harassing of an abortion provider, staff member, or patient away from the clinic. Tabulation of stalking incidents began in 1993.


⁵ Tabulation of email harassment began in 2002. As of mid-November 2015, enhanced technology allowed for an increased ability to document internet harassment.

⁶ Tabulation of hoax devices began in 2002.

⁷ NAF changed its method of collecting picketing data in 2012. Obstruction was separated into its own category.

⁸ Tabulation of Obstruction began in 2012. Obstruction is defined as the act of causing a delay or an attempt to cause a delay in the conduct of business or prevent persons from entering or exiting an area. This would apply to violations

⁹ The "number of arrests" represents the total number of arrests, not the total number of persons arrested. Many individuals were arrested multiple times.

	NAF VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTION STATISTICS (2000 - 2009)										
	INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE & DISRUPTION AGAINST ABORTION PROVIDERS										
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Totals 2000-09
Violence											
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Attempted Murder	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bombing	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Arson	2	2	1	3	2	2	0	2	0	0	14
Attempted Bombing/Arson	3	2	0	0	1	6	4	2	1	1	20
Invasion	4	2	1	0	0	0	4	7	6	1	25
Vandalism	56	58	60	48	49	83	72	59	45	40	570
Trespassing ¹	81	144	163	66	67	633	336	122	148	104	1,864
Butyric Acid Attacks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anthrax/Bioterrorism Threats	30	554	23	0	1	0	0	1	3	2	614
Assault & Battery	7	2	1	7	8	8	11	12	6	9	71
Death Threats/Threats of Harm ²	9	14	3	7	4	10	10	13	2	16	88
Kidnapping	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Burglary ³	5	6	1	9	5	11	30	12	7	12	98
Stalking ⁴	17	10	12	3	15	8	6	19	19	1	110
Totals	215	795	265	143	152	761	474	249	237	187	3,478
Disruption											
Hate Mail/Harassing Calls	1,011	404	230	432	453	515	548	522	396	1,699	6,210
Hate Email/Internet Harassment ⁵			24	70	51	77	25	38	44	16	345
Hoax Devices/Suspicious Packages ⁶			41	13	9	16	17	23	24	17	160
Bomb Threats	20	31	7	17	13	11	7	6	13	4	129
Picketing ⁷	8,478	9,969	10,241	11,348	11,640	13,415	13,505	11,113	12,503	8,388	110,600
Obstruction ⁸											
Totals	9,509	10,404	10,543	11,880	12,166	14,034	14,102	11,702	12,980	10,124	117,444
Clinic Blockades											
Number of Incidents	4	2	4	10	34	4	13	7	8	1	87
Number of Arrests ⁹	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	4

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⁹ The "number of arrests" represents the total number of arrests, not the total number of persons arrested. Many individuals were arrested multiple times.

	NAF VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTION STATISTICS (1990 - 1999)										
	INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE & DISRUPTION AGAINST ABORTION PROVIDERS										
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Totals 1990-99
Violence											
Murder	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	2	0	7
Attempted Murder	0	2	0	1	8	1	1	2	1	0	16
Bombing	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	6	1	1	15
Arson	10	8	19	12	11	14	3	8	4	7	96
Attempted Bombing/Arson	3	1	13	7	3	1	4	2	5	0	39
Invasion	19	29	26	24	2	4	0	7	5	1	117
Vandalism	26	44	116	113	42	31	29	105	46	23	575
Trespassing ¹										193	193
Butyric Acid Attacks	0	0	57	15	8	0	1	0	19	0	100
Anthrax/Bioterrorism Threats	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	35	47
Assault & Battery	6	6	9	9	7	2	1	9	4	0	53
Death Threats/Threats of Harm ²	7	3	8	78	59	41	13	11	25	2	247
Kidnapping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Burglary ³	2	1	5	3	3	3	6	6	6	0	35
Stalking ⁴				188	22	61	52	67	13	1	404
Totals	15	10	22	278	91	107	72	93	49	3	1,945
Disruption											
Hate Mail/Harassing Calls	21	142	469	628	381	255	605	2,829	915	82	6,327
Hate Email/Internet Harassment ⁵											
Hoax Devices/Suspicious Packages ⁶											
Bomb Threats	11	15	12	22	14	41	13	79	31	7	245
Picketing ⁷	45	292	2,898	2,279	1,407	1,356	3,932	7,518	8,402	1,808	29,937
Obstruction ⁸											
Totals	77	449	3,379	2,929	1,802	1,652	4,550	10,426	9,348	1,897	36,509
Clinic Blockades											
Number of Incidents	34	41	83	66	25	5	7	25	2	1	289
Number of Arrests ⁹	1,363	3,885	2,580	1,236	217	54	65	29	16	2	9,447

¹ Tabulation of trespassing began in 1999.

² Death Threats, as of 2015, include any reported or discovered "Threats of Harm."

³ This category includes incidents of Burglary, Robbery, and Theft that occurred at a reproductive health facility.

⁴ Stalking is defined as the persistent following, threatening, and harassing of an abortion provider, staff member, or patient away from the clinic. Tabulation of stalking incidents began in 1993.


⁵ Tabulation of email harassment began in 2002. As of mid-November 2015, enhanced technology allowed for an increased ability to document internet harassment.

⁶ Tabulation of hoax devices began in 2002.

⁷ NAF changed its method of collecting picketing data in 2012. Obstruction was separated into its own category.

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⁹ The "number of arrests" represents the total number of arrests, not the total number of persons arrested. Many individuals were arrested multiple times.

	NAF VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTION STATISTICS (Summary by Decade)				
	INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE & DISRUPTION AGAINST ABORTION PROVIDERS				
	1977 to 89	1990 to 99	2000 to 09	2010 to 19	Totals
Violence					
Murder	0	7	1	3	11
Attempted Murder	0	16	1	9	26
Bombing	25	15	1	1	42
Arson	64	96	14	15	189
Attempted Bombing/Arson	37	39	20	4	100
Invasion	247	117	25	60	449
Vandalism	244	575	570	541	1,930
Trespassing ¹		193	1,864	4,333	6,390
Butyric Acid Attacks	0	100	0	0	100
Anthrax/Bioterrorism Threats	0	47	614	2	663
Assault & Battery	58	53	71	132	314
Death Threats/Threats of Harm ²	70	247	88	351	756
Kidnapping	2	1	1	0	4
Burglary ³	20	35	98	158	311
Stalking ⁴		404	110	106	620
Totals	767	1,945	3,478	5,715	11,905
Disruption					
Hate Mail/Harassing Calls	192	6,327	6,210	8,917	21,646
Hate Email/Internet Harassment ⁵			345	128,237	128,582
Hoax Devices/Suspicious Packages ⁶			160	128	288
Bomb Threats	237	245	129	51	662
Picketing ⁷	847	29,937	110,600	411,837	553,221
Obstruction ⁸				9,677	9,677
Totals	1,276	36,509	117,444	558,847	714,076
Clinic Blockades					
Number of Incidents	385	289	87	290	1,051
Number of Arrests ⁹	24,380	9,447	4	16	33,847

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