



OPINION

Editorial: Beverly Hills city officials say they support abortion access. Their actions say otherwise



View of the Beverly Hills City Hall, which opened in 1932. (Mark Ralston / AFP/Getty Images)

BY THE TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD

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Battles over access to abortion are being waged across the country — but in Beverly Hills?

When a doctor planned to open a new reproductive care [clinic](#) that offered, among other services, all-trimester abortion procedures, she decided on California, a state that had

declared itself a haven for abortion providers and patients and enshrined the right to abortion into the state Constitution.

The doctor, who asked that her name not be used for safety reasons, found a spot in a medical office building on Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills for the West Coast location of the DuPont Clinic in Washington. The doctor says she made clear the scope of the practice to city officials and the property owner, [Douglas Emmett Inc.](#), a real estate investment trust company.



CALIFORNIA

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April 11, 2023

The landlord was welcoming, she says. And so were city officials with whom she discussed permits and plans for the extensive work on creating new offices in the 4,000-square-foot space, which began in early April. And why wouldn't they be? The Beverly Hills City Council had already unanimously passed a resolution supporting the right to an abortion.

"I feel very strongly that we have stood up and spoken out when we've seen human rights taken away," Councilmember Lili Bosse — who was serving as mayor at the time — said in the [statement](#) announcing the passage of the resolution in May 2022.

But when protesters started demonstrating outside the office building where the clinic planned to locate and showing up at council meetings to demand that it be stopped, not a single council member stood up for the clinic or issued a public statement of support.



OPINION

Editorial: Beverly Hills is chopping down ficus trees — and replacing them with palms? Bad idea

Feb. 17, 2023

Worse, the city attorney temporarily held up the clinic's permits and asked for a document from the clinic's operators pledging that they wouldn't break California abortion laws. Clinic officials refused, arguing that no medical office would be asked to supply such a statement.

In May, the city's police chief sent a scare-tactic letter to the landlord, addressed to the tenants, warning of possible violence and vandalism at the building and intimidation of staff and patients in other practices. After that, the landlord rescinded the lease, saying the clinic's presence "will result in a breach of the peace." Now, the clinic is out millions of dollars spent on renovations and architectural plans, and is suing Emmett for breach of contract and says it intends to sue the city for interfering with the lease.

This is appalling. The leaders of Beverly Hills say they support the right to abortion — but this case shows they will do little or nothing if people complain. The city has endured plenty of street demonstrations. The city has had animal welfare protests outside stores that sell furs. Hundreds of Trump supporters [rallied](#) weekly before the November 2020 elections in Beverly Gardens Park near shops and restaurants — and after to protest the election results. (The city went for Joe Biden.) Surely, city officials could figure out how to handle abortion protesters.



OPINION

Opinion: The abortion pill faces its most disturbing attack yet

Aug. 22, 2023

In this case, the abortion protesters think they handled the city. Tim Clement, the outreach director of the antiabortion group Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust, which organized the protests, requested and got a meeting with the mayor and other city officials. The next day he received an email from the deputy city manager confirming that a lawyer for the landlord had notified the city that the clinic's lease had been rescinded. Clement described it as "an agreement" that the antiabortion group had made with the city.

City officials claim they did nothing wrong and did not capitulate to, or make an agreement with, antiabortion activists.

But neither did they help support a new business in their city, and one that is as necessary as it is controversial.

In Washington, where there are no restrictions on abortion, the DuPont Clinic offers abortions up to 31 weeks and six days for any reason. In California, abortion is legal for any reason up to viability — about 24 weeks — and allowed after that point only if the pregnant person's health is in danger. The DuPont clinic's doctor is well aware of that law and said she had no intention of breaking it.

The cases at the D.C. clinic involve pregnancies in which the fetus has received a grim diagnosis or in which the mother-to-be has cancer or some other crisis. And because it is one of only a handful of clinics in the country that offer abortions later in pregnancy, people often have to wait as long as four weeks for an appointment. There is only one clinic in L.A. County that offers abortions up to 26.6 weeks and beyond that on a case-by-case basis. When the DuPont Clinic doctor first started looking for office space in the L.A. area, she was turned down by some property owners who did not want her facility in their buildings.

Maybe it was unsettling for city officials and real estate executives to see abortion opponents protesting on Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills. That's what antiabortion activists do — they try to rattle city officials and property owners.

This seems to have worked in Beverly Hills, where city officials got so rattled they became hypocrites. Supporting the right to abortion means standing up to those trying to destroy reproductive rights, whether they are politicians or protesters.

The Times Editorial Board

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