



Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Inc.

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Contact: Iris Riis
608-256-7549 x2132
iris.riis@ppwi.org

Governor Walker, Wisconsin Attorney General Agree to Pay for Overzealous Pursuit of Unconstitutional Restrictions on Safe, Legal Abortion

MADISON – Teri Huyck, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin issued the following statement today regarding the agreement by the State of Wisconsin to pay a total of \$1.6 million in legal fees and expenses incurred by three organizations, including Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, resulting from the State’s prolonged and unsuccessful attempt to defend its unconstitutional barriers to women’s access to safe and legal abortion:

“Governor Walker’s unconstitutional abortion restrictions have proven to be an expensive bill for the taxpayers of Wisconsin. Funds that would be better spent ensuring that women in Wisconsin had access to basic birth control and preventive health care are instead being wasted on unconstitutional restrictions aimed at blocking access to abortion in our state. The Attorney General has spent 2 years appealing one court decision after another striking down Wisconsin’s unnecessary admitting privileges requirement. Federal courts not only found that this law violated the U.S. Constitution but also compromised women’s health in Wisconsin. We call on Governor Walker and legislative leaders to stop passing unconstitutional abortion restrictions and instead invest government resources in preventive health care that ensures women and families are able to have intended pregnancies.”

Background information:

Since the passage of Act 37 in 2013 Planned Parenthood has been in court to protect patient access to safe, legal abortion. Act 37 is opposed by the medical community because it does nothing to enhance the health and safety of women seeking abortion. On July 5, 2013, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin filed an injunction against Act 37 to protect Wisconsin women’s access to safe and legal abortion, and on July 8, a temporary restraining order was granted. On August 2, a federal judge granted a preliminary injunction against the law allowing Planned Parenthood to continue providing safe and legal abortion services to Wisconsin women. At the time, U.S. District Judge William M. Conley concluded, “On this record, the admitting privileges requirement is a solution in search of a problem,” and continued, **“Devoid of any documentation of a medical need or purpose in Wisconsin, the Governor nevertheless signed the Act on July 5, 2013.”**

In March, 2015 Judge William Conley issued a final decision calling Act 37 an unconstitutional barrier to safe legal abortion. Conley’s strongly worded decision called the Walker-backed admitting privileges requirement **“a solution in search of a problem” with “no documented medical need or purpose.”** Judge Conley further stated, **“the only reasonable conclusion is**

that the legislation was motivated by an improper purpose, namely to restrict the availability of abortion services in Wisconsin.”

Governor Walker instructed the Wisconsin Attorney General to appeal the district court ruling to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. Last November, the Seventh Circuit upheld Judge Conley’s decision. In that ruling, the panel found that the law was designed to close down abortion clinics and had nothing to do with women’s health. Once again, the Attorney General appealed the Seventh Circuit’s clear decision and in June of this year, appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court declined to review the Seventh Circuit’s decision in light of the Court striking down a similar Texas law in *Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt*.

In addition to the Western District of Wisconsin and the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, the U.S. Supreme Court agrees that an admitting privileges requirement does not enhance patient safety and puts obstacles in the path of women seeking abortion.

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Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin is a nonprofit health care provider caring for 60,000 patients annually at 21 health centers. 97 percent of Planned Parenthood’s care is preventive health services including well woman exams, breast and cervical cancer screenings, birth control, HIV screening, and STD treatment.