



Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin

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Senate Republicans Vote to Cut Access to Preventive Health Care

AB 310 Advance to Governor Despite State's Failure Demonstrate Any Plans to Ensure Continued Access to Reproductive Healthcare

MADISON — Today, Republicans in the state Senate moved forward a pair of bills, AB 310 and SB 238, intended to cut off patient access to affordable essential preventive health care provided by Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin (PPWI) and other non-profit family planning providers. The bills passed on a party-line vote despite strong opposition from the health care providers and patients who rely on community based health centers like Planned Parenthood. AB 310, which attempts to end PPWI's 40 year relationship with the federal Title X family planning grant, will advance to Gov. Walker despite the state's failure to provide lawmakers with a plan for ensuring continued health care access at any of the 18 sites currently operated by PPWI and its partners. SB 238 would require the Department of Health to cut reimbursement rates for birth control prescriptions, but only at women's health providers like PPWI and county health departments. Other providers are exempted from the cuts. Both defunding bills require federal approval prior to taking affect.

"It is stunning that our lawmakers continue to ignore the voices of Planned Parenthood's patients and the objections of our community health partners to advance their political agenda of blocking women's access to birth control and other essential services," said Tanya Atkinson, executive director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin. "Throughout this debate, other health care providers have made clear that without Planned Parenthood, they would be unable to absorb the 60,000 patients we care for. After serving the community for 80 years, Planned Parenthood is the largest reproductive health care provider in the state and has cultivated many effective partnerships with other health care providers who refer patients to PPWI for efficient, high-quality reproductive care."

The defunding bills are the latest in a long line of attacks by Republicans who are opposed to birth control and safe and legal abortion. In 2011, Governor Scott Walker and the Republican controlled Legislature eliminated all state funding for Planned Parenthood under the Wisconsin Women's Health Block grant in the state budget. These cuts lead to the closure of five rural Planned Parenthoods and the loss of 18,848 health services for 3,104 women, men and families each year. Since these closures, no other safety net provider has opened to provide coverage in these communities.

"We already know what happens when Planned Parenthood health centers are forced to close in Wisconsin — people lose access to the health care they need," said Atkinson. "In addition to birth control, these actions by conservative leadership could also eliminate access to life-saving breast and cervical cancer screening and STD testing and treatment for women and men."

Access to reproductive care in Wisconsin is already limited. The Guttmacher institute estimates that 336,000 women each year are in need of affordable access to preventive health care like wellness exams, cancer screening and contraceptives.

"For 80 years, PPWI has been providing high-quality, nonjudgmental, affordable care to the people of Wisconsin, and we're committed to continuing to remaining the state's most trusted provider of reproductive health care — no matter what," said Atkinson. "Political attacks will not stop our dedication to our patients."

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Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin is the advocacy arm of Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin. PPAWI engages in legislative and educational activity and works to elect candidates to office that support these goals.