



Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on March 15, 2011

Leftist Republicans Declare Support for Planned Parenthood

One of the most positive developments for social conservatives to come out of the Republican victory in the 2010 midterm elections is an increase in the number of pro-life members of Congress.

More Americans, in general, and more Republicans and Independents (the fastest-growing voter demographic that has confirmed its tendency to support Republicans) are considering themselves pro-life, and the victory of socially-conservative Republicans in GOP primaries last year confirms what has been a longstanding political truth since the realignment of the 1960s — the fact that the Republican Party is generally a pro-life party, affirming its stance on the sanctity of life in the Republican platforms of 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, and 2000.



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More importantly, the pro-life constituency has been a major, even decisive, factor in the unprecedented growth of the Republican Party in the 1980s and 1990s. Dozens of Republicans in Congress were elected only because they were steadfast in their pro-life position, according to the [Republican National Coalition for Life](#).

The new reality is that slightly more Americans call themselves “pro-life” than “pro-choice,” 47 percent vs. 45 percent, according to a May 3-6 [Gallup poll](#). This is nearly identical to the 47 percent to 46 percent division found last July following a more strongly pro-life advantage of 51 percent to 42 percent last May. According to two-year averages of these results since 2001, Republicans have become more likely to call themselves pro-life since polling conducted in 2003/2004, as have Republican-leaning Independents since 2005/2006. Independents who lean to neither party also became more likely to call themselves “pro-life” between 2003/2004 and 2005/2006, but have since held steady.

Democrats’ self-identification with the pro-life position has moved in the other direction, declining from 37 percent in 2003/2004 to 31 percent in 2009/2010. Among independents who lean Democratic, there has been no movement in either direction. In addition, the group Democrats For Life of America, the nation’s largest pro-life Democratic organization, has diminished in influence, as the number of pro-life Democratic elected officials has steadily decreased- Pro-life Democrats in the South and the West lost in large numbers to pro-life Tea Party Republicans. An indication of this trend is the fact that at this year’s March for Life, only one Democratic congressman — [Rep. Dan Lipinski](#) (D-Ill.) — addressed the pro-life crowd.



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In spite of these trends, there is nonetheless a small but committed group of “pro-choice” (pro-abortion) Republicans in Congress and in the electorate. These Republicans are a holdout from the era in which the Republican Party was associated with socially-liberal policies, representing a cross-section of moderate and libertarian Republicans, including former Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, former New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, former Congresswoman Connie Morella of Maryland, and former Congressman Sherwood Boehlert of New York. Present-day Republicans such as Rudy Giuliani, David Petraeus, and Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins of Maine are a continuation of this tradition, and are a testament to the historical truth that the “pro-choice” cause has often been championed by Republicans.

For instance, it was then-Governor Ronald Reagan who signed into law California’s legalization of abortion, and it was Republican President Richard Nixon who once infamously said on a released tape that “sometimes abortion is necessary, like when you have rape or a black and a white.” The Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, which allowed abortion-on-demand, became law in 1973, under Nixon’s presidency, and was largely unchallenged by the Nixon Justice Department. And while a fiscal and foreign-policy conservative, one cannot forget Sen. Barry Goldwater’s quip that “all good Christians should kick (pro-life leader) Jerry Falwell in the a**.”

The latest battle in the struggle for the sanctity of life is the Republican-led effort to defund Planned Parenthood and Title X funding for the family planning agency “Office of Population Affairs” of the Department for Health and Human Services. Led by Rep. Mike Pence (R-Ind.), the Pence Amendment to Title X (another program that became a reality under the Nixon White House) would cut off all federal funding for Planned Parenthood for as long as the agency provides abortions. While the bill passed the GOP-led House, it came up for a Senate vote last week, and failed in the Democratic-controlled body.

The House bill earned the support of 10 Democrats, but was opposed by seven “moderate” Republicans, whose vote in favor of federal funding of Planned Parenthood not only reveals an unconstitutional view of the proper role of the federal government (Article I, Section VIII of the Constitution does not authorize federal funding of sexual health, or any healthcare programs, for that matter), but also demonstrates their connection to a host of socially- and fiscally-liberal causes.

Pro-Life Democrats, Pro-Choice Republicans

The following socially-conservative and moderate-leaning Democrats voted in favor of defunding Planned Parenthood:

- Rep. Heath Shuler (D-N.C.)
- Rep. Dan Boren (D-Okla.)
- Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-Ill.)
- Rep. Jerry Costello (D-Ill.)
- Rep. Mike McIntyre (D-N.C.)
- Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.)
- Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.)
- Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-Texas)
- Rep. Mike Ross (D-Ark.)
- Rep. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.)

The following “moderate” Republicans, however, voted to retain Planned Parenthood funding:

- Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.)



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Rep. Richard Hanna (R-N.Y.)
Rep. Charles Bass (R-N.H.)
Rep. Mary Bono Mack (R-Calif.)
Rep. Charlie Dent (R-Pa.)
Rep. Robert Dold (R-Ill.)
Rep. Judy Biggert (R-Ill.)

In addition, Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska (pictured above — who carries a 67 percent approval rating from the pro-choice organization Family Planning Associates) has indicated her intention to vote in favor of maintaining Planned Parenthood funding. As [reported by Politico](#), she stated,

I do believe that Planned Parenthood provides vital services to those in need and disagree with its funding cuts contained in the H.R. 1 package. From 2002-2008, Planned Parenthood received \$342 million in federal taxpayer money through Title X funding alone. With these funds, Planned Parenthood has provided women throughout the U.S. with important family planning and contraceptive services as well as screening for breast and cervical cancers for low-income women. I believe it is important that Title X organizations continue to receive funding. In Alaska, this includes five centers — two health department clinics, two Planned Parenthood clinics in Sitka and Soldotna and one independent clinic.”

Sen. Murkowski is best known for her unexpected victory on Election Day as a write-in candidate (the only write-in candidate to win a Senate race since Strom Thurmond in 1954), after she had lost in the Republican primary to Tea Party favorite Joe Miller. Murkowski had always slouched toward the more “moderate” end of the Republican spectrum throughout her tenure in the Senate, but with opposition from the constitutionalist Miller — who supports repeal of the unconstitutionally-minded 14th, 16th, and 17th Amendments, the abolition of the IRS, an end to the Federal Reserve and a return to the gold standard, fiscal restraint, as well as outlawing abortion unless the life of the mother is in danger — Murkowski’s reputation as an Establishment, left-leaning Republican has been confirmed. Her support of Planned Parenthood further signifies that she represents a left-of-center ideology that lends itself well to the pro-abortion rights movement, embodied by groups such as Planned Parenthood and NARAL Pro Choice America.

In addition, Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine), another Republican described as “moderate” (see: [“Rockefeller Republican”](#)), came out last week against the House vote to defund Title X, the only federal program dedicated to reproductive health issues. “Sen. Collins is a longtime supporter of the Title X family planning program, and she believes the House’s decision to completely eliminate the funding is unwise,” Collins spokesman Kevin Kelley said. “The program has successfully reduced the number of unplanned pregnancies, therefore helping to reduce health care costs.”

This comes as no surprise. Sen. Collins is considered one of the Senate’s most liberal Republicans — she campaigned for liberal Democrat Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.), has earned little more than a rating of 50 percent on *The New American* magazine’s Freedom Index throughout her career, and is a board member of the nominally moderate, socially liberal Republican groups Republican Majority for Choice, Republican Main Street Partnership, and Republicans for Environmental Protection. Her colleague, Sen. Olympia Snowe, is another left-of-center Republican embodying similar anti-life positions, with the two frequently allying themselves with Republican-turned Democrat Senator Arlen Specter (Pa.).

It has therefore become clear that those Republicans supporting Planned Parenthood funding are



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natural allies of a socially-liberal political ethos, as indicated in Republican votes and statements supporting federal funding of family planning programs through Title X.

Related article: [Planned Parenthood Republicans: A Decades-Long History](#)



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