



Louisville Metro Councilmembers,

Planned Parenthood health centers provide a full range of reproductive health care services, including abortion, to people across the country seeking affordable, high quality care. Unfortunately, Planned Parenthood staff are regularly confronted with the harassment of patients and staff outside of their health centers, including people blocking entrances, exits, and driveways, as well as yelling at, touching, and shoving those seeking health care. The National Abortion Federation (NAF), of which many Planned Parenthood affiliates are members, reported that incidents of obstruction of health care facilities increased from 3,038 in 2018 to 3,387 in 2019, which is the highest number since NAF began tracking it as its own category in 2012. No one should ever be physically obstructed or blocked from entering or exiting a health care facility. Recent years have also seen more incidents of violence, with devastating effects: in November 2015, three people were murdered and nine injured when Robert Dear brought an assault-style rifle to a Planned Parenthood health center in Colorado Springs and opened fire.

As a health care provider in Kentucky, we believe the Louisville Safety Zone is necessary to allow patients in this city to safely enter and exit a health care facility and receive the care they need. Based on the specific problems that regularly occur outside the EMW Women's Surgical Center, we believe that this narrow zone around the entrance of the facility, as well as the prohibition on blocking the driveway, is a necessary and important step to allow patients to enter and exit the facility safely. This ordinance will not only give health care facilities and law enforcement a useful tool in protecting patients outside EMW, but will also provide a narrow solution for other health care facilities that find themselves in a similar position in the future.

The American Medical Association has expressed support for the right of access to medical care and opposes "violence directed against medical facilities, including abortion clinics and family planning centers as an infringement of the individual's right of access to the services of such centers."<sup>1</sup> We urge the council to take action to safeguard the right to access safe and legal health care in this city.

Tamarra Wieder  
Kentucky State Director  
Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates - Kentucky  
842 S 7th Street, Louisville KY 40203

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<sup>1</sup> Am. Med. Ass'n, Res. 82, I-84, *Violence Against Medical Facilities and Health Care Practitioners and Their Families H-5.997* (reaff'd 2019)