

Go fund yourself

Planned Parenthood may lose federal allowance

By SARAH SIDLOW

So... Planned Parenthood is in the news. This is really not news.

But it's an election year, so everything is news, even the stuff that seems to always be in the news.

Let's get to it: Earlier this summer, Planned Parenthood came under intense scrutiny after the anti-abortion group Center for Medical Progress released a series of videos it claims proves the organization is illegally making money off of the sale of fetal tissue.

Planned Parenthood's response: No, we're not.

PP has been upfront about its practices of harvesting, storing and transporting fetal tissue to various research facilities and organizations (all with donor consent), and the fact that it does take compensation is no secret. However, they claim their practices are lawful. They claim the compensation they receive is a reimbursement, not a profit. And, they claim the videos have been edited, taken out of context and don't prove that the organization is engaging in criminal activity.

Already, though, attention has shifted. The videos are not the stars of this story.



Last week, the Senate blocked a Republican push to terminate and re-funnel federal funds for Planned Parenthood. Many GOP leaders say they can't sit idly while their taxpayers fund an organization that may be engaging in criminal behavior.

Skeptics see this as a cover for stopping monetary support of Planned Parenthood by people who don't agree with abortion.

Let's be clear on this point: By law, federal funds are already barred from being used for abortions except for cases of incest, rape or when a woman's life is in danger. The federal funding currently going to Planned Parenthood is grant-

ed for the other health services it provides to men and women like preventative care, cancer screenings, etc.

Planned Parenthood annually receives more than \$500 million in government funds, including state payments—more than one-third of its annual \$1.3 billion in revenue. Its annual report says it provides services for 2.7 million people every year, mostly women, with abortions accounting for 3 percent of cases.

But the funding deadline is approaching, and last week's drama will bring the Planned Parenthood question down to the wire. Federal agencies run out of money at the end of September, and Congress is expected to take up some type of short-term spending bill next month.

Those in favor of defunding Planned Parenthood include Republicans Sen. Ted Cruz, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. Rand Paul.

Top arguments for defunding Planned Parenthood range from the ideological to the practical. Many claim PP should stop receiving funding because it is the largest provider of abortions in the country—something that's been a divisive issue in this country for, like, ever.

Others point out Planned Parenthood's history of large political donations, which are fairly one-sided as far as political lean—that is, they (surprisingly) tend to support Democrats.

Others argue that Planned Parenthood is independently wealthy and simply doesn't need to be on the public coffers to survive. And that perhaps these things would be best left up to the states.

The Republican measure blocked last week would have transferred Planned Parenthood's federal dollars to other health care providers on the state and local levels—bucking the suggested "war on women's health care" by arguing PP's 700 clinics are outnumbered by these other facilities anyway.

But supporters of Planned Parenthood contest that point. They say many of the organization's centers are in areas with few alternatives for low-income women, who comprise a majority of its base.

Supporters of Planned Parenthood's mission are standing strong. The organization provides an invaluable service to a significant number of men and women around the country, they say, and not only are their tissue harvesting practices legal, the research drawn from them has been used to develop treatments or vaccinations for things like chicken pox, polio, rubella, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

On the state level, the New Hampshire Executive Council has ended state funding of Planned Parenthood, reportedly as a result of the videos in question. On the federal level, as the deadline approaches, a government shut down has been threatened.



Reach DCP Editor Sarah Sidlow at Editor@DaytonCityPaper.com

DEBATE FORUM QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

Is it time to consider defunding Planned Parenthood?

See our debate on this topic on the next page

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DEBATE FORUM QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

Is it time to consider defunding Planned Parenthood?

Did you say “defund” or “defame”?

RESPONSE BY JENNIFER HANAUER LUMPKIN

No, it's not time to consider defunding Planned Parenthood. It will never be time to consider defunding essential healthcare.

Planned Parenthood is a reproductive healthcare provider dedicated to providing care, no matter what. They provide women's healthcare, men's healthcare, general healthcare and LGBT services. They advocate education through community outreach. The Dayton Health Center offers birth control, emergency contraception, pregnancy testing and abortion referral in addition to STD testing, treatment and vaccines. Tens of thousands of people utilize the seven Planned Parenthood healthcare centers of Southwest Ohio.

So, this recent smear campaign? These videos from the “Center for Medical Progress” clearly meant to rile the pro-lifers into a frothing mass of misplaced outrage? This is not a revealing bit of covert documentary filmmaking meant to shine light on the business of being aborted. This is a shameful shot at a shock-and-awe crusade meant to force a very small group's religious zealotry onto the souls of the greater good. They haven't been able to win with the truth, so they've turned to the theatre of the macabre—only to reveal their own ghoulishness as they feast on the minds of those primed for a faux-scandal.

I have to, absolutely must, believe that the majority of individuals in this country, at least those in office, can see how illogical it would be to defund Planned Parenthood, much less bring the entire government to a standstill over it. You know your tax dollars don't fund abortions, you know fetal tissue isn't being sold for profit by Planned Parenthood, you know it's better for families and the economy if there are fewer unplanned pregnancies, so stop saying those things. Own up. Tell me the real reason you want to defund Planned Parenthood: You're frightened by your anger and subsequent guilt over missed sexual experiences, and, now that you've lost pressure on your libido gauge, your only recourse is to make sure everyone else in the world is forced to make the same decisions you did because then you must be right because you can't all be wrong and God will let you into heaven. Then we'll have a different conversation and everything will be OK. I promise.

You KNOW that the majority of what other people do, short of shooting you in the face, doesn't have any bearing whatsoever on your life. They are incapable of affecting how big your family is or whether or not you get into heaven or how happy you are. They are not going to come kill your child. If they decide to abort an embryo or fetus growing in their own body, that's not going to kill

your child, either. Keeping federal funds for Planned Parenthood will not make your body abort a baby. It absolutely will remain your right to not have an abortion.

Allow me to further illustrate this for you. I'm morally opposed to the ownership of handguns, so I don't own one. I'm morally opposed to war, so I didn't join the armed forces. I'm morally opposed to vegetarianism, so I eat all the meat. I would simply be exhausted if I had to save every gun-toting Special Operations Combat Service Herbivore from him or herself. There'd just be no time for the things I enjoy, like pastrami.

It's been a rough couple of weeks for us pro-choicers who want to stay on speaking terms with the Romney sticker-sporting, Fox News-watching, Grand Old Party branches of our family. Imagine the incredible amount of restraint on my party line, keeping both sides from lashing out at the other across social media forums, offering only passive click-bait educational opportunities. Has anyone else had an exchange like this recently? Me: [Scrolls through Facebook, visibly cringing at the anti-Planned Parenthood blasts from my right-leaning acquaintances.]

Husband: Just un-follow them.
Me: I have to know what the other side is thinking!

Husband: [Sighs.]
Me: [Reads another jaw-dropping account of anti-lifers hunting random children, murdering them with droid-like detachment, selling their hearts on the black market and stringing their arms and legs on necklaces to wear as trophies. Fuming rage at organizations' manipulative attempts to brainwash well-meaning people gives way to such fevered jaw-grinding that the dogs think somebody is at the front door and start barking.]

Husband: [Slides laptop away from me, replaces it with *The Indispensable Calvin and Hobbes*, retreats to far side of couch.]

It's healthcare, people. Let's put it to bed and refocus our energy on real problems in our world. Who wants to talk about Trump's hair?



Jennifer Hanauer Lumpkin is a writer and amateur cartographer living in Dayton, Ohio. She has been a member of PUSH (Professionals United for Sexual Health) since 2012 and is currently serving as Chair. She can be reached at JenniferHanauerLumpkin@DaytonCityPaper.com or through her website at jenniferlumpkin.com.


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DEBATE FORUM QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

Is it time to consider defunding Planned Parenthood?

We're getting it wrong

RESPONSE BY MIKE SNEAD

One of my favorite Americans and a person I would have very much liked to hear speak in person is Frederick Douglass. Mr. Douglass helped a troubled society establish its moral footing by bringing immorality out of the shadows and making it clear as day.

An accomplished orator, writer and businessperson, Mr. Douglass was one of the original American founders of the "black lives matter" movement. He was one of America's prominent abolitionists at the time when Americans were deeply divided over the issue of treating some humans as property, with little regard for their inalienable rights to "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness," while protecting these rights for others with the full force of the law.

Even the U.S. Supreme Court got it wrong in 1857 when it issued a ruling that all of African ancestry, whether free or slave, could never become citizens of the U.S. and could not sue in federal court, and that the federal government had no power to prohibit slavery. (The majority opinion was written by a staunch supporter of slavery.) To many in America, it was simply common sense that those of African ancestry were humans whose lives mattered. What Mr. Douglass and others of his time, such as Abraham Lincoln, did was help shepherd Americans through very troubled times by keeping them on the difficult path leading to America becoming a better nation.

Are we not grateful today that they were successful?

The issue today with a right to abortion for convenience—at the heart of using federal funds to fund Planned Parenthood—and the issue of Mr. Douglass' time of a right to slavery for economic benefit are very similar. Both "rights" were sustained in their day by morally-flawed U.S. Supreme Court political rulings. Proponents of these "rights" used these rulings to mask the inherent immorality of their asserted "right" to deny life and liberty to another human for convenience by labeling the other human as property—the slave as property of the slave owner and the fetus as property of the mother.

What made Mr. Douglass such a powerful moral force in the abolitionist movement was that he was a self-freed slave. His life story is truly one with which all Americans should be familiar but most, like myself until recently, are not. His voice in support of the abolition of slavery and his mere presence as a speaker convinced many—most likely, including Abraham Lincoln and many who fought for and died for the Union in the Civil War—of the immorality of the age-old concept of human slavery.

What our grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the womb lack is the ability to stand before us, as Mr. Douglass did, to speak against the immorality of the act of abortion for convenience. Instead, anti-abortion proponents are forced to rely on videos of the results of medical abortion and of the abhorrent actions of those

harvesting and selling our never-to-be grandchildren and great-grandkids' body parts for research to create the drama necessary to capture the public's attention and agitate for change—exactly what Mr. Douglass did with his speeches and books.

With the immorality of abortion for convenience now clear as day, there is need to make it impossible for federal funds to be used for abortion or to promote abortion for convenience by defunding Planned Parenthood—one of the leading organizations promoting abortion for convenience and conducting abortions. It's striking that President Obama leads the progressive movement's efforts to absolve abortion for convenience of its immorality and to protect the granting of federal funds to Planned Parenthood. His threat to veto any legislation removing such funding should be long remembered by those who still hold him in esteem. It's a reflection of his core values.

The Republican Party was founded in the 1850s as an anti-slavery party due to the agitation of abolitionists like Frederick Douglass bringing the issue of slavery front and center in American politics. Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate, was elected largely as a public expression of their position on this issue. The recent return of the Republican Party to the majority in both houses of Congress was due in large measure

to grassroots republicans' fundamental belief of the immorality of abortion for convenience and of the need for legislative action to stop this. Just as it happened following the 1857 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that sustained slavery, it will take forceful political action to reverse the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalizing abortion for convenience. This is the way the checks and balances of our political system works to correct flawed political Supreme Court rulings.

The starting point is to stop all federal funding of Planned Parenthood and shift this funding to other public health organizations already providing non-abortion medical services for women. Federal legislation to this effect must be passed by Congress, especially now under Republican leadership, in order to assert the moral view and legal position that no federal funds are to be used for abortion or to promote abortion for convenience. It's the primary responsibility of Congress to uphold the Constitution by protecting American life, including Americans—our grandchildren and great-grandchildren—still in the womb.

"The starting point is to stop all federal funding of Planned Parenthood and shift this funding to other public health organizations already providing non-abortion medical services for women."



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