

PA REP. SIMS APOLOGIZES

Last spring, we called for the censure of Brian Sims, a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, for verbally assaulting an innocent woman. He remained defiant, refusing to apologize. But he finally relented in late October.

On May 5, totally unprovoked, Sims accosted an elderly Catholic woman who was praying the rosary outside a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Philadelphia. He badgered her for eight minutes, telling her to go pray at home. On a previous occasion he became equally aggressive with attempting to intimidate three teenage girls who were protesting abortion outside the clinic. He is known for his vicious anti-Catholic rants.

Two days later we contacted every member of the state House of Representatives. After being told by the House Ethics Committee of the Pennsylvania legislature that our request to censure Sims did not meet the House Rules and Legislative Code of Conduct (it deals mostly with conflict of interest violations), we changed course. We supported a resolution by Rep. Jerry Knowles, whom we had been working with, to censure Sims for his bigotry and bullying. Sims felt the pressure mounting, and when the lawmakers returned from summer break, he switched gears.

Knowles briefed us on the outcome shortly before Sims' decision was made public. He thanked us for our support. We are grateful for his courage.

Sims got off easy. He does not belong in government. But at least he was forced to apologize.