

April 24, 2017

US Senate  
US House of Representatives

Dear Member of Congress:

For many, these are confusing and tumultuous times. **As state and local elected representatives, we are on the front lines of the fight to protect and preserve American families every day.** We know these unsure times can leave even the most ardent advocates wondering how best to move forward. As we embark on a new political path, we believe it is imperative that we hold fast to the principles and values that bind us as a nation, rather than feed the disagreements that divide us. **We are your colleagues, your constituents and your compatriots along this path.**

**As legislators and policy makers we are called to serve our fellow man, as are many of you.** We see this as a call to better the lives of the people who elected us to represent them. We feel they have entrusted us to make sure our government works for them. We all represent diverse communities with people from different economic circumstances and with a range of faith beliefs or no religious belief.

**As Catholic elected officials,** we also believe we have a special responsibility to speak for those who have little or no voice in the political process. **We are compelled by our faith to speak out against policies that unfairly target the least among us** for our tradition calls us to have a preferential option for the poor. In keeping with our Catholic commitment to social justice and in full consultation with our consciences, **we stand with Planned Parenthood.** We write to you, as colleagues and constituents, urging you to oppose efforts to defund this important organization, which serves our communities across this country.

Defunding Planned Parenthood would mean we would abandon those in our community who are already struggling to make ends meet. **Families rely on Planned Parenthood to receive basic healthcare. Efforts to limit government funding for these health services will punish poor families** and communities, leaving many bereft of compassionate, knowledgeable caregivers and educators.

As Catholics, we revere conscience and the right for each of us to follow where ours may lead. Defunding Planned Parenthood would not just hurt families economically. **By impeding their ability to make decisions about reproduction according to their own conscience, it would be an assault on their human dignity.**

Conscience isn't a status symbol for the privileged few. We believe everyone has the ability to decide to be pregnant or not and to protect oneself and one's partner from sexually transmitted infections. Our laws and lawmakers should make this self-determination possible for everyone, no matter what their means, where they live, or what they believe.

**PRESIDENT**

Jon O'Brien

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**Planned Parenthood clinics provide essential health services to millions of people from all walks of life, including many Catholics. These clinics are on the front lines** of promoting reproductive and sexual health by helping people prevent unintended pregnancies, providing education about sexual health, treating sexually transmitted infections, sharing the information needed for a healthy pregnancy and enabling women to make decisions about whether to become pregnant and whether to continue a pregnancy.

Planned Parenthood is there with affordable birth control for the single mother in Atlanta working to get her degree at night so she can forge a new path for herself and her children. They are there for the woman in Milwaukee who wants to do right by her conscience and finds herself with an unintended pregnancy at the wrong time of life. When the young man in Phoenix needs to be screened for HIV, he turns to a trusted provider, knowing that he will get the quality healthcare and compassion he needs. When a teen from Buffalo asks a question and her parents are unsure how to answer, they turn to their trusted Planned Parenthood for accurate information.

**Like you, we are called to serve our community in public service. We share a commitment to our constituents and each other.** We urge you to stand with us as we move forward on this new path and oppose measures that take away vital services for those in our communities that need it most.

**Stand with us and for those we serve. Stand with Planned Parenthood.** It is what our communities need and it is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Sen. Irene Aguilar (CO)  
Rep. Roberto Alonzo (TX)  
Rep. Carol Alvarado (TX)  
Rep. Joe Aresimowicz (CT)  
Sen. Tony Avella (NY)  
Former Rep. Suzanne Bassi (IL)  
Former Rep. Debbie Benefield (CO)  
Rep. Terese Berceau (WI)  
Asw. Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod (NV)  
Rep. Tim Briggs (PA)  
Asm. Anthony Brindisi (NY)  
Rep. Thomas J. "Tom" Burch (KY)  
Former Sen. Capri Cafaro (OH)  
Asm. Kevin Cahill (NY)  
Sen. Yvanna Cancela (NV)  
Sen. Karen Carter Peterson (LA)  
Livonia School Board Member Daniel Centers (MI)  
Former Rep. Eleanor Chavez (NM)  
Rep. John Cloutier (NH)  
Rep. Tom Cochran (MI)  
Rep. Tricia Cotham (NC)  
Sen. Andrea Dalessandro (AZ)

Sen. Lou D'Allesandro (NH)  
Sen. Richard Devlin (OR)  
Sen. D. Scott Dibble (MN)  
Former Rep. Brandon Dillon (MI)  
Rep. Johannah Leddy Donovan (VT)  
Former Sen. Thomas Duane (NY)  
Rep. Dawonna Dukes (TX)  
West Hollywood City Councilmember John Duran (CA)  
Pima County Supervisor Richard Elías (AZ)  
Asm. Patricia Fahy (NY)  
Sen. Lawrence Farnese, Jr. (PA)  
Rep. Jessica Farrar (TX)  
Sen. Barbara Favola (VA)  
Rep. Ryan Fecteau (ME)  
Rep. Teresa Fedor (OH)  
Former Rep. Keith Fitzgerald (FL)  
Sen. Mae Flexer (CT)  
Former Rep. Eileen Flockhart (NH)  
Former Asm. Lucy Flores (NV)  
Rep. Kathleen Fogarty (RI)  
Asm. Ozzie Fumo (NV)  
Maricopa County Supervisor Steve Gallardo (AZ)

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Rep. Mary Gonzalez (TX)  
Rep. Christine Greig (MI)  
Del. Ana Sol Gutierrez (MD)  
Rep. Roland Gutierrez (TX)  
Rep. Patricia Haddad (MA)  
Rep. Daniel Hernandez, Jr. (AZ)  
Sen. Curtis Hertel, Jr. (MI)  
Sen. Katie Hobbs (AZ)  
Del. Patrick Hope (VA)  
Rep. Melissa Hortman (MN)  
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Rep. Cory Mason (WI)  
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Rep. Mary Nichols (MO)  
Rep. Michael O'Brien (PA)  
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Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino (NM)  
Rep. Alice Peisch (MA)

Sen. Jose Peralta (NY)  
Sen. Pat Pettey (KS)  
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Asm. Robert Rodriguez (NY)  
Rep. Eddie Rodriguez (TX)  
Sen. José Rodriguez (TX)  
Tucson City Council Member Regina Romero (AZ)  
Rep. Patricia A. Roybal Caballero (NM)  
Rep. Angelica Rubio (NM)  
Rep. Deborah Ruggiero (RI)  
Rep. Louis Ruiz (KS)  
Former Rep. Kathleen Ryg (IL)  
Former Rep. Thomas Sannicandro (MA)  
Rep. Sylvia Santana (MI)  
Sen. Diane Savino (NY)  
Sen. Joseph "Joe" Schiavoni (OH)  
Former Sen. Kathy Sheran (MN)  
Rep. Christine Sinicki (WI)  
Rep. Patricia Haynes Smith (LA)  
Former Asm. Linda Stender (NJ)  
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Rep. Geran Tarr (AK)  
Sen. Christine Tartaglione (PA)  
Rep. Robert Theberge (NH)  
Sen. Patricia Torres Ray (MN)  
Asw. Valerie Vainieri Huttle (NJ)  
Del. Kris Valderrama (MD)  
Rep. John Viola (DE)  
Allegheny County Controller Chelsa Wagner (PA)  
Rep. Armando Walle (TX)  
Sen. Joyce Woodhouse (NV)  
Sen. Rachel Zenzinger (CO)

*For more information on this letter or the list of signatories, please contact Sara Hutchinson Ratcliffe, domestic program director, Catholics for Choice at 202-986-0693 or [shratcliffe@catholicsforchoice.org](mailto:shratcliffe@catholicsforchoice.org)*