

January 2026

Dear Friends and Supporters,

On December 17, I commented to some of our supporters that SLI's original motivation was to protect religious freedom including religious speech. There were many and varied cases in those days. A particular note then as now are those where Christians exercise their First Amendment rights to attempt conversations with persons who are entering abortion clinics. We said that "[I]n 1994, Congress passed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act ("FACE"). This was a national law which prohibited demonstrations around abortion clinics. It grew initially out of the Operation Rescue demonstrations, many of which occurred in Birmingham and resulted in many of our friends being arrested. Federal court actions followed alleging violations of federal law by these persons, including the racketeering laws known as RICO. We defended those individuals up to and including FACE prosecutions. In the end, however, we prevailed. Across the country, the rights of individuals that demonstrate outside of abortion clinics was established. It is still a problem in some jurisdictions, where there are abortion clinics."

Right after those comments, on December 20, 2025, was a report that a lady was arrested outside a San Francisco abortion clinic for passing out prolife pamphlets. She was arrested under the federal FACE law. California had its own version of the FACE law. These arrests are usually based on the uncorroborated testimony of clinic personnel.

All of that leaves us with the need to protect our First Amendment rights of religion and speech to speak out on issues we find important. The Sanctity of Life is one of the most important issues that individuals may speak to, including from both sides of the issue. However, the FACE laws do not burden the speech of pro-abortion advocates.

Abortion will continue being an issue. This month's Educational Update discusses what has happened in Alabama since the Alabama Human Life Protection Act went into effect. We will continue to provide free legal services to those on the street, in the Legislature, and others who speak out on such important issues. Thank you for your continued support. With best wishes for the New Year,

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston

AEJ/pkh