News



Pictured in an undated photo are Red Rose Rescuers left to right: Monica M. Miller, Eric Holmberg, Will Goodman, ChristyAnne Collins and Patrice Woodworth-Crandall. Not pictured is Joan Bell, who had not yet bonded out of jail. On Jan. 23, 2025, Bell, 77, of Montague City, N.J., and Goodman, 55, originally from Madison, Wis., but homeless since 2017, had been pardoned by President Donald Trump for violating the Free Access to Clinic Entrances, or FACE, Act, for their participation in clinic blockades known as "rescues." (OSV News/Red Rose Rescuers)

Kurt Jensen

View Author Profile



OSV News

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

UPLAND, Pa. — August 20, 2025

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Six pro-life activists, a majority of them Catholics including two recently pardoned by President Donald Trump, are now facing state charges for a July 31 Red Rose Rescue abortion clinic "rescue" in Upland, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, that temporarily disrupted its activities.

The protest took place at the Delaware County Women's Center in the Crozer Chester Medical Center.

The facility does not perform surgical abortions, but provides first trimester medication-based abortions using mifepristone and misoprostol. The two drug-regimen is commonly used in first trimester abortions, as well as some early miscarriage protocols.

Abortion is legal in Pennsylvania up through the 23rd week of an unborn baby's gestation.

On Aug 14, an arraignment hearing scheduled for magisterial district court in Brookhaven, Pennsylvania, was postponed until Aug. 21.

Among the six defendants are Joan Andrews Bell, 77, of Montague, New Jersey, and William Goodman, 55, originally from Madison, Wisconsin. Both Bell and Goodman had been pardoned by Trump for their convictions under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, or FACE Act, for their participation in clinic blockades known as "rescues."

They and four others face charges of biosecurity trespassing — entering a medical treatment area without adhering to biosecurity procedures — and disorderly trespassing. Both are misdemeanors and could bring jail terms of up to one year as well as fines.

Also charged were Christy Anne Collins, 70, of Texas City, Texas, who was well-known in the Washington area in the '80s and '90s for her participation in clinic protests; Monica Miller, 72, of South Lyon, Michigan, who heads Citizens for a Pro-Life Society, a group affiliated with the Red Rose Rescues; Patrice Woodworth-Crandall, 61, of Winona, Minnesota; and William Holmberg, 71, of Steubenville, Ohio.

All the defendants are Catholic, except Collins, who is evangelical. Magistrate court records accessed by OSV News show all six posted bail at $20,000 each. In an email to supporters sent Aug. 7, Miller said $2,000 was raised per rescuer for their bail.

The Upland borough police report described a chaotic, but nonviolent, afternoon on July 31.

According to the report by the arresting officer, a security guard at the Crozer Center told police there were two people in the elevator refusing to leave the property. One of the people was identified as Collins. In the building's second elevator, the report said, were Bell and Holmberg. The officer's report stated Holmberg told him that "they were there to aid women in different opportunities other than abortion."

When the officer "attempted to explain to all parties that while I understand they are there to help people," Collins he wrote, "interrupted me stating that I should go speak to the women upstairs and explain that they are committing murder. I replied by informing her that abortions are legal here, and entirely the women's choice. Furthermore, I would not be going upstairs and speaking with anyone."

A nurse had set off the fire alarm in an attempt to get the protesters to leave, but they refused.
Upstairs, police found Miller, Woodworth-Crandall and Goodman.

According to the arresting officer's report, "They were allegedly there with a young female who came in for an appointment. The young female checked in and three protesters all checked in with her. The young female stated she had to make a phone call, left the room and never came back."

Advertisement

The report then relayed that the trio "then began pouring an unknown liquid and salt-like substance" (which they identified as holy water and holy, or blessed, salt) all over the floor, and informed a staff member that they would "rather burn in hell than leave."

The arresting officer then described how after refusing a lawful order to leave or face arrest, "all 3 protesters began to kneel or lay on the floor" before being physically removed from the premises.

A similar scene played out with the remaining rescuers who laid themselves down and acted as dead weight. Holmberg was placed into a patrol vehicle, while Collins and Bell were taken out in wheelchairs before being placed into a different patrol vehicle.

In her account of the day sent by email Aug. 7 to Citizens for a Pro-Life Society supporters, Miller wrote that the rescuers were "arrested while peacefully offering roses and resources to mothers."

She also wrote that they "peacefully offered words of support and alternatives to abortion as well as information on abortion pill reversal," which refers to the attempt to stop a medication-based abortion with progesterone after a woman has taken the first dose of mifepristone.

According to Miller, "About 90 minutes into the rescue, the staff announced that they were 'closing the clinic for the day,' and all abortion appointments for the eight women who had arrived to kill their unborn children were canceled."

Miller said that because the parking-lot location of the center made sidewalk interventions impossible, "thus only by entering the building itself could the women scheduled for abortion be reached."

The Catholic Church opposes abortion because it holds that all human life is sacred from conception to natural death. The church also has a tradition of nonviolent advocacy to give witness to the truth, while making clear that all advocacy for justice must make use of only moral means, with St. John Paul II teaching in his 1993 encyclical, Veritatis Splendor, that a person cannot "intend directly something which

of its very nature contradicts the moral order ... even though the intention is to protect or promote the welfare of an individual, of a family or of society in general."

Red Rose Rescue was founded in June 2017, with its first clinic intervention held that September.

Although the FACE Act is still on the books, on Jan. 24 the Justice Department ordered federal prosecutors to cease enforcement of that law barring "extraordinary circumstances" or in cases presenting "significant aggravating factors."

A bill to repeal the act, sponsored by Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, was voted out of the House Judiciary Committee June 10.