



Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin

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Senate Moves to Imperil Health Care for Millions

Mike Pence Casts Deciding Vote to put Health Care at Risk

Washington, DC — Today, the Senate voted to move forward with an effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act and block Planned Parenthood from serving Medicaid patients – including 50,000 in Wisconsin. The move came despite millions of people across the country expressing opposition and outrage at the various pieces of legislation that have been proposed — which would all leave tens of millions uninsured, charge women more for less insurance coverage, and prevent millions of people with Medicaid coverage from coming to Planned Parenthood health centers for basic, preventive care. Vice President Mike Pence, who authored the original legislation to “defund” Planned Parenthood as a congressman, had to cast the tie-breaking vote on the motion to proceed.

Statement from Nicole Safar, Executive Director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin:

“No matter its form, this bill is the worst policy for women’s health in a generation. From ending maternity coverage and the birth control benefit for millions of women to blocking access to preventive care at Planned Parenthood, every version of this bill would be devastating to our community. And at every step of the process, this legislation has only gotten worse as Republican leaders have chipped away at women’s access to affordable health care. The Senate must reject this dangerous legislation, or they will be responsible for putting millions of people’s lives at risk.

“Make no mistake: This fight is far from over. This Senate bill is deeply unpopular, and the incredible power of the American people has made that clear. Planned Parenthood supporters across the country will not give up this fight. One voice may be easy to dismiss, but together, our voices are too loud to ignore. Now — more than ever — is the moment to speak out, call your senators, and demand they vote no on the final bill. We call on our elected leaders to listen to our voices and reject this dangerous legislation.”

BACKGROUND:

No matter what version of Trumpcare the Senate votes on, it’s still a dangerous bill for women’s health.

- Every version of Trumpcare would take away health insurance from tens of millions of people and make it less affordable for those who will still have insurance. Official estimates say that various versions of Trumpcare would result in anywhere between 22 to 32 million people losing coverage.
- Every version of Trumpcare would “defund” Planned Parenthood by blocking people with Medicaid coverage from accessing preventive care at Planned Parenthood health centers — including birth control, cancer screenings, and STI testing and treatment. Unlike other provisions of the bill, this would go into effect immediately.
- Every version of Trumpcare would result in people paying more for health insurance coverage, raising out-of-pocket costs significantly — for those who are still left with coverage.

- Every version of Trumpcare would gut the Medicaid program, which approximately one in five women of reproductive age rely on to access no-cost, critical reproductive health care such as birth control, lifesaving cancer screenings, and maternity care.
- Every version of Trumpcare would dramatically reduce — or eliminate — access to financial assistance that helps 85 percent of people on the marketplace purchase insurance. This will reduce access to no-cost preventive services, including birth control, and life-saving care, such as prescription drug coverage.
- A number of versions of Trumpcare would impose a nationwide ban on private insurance coverage of abortion by prohibiting financial assistance from being used to pay for an abortion outside of rape, incest, and life endangerment. Plans could be subject to a penalty for violating this provision.
- A number of versions of Trumpcare would cut Essential Health Benefits protections, including maternity coverage and prescription drugs, which disproportionately affect women. [Thirteen million women](#) could lose coverage to maternity care under this bill. The U.S. maternal mortality rate is [rising](#), and considerable racial disparities persist. Maternal mortality rates among Black women are [four times higher](#) than white women.

In addition, the [Parliamentarian has ruled](#) that the provision to “defund” [Planned Parenthood](#) violates the Byrd Rule and should not be included in the Senate health care repeal bill, or any bill passed through the reconciliation process. Relatedly, the Parliamentarian also determined that abortion restrictions for tax credits also violate the Byrd Rule. This is not surprising news, given that both policies are very clearly motivated by a political agenda and are not primarily budgetary in nature. Targeting Planned Parenthood because Planned Parenthood provides abortion is an obvious violation of the Byrd Rule because the provision’s primary intent is clearly political, and the budgetary impact is ‘merely incidental’ to that purpose. No amount of legislative sleight of hand will change the fact that the primary motivation here is to pursue a social agenda by targeting Planned Parenthood because Planned Parenthood provides the full range of reproductive health care, including abortion.

There’s simply no way to rewrite the defund Planned Parenthood provision to get around the fact that it’s rooted in advancing a politically motivated agenda attacking reproductive health. For this reason, it is important to remember that historically, abortion policy hasn’t been allowed on reconciliation bills because it is political in nature. As former Senate parliamentarian Robert Dove said in an [NPR interview](#) regarding abortion policy, “It was my view that the provision was not there in order to save money. It was there to implement social policy. Therefore I ruled that it was not in order and it was stricken.”

Policy focused on advancing a social agenda (for example, targeting Planned Parenthood; targeting access to birth control or abortion) -- no matter how it is written -- is always going to violate Byrd, because the intent is clearly political, and not about the budget.

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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.