



# ZACH KLEIN

COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

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## City Attorney Zach Klein Announces Nuisance Lawsuit Against Local Nonprofit, Sanctuary Night, for Repeated Criminal Activity, Drug Use, and Overdoses On-Site

*Says organization cannot continue to slow-roll changes to mitigate criminal and nuisance activity that threatens public health and safety*

**COLUMBUS, OH**— Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced that his Property Action Team filed a lawsuit against Sanctuary Night, a local nonprofit organization that in recent years has become a nuisance to its neighbors in Franklinton, attracting criminal activity, open drug use, and prostitution at all hours, which has endangered clients and disrupted the quality of life for area residents and families. Columbus Police have received more than 230 calls for service to the property from June 2022 to January 2025. The center serves as a drop-in facility focused on drug-use harm reduction and other social services for women experiencing exploitation.

**“Social service organizations are critical to getting vulnerable people back on their feet, but that work needs to be done responsibly,”** said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **“Neighbors are rightly upset by the drugs, overdoses and criminal activity emanating from Sanctuary Night, and I instructed my team to move forward with a lawsuit to hold them accountable, protect public safety and truly benefit the women who are seeking help.”**

In February, Property Action Team attorneys sent Sanctuary Night a demand letter notifying them of their duty to mitigate nuisance activity and to file an order with the Court outlining an agreed upon plan of action or face a lawsuit from the City. Several months later, Sanctuary Night has not agreed to an order.

The City’s lawsuit details the long history of criminal and nuisance activity at the premises, which began shortly after the facility opened in 2022. Upon opening, the 1,800 square foot facility quickly became overwhelmed with the sheer number of clients seeking services at the facility, which left large groups to gather outside the building, with some individuals engaging in open drug use and other nuisance activity.

Shortly after foot traffic and loitering increased at the property, several neighbors reported increased porch-pirate thefts, individuals using the property's exterior water spigot to bathe, others openly urinating and defecating in the area, and various individuals engaging in apparent sex work at and around the property. In early 2025, police surveilled the area and witnessed vehicle traffic consistent with prostitution activity immediately in front of the facility after it had closed for the night.

In addition, a Sanctuary Night staff member informed a Columbus Police officer that the facility tolerated on-site drug use—a violation of state and city laws. In fact, one client of Sanctuary Night spoke with a CPD officer shortly after leaving the facility, stating that staff let clients “do whatever they want” while inside the facility, including engaging in drug use.

From June 2022 to December 2024, the Columbus Division of Fire responded to 40 suspected substance-abuse events at Sanctuary Night, and Fire personnel had to administer naloxone to those overdosing on a number of occasions. This number includes 16 overdoses, the most recent occurring in December 2024.

**“Concerned neighbors and the vulnerable women who rely on Sanctuary Night deserve better than the crime and unsafe conditions at this property. That’s why the City demanded Sanctuary Night take swift action to file an order with the court outlining safety and security enhancement—or face a lawsuit,”** said Property Action Team Attorney Rob Doersam. **“Sanctuary Night has been unable to deliver a final agreed upon order at this time, so the City is moving forward with filing today.”**