



Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin

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Cecile Richards Rallies Planned Parenthood Supporters in Wisconsin

Over 720 rally against Speaker Ryan's Plan to Defund Planned Parenthood

MILWAUKEE, WI – Today, Cecile Richards joined PPAWI President Tanya Atkinson, Wisconsin lawmakers and over 720 Planned Parenthood supporters to speak out against Speaker Paul Ryan's plan to block thousands of Wisconsinites from essential preventive health care.

This rally followed a patient roundtable at the Kenosha Planned Parenthood health center where Cecile Richards and Tanya Atkinson met with three patients and a provider from Paul Ryan's district.

Blocking Planned Parenthood from receiving Medicaid reimbursements would block tens of thousands of Wisconsinites from essential health care including birth control, cancer screenings, and STI testing. In Paul Ryan's district alone, Planned Parenthood provides care for 6,000 patients every year. "Defunding" Planned Parenthood would have a disproportionate impact on those who already face far too many barriers to health care as people of color, people who live in rural areas, or people with low incomes. In Wisconsin, 30 percent of Planned Parenthood health center patients are Black and 19 percent are Latino, which are higher proportions than in the general population of the state.

Statement from Cecile Richards, President of Planned Parenthood Action Fund:

"When Speaker Ryan threatens to 'defund' Planned Parenthood, he's talking about taking away health care from his own constituents. The one in five women across this country that have been to Planned Parenthood don't come to make a political statement, they come for birth control, well-woman exams, and lifesaving cancer screenings. And they're furious that Speaker Ryan and other politicians are intent on taking that care away. In Wisconsin, and all across the country, we're linking arms and fighting together to protect access to health care."

Statement from Tanya Atkinson, President of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin:

"As a health care provider who works every day to help patients get the care they need, we know that Wisconsinites need more access points for health care – not less. Speaker Ryan is putting politics over health care. We urge him to listen to the medical community and the patients who rely on Planned Parenthood. We should all be able to agree that women deserve access to essential preventive care like cancer screenings, well woman exams and birth control. These are exactly the services that Speaker Ryan's proposal would impact."

Sydney Rosengarten, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin patient:

Attacks against Planned Parenthood are attacks against my health and the health of the 60,000 Wisconsin women, men and young people who also rely on Planned Parenthood. Patients like me don't go to Planned Parenthood to make a political statement. We go for affordable, high-quality health care. Every person, no matter who they are or how much money they make, deserves that kind of care. We cannot allow politicians to take it away.

The American public does not want to see people blocked from accessing health care. That's why tens of thousands of people, including Planned Parenthood supporters, participated in hundreds of events across the country this week, Planned Parenthood supporters stormed town halls, showed up at district offices and even convened their own town halls to tell politicians that they will not stand for attacks on access to care at Planned Parenthood.

The term "defunding" Planned Parenthood is a misnomer. There is no blank check that Planned Parenthood gets from the federal government, and it's not a line item in the budget. Instead, this type of legislation would prevent millions of women who rely on Medicaid or other federal programs from accessing the health care provider they've been able to rely on for decades.

Defunding Planned Parenthood would have a devastating impact in Paul Ryan's district, and across Wisconsin. In Racine & Walworth counties, where 42% of the women in Paul Ryan's district live, there are two Planned Parenthood health centers and no community health centers to meet women's health care needs. In Racine, other health providers agree they wouldn't be able to provide for Planned Parenthood patients, meaning thousands would be left with no other health care provider.

Across the state, nearly half of the counties that Planned Parenthood serves in Wisconsin will have no alternative family planning provider to receive care from if Planned Parenthood closes. Already more than 70 percent of counties Planned Parenthood serves in Wisconsin have a shortage of health care providers. There simply aren't other health care providers that can replace Planned Parenthood.

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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.