



Advocacy Update

Planned Parenthood, Reproductive Rights, and Why We Should Care

Sent September 30, 2015

Over the past few weeks, there has been a big [spotlight](#) on women's reproductive healthcare, and more specifically the [Planned Parenthood Federation of America](#) (also known as Planned Parenthood or PPFA) in Congress and in the news.

Planned Parenthood is a non-profit organization that provides reproductive, maternal, and child health services to over 3 million people in the United States through its over 800 clinics. PPFA is the largest provider of reproductive health care services in the country which includes birth control and contraception, lifesaving cancer screenings, abortion procedures, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and other essential care. In addition to these services, Planned Parenthood provides sexuality educational programs and information through their website to millions of youth and adults each year. In addition to being accessible and reliable, Planned Parenthood is also an affordable healthcare option, providing services to women of all ages and walks of life. Planned Parenthood receives funding from the government so their clinics can operate. This funding can go towards all of their services with the exception of abortion procedures. Recently, some Members of Congress have been fighting to defund Planned Parenthood and otherwise curtail other reproductive rights.

The urgency of funding Planned Parenthood comes from the start of a new fiscal year (FY16) on October 1st, 2015. Before the new fiscal year begins, Congress has to come to an agreement about the year's budget. Many Members of Congress are attaching the fight to defund Planned Parenthood onto the creation of a new budget. On September 18th, the House of Representatives passed the [Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015 \(H.R. 3134\)](#). Fortunately, the Senate rejected similar legislation in an effort to continue to fund Planned Parenthood.

It is very unlikely that Congress will pass a budget for FY2016, and instead they will pass [a continuing resolution](#) that will fund the government until December 2015. This will most likely allow continued funding for Planned Parenthood for the time being. Once the temporary budget's timeline has run out in December, we could see this fight to defund Planned Parenthood pick up again. Unfortunately, there are many points throughout the upcoming year where we might see renewed activity surrounding Planned Parenthood and women's reproductive health, so it is important for us to show our continued support for this cause.

To show your support for Planned Parenthood, and women's reproductive health, take action and [urge your Members of Congress to oppose efforts to curtail reproductive rights!](#)

Cutting funding to Planned Parenthood clinics would be a sad path for our government to take. Millions of women of all ages and walks of life receive care from Planned Parenthood every year. Stripping Planned Parenthood of its funding would severely limit the ability of women to receive all of these necessary forms of care and treatment to which they deserve access.

For many years, [Women of Reform Judaism has stood by Planned Parenthood and access to affordable reproductive healthcare for women](#). In 2012, WRJ wrote a [letter](#) in disappointment when Susan G. Komen for the Cure halted its partnership with Planned Parenthood, and has [partnered](#) with other faith based organizations in support of women's healthcare. As Reform Jews, we support the right of all women to make their own reproductive health care decisions, as we believe firmly that reproductive rights are a key component of women's equality in broader society. It is due to the fundamental Jewish belief in the sanctity of life that there is a vital need for medically accurate sexuality education and for high-quality family planning services.

For more information on WRJ and Social Justice, visit www.wrj.org/social-justice-home

While Planned Parenthood may be safe from federal funding cuts for now, we must not stand idly by while Members of Congress strive to close its doors. Let us keep up our advocacy and support for women's health and the heroic work of organizations such as Planned Parenthood that provide women with services that we all need and deserve.