

EDUCATION FAITH FRONT PAGE HEALTH POLITICS U.S.

# School accused of 'trying to hide death trap'

## Suing protester of abortion clinic adjacent to campus



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A charter school is in court "trying to hide" a "death trap" abortion business located between two of the school's buildings, according to Liberty Counsel chairman Mat Staver.

The Two Rivers Public Charter School in Washington, D.C., sued Liberty Counsel client Larry Cirignano for protesting the Planned Parenthood business,

which is located between the elementary school and the middle school.

Since 2015, Cirignano has been peacefully protesting the abortion business, remaining on a public sidewalk.

"It is shocking that a school entrusted with the care of young children would welcome and fight for a Planned Parenthood abortion facility to be located between its elementary and middle schools," said Staver.

"Instead of acknowledging the death that is perpetrated by the abortion center sandwiched by school buildings, the school is attempting to silence the courageous advocates trying to protect children and women. Every school day, innocent children walk by this facility where babies are killed. School officials should be ashamed for trying to hide this death trap from parents and the public," he said.

Staver's comments came as Liberty Counsel filed a reply brief in its appeal seeking dismissal of the lawsuit against Cirignano.

The school has claimed that the protests of Cirignano and others on the public sidewalk have imposed on the students "emotional distress" and caused a "nuisance" to the school.

"Cirignano, however, has only stood on the sidewalk peacefully holding a sign, and has never trespassed on school property or otherwise broken any laws," Liberty Counsel said.

The brief contains a list of the school's failures to meet judicial requirements in the case.

For example, the school previously argued it was claiming damages to its students but now is claiming damage to the school itself.

That is "fatal" to its contentions on appeal, the brief argues.

"Because it failed to allege injury to itself, Two Rivers has failed to establish the irreducible constitutional minimum of standing," the brief says.

The school also cannot argue that it has "members" who were injured, contends Liberty Counsel.

Cirignano's sign focused on "a broad issue of public interest" and was protected speech, the brief argues.

WND reported Liberty Counsel had asked for a dismissal based on the local Anti-SLAPP law, which stands for Strategic Lawsuit against Public Participation. The law is intended to limit lawsuits major players may bring against individuals who exercise their constitutional right to express their opinion.

Liberty Counsel is appealing a lower court's decision not to dismiss the case.

"The upshot of Two Rivers' scant mention of Cirignano in its complaint is that Cirignano stood on a public sidewalk, peacefully holding a sign, on one single

occasion," the court filing explains.

"Cirignano is not alleged to have ever spoken a single word to a single individual at Two Rivers. Cirignano is not alleged to have approached a single individual at Two Rivers. Cirignano is not alleged to have even opened his mouth at Two Rivers," Liberty Counsel argues.

He simply was expressing his own beliefs and was not there as part of any "agreement" with anyone else.

The filing explains he never trespassed or broke any other law, and even school officials are not claiming that he did.

"Two Rivers' attempts to circumscribe all speech in the traditional public forum around its location to 'that which would be suitable for the sandbox' is a constitutionally defunct proposition," the filing asserts.