



Senate Fails to Pass Legislation to Defund Planned Parenthood

During a procedural vote on Monday evening, Senate Republicans failed to pass legislation that would have barred all federal funds to Planned Parenthood. The fight over Planned Parenthood's funding will now shift to a government funding measure this fall, CNN reports.

Republicans are renewing their efforts to defund Planned Parenthood following unsettling videos exposing the organization's practice of selling fetal tissue to researchers. Monday's vote was 53-46, failing to garner the necessary 60-vote threshold. And even if it would have passed, President Obama has already vowed to veto any legislation to defund the organization.

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest admitted on Monday that he has not viewed the videos, but added, "What the President has said is that Planned Parenthood provides valuable services, health care services for men and women across the country. He would veto any legislation that tried to advance wholesale defunding for Planned Parenthood."

Planned Parenthood, which is responsible for approximately 300,000 abortions each year, has received federal funding since 1970, when President Richard Nixon signed the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act. Constitutionlists have long observed that the federal government has no authority in the U.S. Constitution to fund any Planned Parenthood's activities, but calls to cut funding to Planned Parenthood have increased after the release of undercover videos recorded by the Center for Medical Progress in which Planned Parenthood officials discuss the sale of body parts of aborted babies.

Besides the obvious barbarity of such a scene, the actions discussed in the video are criminal if the organization was making profits on the organ sales.

Planned Parenthood has apologized for comments captured in the video, but defensively asserts it has not broken any laws and that the videos were selectively edited and taken out of context.

Critics disagree, and contend that the organization should not be taxpayer-funded.

"I think most Americans don't want their tax dollars going to this," 2016 Republican presidential candidate and Kentucky Senator Rand Paul told CNN's *State of the Union*. "So I think when something is so morally repugnant to so many people, why should tax dollars go to this?"

Supporters of defunding have argued that the nearly 9,100 federally funded community health centers could continue to do the work of Planned Parenthood, a sentiment that Paul echoed.

"It would be much less emotional for everyone if we just funded community health centers and didn't





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fund Planned Parenthood,” Paul said.

Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas), another Republican presidential hopeful, told pundit Mark Levin, “In the wake of these gruesome videos, where they appear to admit to multiple felonies, we should be defunding them, and we should defund them this week.”

Democrats, on the other hand, have come to the defense of Planned Parenthood, calling efforts to defund the organization “politically motivated” and relying on oft-used talking points that largely ignore any specific criticisms of the organization.

“They’re attacking women’s health,” droned Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.).

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) argues that an investigation into the videos is necessary, but believes it should be the Center for Medical Progress under Justice Department scrutiny, not Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood has defended its existence and its “right” to federal funding by touting all of the so-called vital health services it provides to underprivileged women, including testing for sexually transmitted diseases, cancer screenings, breast exams, and birth control distribution.

But in 2011, the pro-life group Live Action, which exposed Planned Parenthood for its support of child sex trafficking, uncovered evidence that refuted Planned Parenthood’s claims. Live Action released recordings on YouTube which revealed that 30 Planned Parenthood clinics in 27 cities do not provide mammograms.

Live Action’s website reported:

Every Planned Parenthood, without exception, tells [the Live Action caller] she will have to go elsewhere for a mammogram, and many clinics admit that no Planned Parenthood clinics provide this breast cancer screening procedure. “We don’t provide those services whatsoever,” admits a staffer at Planned Parenthood of Arizona. Planned Parenthood’s Comprehensive Health Center clinic in Overland Park, KS explains to the caller, “We actually don’t have a, um, mammogram machine, at our clinics.”

Live Action’s findings directly refuted Planned Parenthood’s multi-million dollar public relations campaign it launched in 2011 when the movement for Planned Parenthood’s defunding began to gain momentum. Planned Parenthood Federation of America implemented a nationwide bus tour, dubbed the “[Truth Tour](#),” wherein it advertised various statistics and health data related to Planned Parenthood’s services. Ironically, the tour failed to report the truth on the number of abortions performed by the organization, or on the fact that the organization had its roots in the eugenics movement. The bus tour also did not advertise the hundreds of millions of dollars the organization received in government grants and contracts, including federal tax dollars.

Fox News reports that Planned Parenthood saw \$1.3 billion in revenue in 2014, \$528 million of which came from taxpayers. Supporters of Planned Parenthood claim that federal aid is not used for abortions except in very specific cases, such as rape, incest, or when performing an abortion protects the life of the mother.

Opponents recognize, however, that providing money to Planned Parenthood for “other health services” frees up money that can then be used to pay for abortions.

CNS News reported of taxpayer contributions to the organization under Title X family planning provisions:



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Although federal law does not allow for taxpayer dollars to directly pay for abortion, critics of Planned Parenthood, which is the largest provider of abortions in the United States, say the millions of dollars it gets annually help it support other programs, thus freeing up funds that can be used to promote or perform abortions.

Whether the Republicans will in fact attach a defunding provision to a government spending measure is not yet confirmed.

Iowa Senator Joni Ernst, the sponsor of the GOP bill that failed to pass on Monday night, told reporters that she is undecided and was not “going to discuss that.” Likewise, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) was not specific about whether Republicans intend to attach a provision to the spending bill in September. “We’re going to discuss how to fund the government after the recess,” he told reporters last week.



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