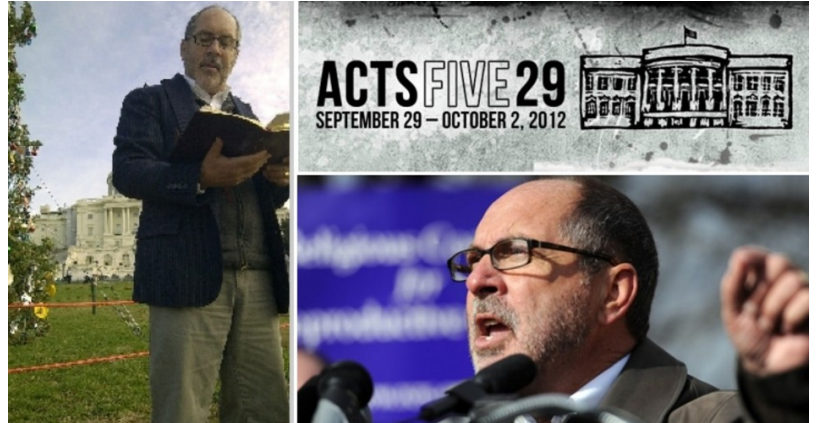




Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 3, 2012

Praying Pro-Lifers Arrested Outside of White House

Over 60 pro-life activists were arrested during a three-day period, September 29 through October 1, as they knelt and prayed on what is considered restricted space outside the White House. The event, organized in part by the Rev. Patrick Mahoney (pictured at right) of the [Christian Defense Coalition](#), was meant as a protest of the Obama administration's contraception mandate, which would "force institutions, churches and individuals to purchase abortion-inducing drugs and pay for sterilization and abortion in direct opposition to their beliefs, conscience and historic teachings of the Church," read a statement issued by the group. The statement added that "with the recent Supreme Court ruling affirming Obamacare, the future of religious freedom in America is at risk and in grave danger of being entirely wiped out."



Mahoney told [LifeSiteNews.com](#) that in the mandate, orchestrated by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), "we see the greatest assault on religious freedom in the history of our nation... We sensed there had to be a response from the church."

Bryan Kemper of [Stand True Pro-life Outreach](#) told LifeSiteNews that those arrested had intentionally broken an ordinance that allows protesters to carry signs while walking in front of the White House, but prohibits them from stationary actions such as kneeling to pray. Kemper explained that they broke the law to draw attention to the Obama administration's assault on religious liberty through the HHS mandate. Kemper, who was arrested on at least two occasions during the protest, said that "I was here because I want my children to grow up in a country I love and be able to practice their faith, be able to have their religious freedom. And if I'm not willing to stand up for my own children, no one else is going to."

The event was part of an ongoing initiative organized by a group called [ActsFive29](#) (event banner pictured above), which gets its name from the Scripture in which the Apostle Peter responds to the Jerusalem authorities who forbade him to preach the gospel: "We ought to obey God rather than men." On Sunday, September 30, the group held a Religious Freedom Rally, where hundreds of supporters listened to such pro-life and pro-family leaders as Father Frank Pavone of Priests for Life, Kristan Hawkins of Students for Life, and Lila Rose of Live Action.

"For the faith community, we can never be silent or indifferent when it comes to matters of justice, human rights, and religious freedom," Mahoney said. "As people of principle and faith, we must purpose in our hearts that we will never comply with an unjust or immoral government mandate which would require us to violate our conscience, the teachings of the Scriptures, and the historic teachings of the Church."



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He added that “we want to make it clear to President Obama and all public officials that we would rather spend time in jail than to be forced into complying with a mandate that crushes religious freedom.”

Among those arrested during the weekend protest were members of a group called [Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust](#), which engages high school and college students for pro-life activism. “Kristina Garza, campus outreach director for Survivors, has been arrested all three days after traveling from California to participate,” reported [World magazine](#). “She said the HHS requirement is forcing Christians ‘to pay for things that violate our religious convictions. We believe that is absolutely wrong.’” Garza said the arrests are ‘the first step’ to sending a message to elected officials and the nation.” Mahoney told LifeSite that one of the purposes of the protest was to force a dialogue about religious liberty among churches and Christians, and his group is planning other such events across America. “How do people of faith respond when the government begins to encroach into the private affairs of their lives and their families and their values and their beliefs?” he asked. “We felt here from Lafayette Park this movement would begin to spread nationally, and we’re looking to do a whole series of conferences and events.”



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