



ACTION

February 20, 2020

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Dear members of the appropriation committee,

My name is Christina Bennett and I serve as the Communications Director for the Family Institute of Connecticut. In reference to Governor's Bill No. 5005, I urge you to oppose replacing the funding that Planned Parenthood walked away from after refusing to comply with Title X regulations. Planned Parenthood voluntarily declined over 2 million dollars and it isn't right for Connecticut taxpayers to have to make up that amount. In the fiscal year ending March 2018 Planned Parenthood of Southern New England brought in close to \$39 million in revenue. In addition to that over its last two fiscal years PPSNE reported an operating surplus of approximately \$11 million. As a business Planned Parenthood is supported by an extensive community of global donors which includes celebrities, political leaders and influential people. Planned Parenthood is more than capable of self funding their organization and making up for the loss from Title X.

Title X requires that organizations which receive their grants be financially and physically separate from abortion providers. Planned Parenthood was clearly in violation of this requirement. Title X locations cannot refer for abortion. This is an important requirement as abortion clinics should not be taxpayer-funded family planning centers. A Marist poll recently found out that 54 percent of Americans oppose any taxpayer funding of abortion. An extensive report from the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference revealed that Connecticut taxpayers pay for 75% of abortions in our state. Federal law prohibits paying for abortions through the Hyde Amendment and CT law states Medicaid will only pay for abortions that are deemed by a doctor to be "medically necessary". With 75% of abortions being paid for through Medicaid it is clear "medically necessary" can and does mean anything a doctor wants it to mean.

According to state law found on the cga.ct.gov website "DSS regulations state that DSS will pay physicians for all abortions that a physician certifies as medically necessary, regardless of the (1) woman's life would be endangered by carrying the fetus to term or (2) pregnancy is a result of rape or incest. The physician alone determines medical necessity and perhaps this accounts for horror stories I've heard from women of color over the years regarding abortion. One of those stories includes a CT woman who had multiple abortions which led to her being infertile. When I asked why the doctor performed so many abortions in spite of potential health consequences I was told he didn't care about the client's health but rather billing Medicaid. A dear friend who had an abortion in CT stated she was asked no questions about her health. The only thing she needed to give was her Medicaid info. These stories and more speak to a system that is already being abused where women are seen as numbers and state funded abortions are offered as a quick solution to the societal ills of poor women of color.

In contrast to Planned Parenthood clinics, CT's pregnancy resource centers offer support and care for women with no cost to taxpayers. Pregnancy centers raise all of their own support which is used to offer free ultrasounds, parenting classes, material resources and more. Tragically pregnancy centers are harassed by discriminatory legislation while abortion clinics receive support from our lawmakers. In addition there is a need for federally qualified health centers and community centers to receive more financial support. For these reasons I urge you to not give Planned Parenthood additional funding that would come at the expense of our already burdened CT taxpayers.