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### “We ought to stand with him”

*African-American pro-life leaders across U.S. on their way to Oakland to support beleaguered pastor facing jail time for trying to save babies from abortion*

Leaders of the Black pro-life movement from across the U.S. have announced they will be traveling to Oakland for tomorrow’s scheduled sentencing hearing for Rev. Walter Hoye, the pro-life Baptist pastor from Berkeley who faces up to two years in jail and \$4000 in fines following his conviction on two counts of “unlawful approach” in violation of Oakland’s restrictive new ‘bubble law.’



Rev. Johnny Hunter, president of Life Education And Resources Network, is among Black pastors who say they will travel to Oakland to support Rev. Walter Hoye.

Hoye had initially been charged with four counts of violating the ordinance – two counts of “unlawful approach” and two counts of using “force, threat of force or physical obstruction” against ‘escorts’ at Family Planning Specialists Clinic in Oakland. The charges stemmed from two separate incidents – one on April 29, 2008 and one on May 13, 2008. Hoye was arrested on May 13 after a clinic staff member called police. He was carrying a 40-inch sign that read, “Jesus Loves You & Your Baby. Let Us Help You,” and attempting to hand out pro-life literature.

A regular fixture at the clinic and an outspoken opponent of the “bubble law,” Hoye had challenged the constitutionality of the ordinance in a federal lawsuit pre-dating his arrest. He had become a top target for the clinic staff.

Alameda Superior Court Judge Stuart Hing dismissed one count of using “force, threat of force or physical obstruction” before the trial got under way on Jan. 5. After deliberating for about two days, the jury found Hoye guilty on Jan. 15 of two counts of “unlawful approach,” but not guilty on the remaining “threat of force” count.

Hoye is scheduled to appear for sentencing tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. before Judge Hing in Department 109 (5th Floor), 661 Washington St., in Oakland.

“We’re coming here because Black pastors and bishops around this country are just learning of Walter’s fate and to silence the Gospel is unacceptable,” said Rev. Johnny Hunter, president of Life Education And Resources Network (LEARN), a prominent African American pro-family, pro-life organization with members in 27 states. “It violates the freedom of speech of every Christian in this nation.”

“We see brother Hoye standing for life and we ought to stand with him,” said Dr. Levon Yuille of Ypsilanti, Mich., president of the National Black Pro-Life Congress.

More than a third (37 percent) of pregnancies for black women ended in abortion, compared with 12 percent for non-Hispanic white women and 19 percent for Hispanic women in 2004, according to an April 14, 2008 report by the National Center for Health Statistics, a division of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2004, 453,000 black babies were aborted while 418,000 white and 269,000 Hispanic babies were aborted, according to the federal report.

“This is a deliberate attempt to silence the Church and its prophetic role in protecting the innocent lives in our community and especially Black babies,” said Pastor Stephen Broden of Dallas, Texas. “Pastor Hoye represents a legacy of resistance by Black preachers to injustices perpetrated on the beloved community. Prenatal murder of

Black babies by the abortion industry should be resisted by every black pastor across this country."

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