

De-Fund Planned Parenthood Now

By Rose Mimms and Randall K. O'Bannon, Ph.D.

Planned Parenthood, the Tyrannosaurus Rex of the abortion industry, has been wounded with the passage of the Pence Amendment supported by all of Arkansas' U.S. House delegation and U.S. Senator John Boozman. If all government funding dries up, they stand to lose a third of a billion dollars of your money. While they may claim that none of the government funds go for abortions, money given to one part of the program frees up other funds to keep the abortion clinic doors open, pay salaries and buy equipment, and help promote the Planned Parenthood name. Pro-life Americans have long objected to their tax dollars being used to fund the largest abortion provider in the United States and with the current deficit spending the time has come to cut them off.

Planned Parenthood argues that maintaining its government funding will reduce the numbers of abortion. In just the past twelve years, government funding at Planned Parenthood has more than doubled, with the number of abortions following pretty much the same track. According to its latest Annual Report, Planned Parenthood received \$363.2 million in government grants and contracts in 2008. Clinics run by Planned Parenthood performed 332,278 abortions in 2009, the highest total ever recorded, according to a recent factsheet. This is the 15th year in a row the number of abortions has risen at Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood says that abortion represents only three percent of its services, but at going rates, over a third of its clinic revenues would come from abortion, even if all of its abortions were the cheapest first trimester abortions. Not surprisingly, the organization is putting even less emphasis on other "services" that would be considered alternatives to abortion. For example, the number of adoption referrals dropped from 2,405 in 2008 to just 977 for 2009. That's just over one referral for every clinic Planned Parenthood runs. As it stands, abortions outnumber adoption referrals at Planned Parenthood by a 340–1 margin. Women seeking prenatal care don't fare much better. According to PPFA's own factsheet, just 7,021 Planned Parenthood clients received prenatal care in 2009—2,412 fewer than the previous year. Planned Parenthood's plans typically don't involve parenthood.

In 1990, when abortions were at their peak of 1.6 million, Planned Parenthood accounted for just about 8% of the total (129,155 abortions). Since that time, abortions in America have dropped by nearly 25% to about 1.2 million, while abortions at Planned Parenthood have doubled! In other words, in 20 years, the percentage of abortions performed by Planned Parenthood clinics in the U.S. has leaped from 8% to about 27%.

From the beginning, Planned Parenthood has been heavily involved in the promotion and dispensation of RU486, the "abortion pill." It participated in clinical trials in the last half of the 1990s, and then quickly added the two-drug chemical abortion technique to its product offerings when the FDA approved it in 2000. RU486 enabled Planned Parenthood to sell abortions in scores of clinics where the group had not offered abortions before. In Arkansas, the clinics in Fayetteville and Little Rock, that had not previously provided abortion, began offering the RU486 chemical abortion a few years ago. Since then chemical (non-surgical) abortions in Arkansas have increased from 5 in 2006 to 521 in 2009.

In a January factsheet, "Planned Parenthood by the Numbers," the organization admits that 12%, not 3%, of its health care clients receive abortions. This is a major admission, but even this doesn't quite capture what abortion means to Planned Parenthood. At going rates for standard, surgical first-trimester abortions (\$451), Planned Parenthood's 332,278 abortions represent revenues of at least \$149.9 million— 37% of the \$404.9 million it reported in clinic income for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009. We expect the figure could be much higher, owing to their advertising and performing of more expensive chemical and later abortions.

The legitimate health care needs of women in the community could be better met by providers not compromised by their involvement in the destruction of innocent human life. With the millions of dollars that Planned Parenthood makes every year it is past time that the government cut off funding to the nation's largest abortion chain, funding that most Americans forced to support it with tax dollars finds abhorrent.

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