

September 8, 2015

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress,

We, the 69 undersigned national faith-based and religious groups, state and local affiliates stand with Planned Parenthood, with its millions of patients and with its health centers that have served families in the US for nearly a century. Planned Parenthood touches the lives of millions of young people with education programs and online information that helps foster health and safety; it provides women with quality medical services, including abortion; and it embodies the highest of standards of medical and ethical care.

We represent millions of people of faith committed to ensuring women's health and moral autonomy. We are deeply troubled by the latest deplorable attacks on Planned Parenthood by faux groups, which demonstrate the lengths to which antiabortion extremists will go to curtail women's right to obtain a legal medical procedure.

Our organizations share a faith-centered commitment to the most marginalized and the most vulnerable of our society, including those with limited financial means or those who live in areas with limited access to healthcare and related services. For many, Planned Parenthood is their only source of medical care. Many Planned Parenthood patients are struggling to make ends meet. In times of economic hardship, the need for Planned Parenthood is greater than ever.

A world without Planned Parenthood would be disastrous for many women and their families—particularly young women, women of color and women in rural areas. Planned Parenthood health centers are on the front lines helping women and men, especially those of limited means, to prevent unintended pregnancies. They support prevention and treatment efforts for HIV and other STDs; offer life-saving cancer screenings; and provide crucial medically accurate information about sexual health.

As people of diverse faith traditions, we understand the myriad beliefs and moral complexity that exist on issues of reproductive health—abortion in particular. The duplicity of the so-called Center for Medical Progress shows a disturbing lack of concern for women's health and safety. Such behavior does nothing to further the discourse on such a complex issue.

It is shameful that desperate antichoice extremists would resort to methods of deceit to try to dupe the public and policymakers. The smear campaign videos are heavily edited and misleading in order to make it appear that Planned Parenthood profits from donations of fetal tissue for medical research. The truth is: some Planned Parenthood health centers do participate in programs where fetal tissue is donated, at the client's request, for use in critical biomedical research to help find cures for diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Patients make the decision to donate tissue for such research. Planned Parenthood does not profit from such voluntary, legal donations.

The recent efforts of the so-called Center for Medical Progress were undertaken with a singular goal in mind: to limit access to the critical reproductive health services that Planned Parenthood provides. This goal is deeply political and will harm women and families' health and economic security.

We urge you to reject attacks that would reduce federal funding or otherwise undermine the provision of critical services by Planned Parenthood.

Our organizations respect women's moral agency and are committed to the social good. We value compassion and feel obligated to protect women's health and well-being. We value real religious liberty, which upholds the right of each person to make their own faith-informed or conscience-based healthcare decisions. As groups representing millions of people of faith, including those who access healthcare at local Planned Parenthood centers, we affirm our support for the incredible and necessary work of this organization. We call on you to reject the underhanded, dishonest attempts to discredit Planned Parenthood and to consider who will be harmed if federal funding to this important organization is blocked or eliminated.

As organizations of faith, we stand with Planned Parenthood. As members of Congress committed to supporting the health and well-being of your constituents, we urge you to do the same.

Sincerely,

National

A Critical Mass: Women Celebrating Eucharist

Anti-Defamation League

Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice

Catholics for Choice

Central Conference of American Rabbis

Concerned Clergy for Choice

CORPUS

DignityUSA

Episcopal Women's Caucus

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.

Hindu American Foundation

International Rabbinical Assembly

Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Jewish Women International

Keshet

Methodist Federation for Social Action

Muslims for Progressive Values

National Coalition of American Nuns (NCAN)

National Council of Jewish Women

New Ways Ministry

Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and Jewish Reconstructionist Communities

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Religious Institute

Society for Humanistic Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Association

Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

Women's League for Conservative Judaism

Women's Rabbinic Network

For more information please contact Sara Hutchinson Ratcliffe, Catholic for Choice Domestic Program Director, shratcliffe@catholicsforchoice.org or 202-986-6093 or Amy Cotton, National Council of Jewish Women Senior Policy Manager, amy@ncjwdc.org or 202 375 5067.

State and Local

National Council of Jewish Women, Arizona Section
California Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
National Council of Jewish Women California State Policy Advocacy Chair
National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Long Beach Section
National Council of Jewish Women, San Francisco Section
San Francisco Bay Area Women-Church
Colorado Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice Connecticut
National Council of Jewish Women Florida State Policy Advocate
National Council of Jewish Women, SouthEast Atlantic Section
National Council of Jewish Women Palm Beach Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Miami Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Kendall Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Sarasota-Manatee Section
National Council of Jewish Women Illinois State Policy Advocate
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice Illinois
Chicago Women-Church
National Council of Jewish Women, Chicago North Shore Section
National Council of Jewish Women, South Cook Section
Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
National Council of Jewish Women Maine State Policy Advocate
National Council of Jewish Women, Southern Maine Section
National Council of Jewish Women Michigan State Policy Advocates
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Minneapolis Section
National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Bergen County Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Essex County Section
National Council of Jewish Women, New York (City) Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Peninsula Section
National Council of Jewish Women Ohio State Policy Advocate
Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
National Council of Jewish Women, Columbus Section
PA Religious Coalition for Reproductive Justice
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Dallas Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Houston Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Utah Section
National Council of Jewish Women Washington State Policy Advocate
National Council of Jewish Women, Seattle Section

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