

# Officials condemn violence, threats after high court leak on abortion case

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Biden administration officials issued a statement against violence on May 9 following protests outside the homes of two Supreme Court justices in the Washington area as well as a spate of vandalism and disruptions targeting locales of groups that oppose abortion. Some of them include Catholic churches.

Referring to U.S. President Joe Biden by the Twitter handle for President of the United States, or @POTUS, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that he “strongly believes in the Constitutional right to protest.”

“But that should never include violence, threats or vandalism. Judges perform an incredibly important function in our society, and they must be able to do their jobs without concern for their personal safety,” she tweeted.

The statement came after news agencies reported protests outside the home of Justice Brett Kavanaugh in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and the nearby home of Chief Justice John Roberts. Others said another justice and his family had to be taken to an undisclosed location because of threats, but it turned out to be unfounded.

After the online news site Politico published a report late on May 2 from a leaked draft opinion signaling that the majority of Supreme Court justices seem set to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the decision legalizing abortion, those opposed to having it overturned have taken to the streets to protest. But vandalism showing discontent with the potential ruling also seems to be on the rise.

The New York Times reported on May 7 that part of the wall of the headquarters of Wisconsin Family Action, in Madison, was set on fire, leaving behind graffiti that read: "If abortions aren't safe then you aren't either."

Madison Bishop Donald J. Hying, in a May 9 statement, called the vandalism, "a brazen act of violence, which all citizens should condemn, as an attack on the respect and concern we owe to each other in seeking the common good."

Officials from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' religious liberty office said they documented nine similar incidents on the weekend after the leak, stretching from New York to Los Angeles.

Most were disruptions or destruction of property such as the one reported by The Denver Channel in Colorado, an ABC affiliate, where Sacred Heart of Mary Church staff, in Boulder, removed graffiti, paint, and broken glass over Mother's Day weekend.

Though the leaked draft is not final, Chief Justice Roberts confirmed its authenticity and has called for an investigation. The draft, according to the Politico report, shows five justices' alignment against *Roe v. Wade* – enough to overturn it. The court's final decision could be announced in the next two months.