

# Satanic Temple abortion battle may become class action, lawyer says

---

Lawyers argue Satanic convictions of ‘Mary Doe’ exempt her from Missouri abortion restrictions

May 13, 2015 4:00PM ET

by **Massoud Hayoun** (</profiles/h/massoud-hayoun.html>) -

---

The Satanic Temple’s bid to allow a Missouri follower to circumvent state laws restricting abortion may soon become a class-action lawsuit, the woman’s legal counsel said Wednesday.

Court documents filed Monday and obtained by Al Jazeera argue that, as a Satanist, a woman referred to as “Mary Doe” should not have to undergo the state’s mandatory 72-hour wait period, be offered an ultrasound to listen to a potential heartbeat and receive requisite informational materials that her attorneys say are designed to dissuade her from the procedure.

The Satanic Temple, an organization that has long sought to bolster the separation between church and state — most notably through an ongoing bid (<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/5/2/satanist-monument.html>) to place a Satanic monument next to the Ten Commandments statue on the Oklahoma state Capitol lawn — hopes to “leverage” Missouri’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act, said Temple spokesman Lucien Greaves, who is also known by his legal name, Doug Mesner.

The documents say Missouri’s abortion restrictions contravene the group’s religious tenets, which hold “her body is inviolable and subject to her will alone” and that “she makes any decision regarding her health based on the best scientific understanding of the world.”

Attorneys are waiting for a court date when the state and Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon will have to argue either against the sincerity of Doe’s religious convictions or her exemption from state law, said W. James Mac Naughton, one of Doe’s attorneys.

Nixon's office did not respond to an interview request by time of publication.

Doe may not be the only plaintiff. Her complaint "lends itself to a class-action-type claim," Mac Naughton said. Although other women may not identify with Doe's professed religious convictions, "Mary Doe is not alone in her beliefs."

"What's my class?" he said of potential co-filers. "Women situated closely to Mary Doe. Who are they? Mary Doe 1, Mary Doe 2, Mary Doe 3, Mary Doe 4."

He is looking into other circumstances where class-action lawsuits have been filed on behalf of entirely anonymous clients. Doe and whoever she ends up filing with would remain anonymous for safety reasons, he said, noting "physicians have been shot by people on the other side of the debate on whether the fetus is just tissue or an unborn child."

In May 2009, abortion doctor George Tiller, was shot to death ([http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/01/us/01tiller.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/01/us/01tiller.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)) at age 67 in a Kansas church. It was the second time an opponent had shot him, and he had also survived the bombing of his clinic.

Mary Doe reportedly entered the St. Louis Planned Parenthood facility late last week to submit a letter from the Satanic Temple arguing against the mandatory information and wait time. Greaves said he would not reveal the exact timing of Doe's trips to the clinic, out of respect for her safety. Mac Naughton said Doe is not giving interviews.