



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on January 12, 2011

Arizona Enacts “Funeral Protection Zone”

Phelps has found his way into the news before, frequently [picketing with members of his congregation at events such as funerals](#), pro-homosexual gatherings, and other high-profile events. Thus it was no surprise when the pastor posted a YouTube video saying, “Thank God for the shooter,” in response to the Tucson tragedy. Only last month the group picketed the funeral of Elizabeth Edwards.



Prior to passage of the bill, State Senator Paula Aboud (D-Tucson) said, “They want to protest at the gravesite of a 9-year-old girl, and we want to stop him [Phelps].”

The new Arizona law is patterned after an Ohio law establishing a 300-foot protection zone around a funeral location for one hour before and after an event. Arizona state lawmakers incorporated an emergency clause into the legislation, which required a three-fourths majority vote, so that the legislation could go into effect in time for services beginning this week. Nine-year-old Christina Green will be remembered on Thursday.

Prior to enactment of the new law, Tucson citizens had already begun private efforts to prevent Phelps from dishonoring the memories of the shooting victims. Grassroots efforts popped up on Facebook calling on residents to intervene. They were planning to form a human barricade to provide as much of a buffer as possible between grieving families and Phelps and his picketers. According to NYDailyNews.com, dozens of people were planning to wear large 8- to 10-foot [angel wings](#) to block WBC protestors from view at the funeral.

[Bikers and other groups were also organizing](#) to prevent the WBC from disturbing the families, as reported by BlogForArizona.com:

Glen Littell is bringing a pack of bikers from the Phoenix Motorcycle Rider Group to Tucson on Thursday. Littell said his riders are not looking for any violent confrontations. But he told FoxNews.com that Arizona bikers are going to do “whatever we have to do” to cordon off the family from the protests. A group called the Patriot Guard Riders often does this when the Westboro church pickets military funerals, but Littell said that group is not traveling to Tucson, so “we’re stepping in.” Littell has notified the Pima County Sheriff’s Department and has reached out to several other biker groups notifying them of their planned presence at Green’s funeral.

Photo of Gov. Jan Brewer: AP Images

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