

STOPPING TAXPAYER DOLLARS FROM SUBSIDIZING ABORTION

by Connor Semelsberger, MPP

Ever since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, there have been bipartisan efforts in Congress and many states to stop taxpayer funds from paying for abortions or going to the abortion industry. These actions reflect the consistent polling which shows nearly 60 percent of Americans oppose funding abortions. However, these efforts are under attack and Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion business, still receives millions of dollars in government funds. Here is what you need to know about government funding of abortion.

THE HYDE AMENDMENT

Congressman Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) led the first effort in Congress to prohibit Medicaid funds from paying for abortions by offering an amendment to the annual Health and Human Services (HHS) appropriations bill. What is now known as the Hyde Amendment was first adopted to the HHS appropriations bill in 1976, and has been passed by a bipartisan majority in each annual spending bill ever since. However, because of the nature of federal spending, this measure must be passed annually and is only one spending cycle away from being repealed.

Because Medicaid is a joint federal and state program, many states followed suit and passed their own version of the Hyde Amendment. Currently, 34 have policies restricting state Medicaid funds from paying for elective abortion. However, the remaining 16 states use their own Medicaid funds to pay for abortion. Nine of these states do so because of court orders which force them to fund elective abortions, but Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, New York, Oregon, and Washington have voluntarily chosen to fund abortions with taxpayer dollars.

FUNDING FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD AND OTHER ABORTION BUSINESSES

Despite these great efforts to prohibit public funding for abortions, abortion businesses are still funded with taxpayer dollars. Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion business having done 8.2 million abortions since 1973, received \$616.8 million of government funds in 2019 alone. The most recent government report on federal funding for Planned Parenthood revealed that in 2015 Planned Parenthood received nearly \$500 million in federal taxpayer funds.

\$414.37 million - Medicaid

\$57.28 million - Title X Family Planning Program

\$5.83 million - Maternal and Child Services Block Grant

\$5.44 million - Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program

\$15.81 million - Miscellaneous grants and contracts



The two largest sources of federal funding that Planned Parenthood receives are from Medicaid and Title X.

- **Medicaid:** Individual Planned Parenthood affiliates will perform health care services like cancer screenings, breast exams, or prenatal services for Medicaid recipients and then are reimbursed for those services from the state. The federal government then reimburses states for a percentage of their overall Medicaid expenses.
- **Title X:** This is a federal family planning program in which grants are given out directly to individual health facilities like Planned Parenthood or to state health agencies which then award the grants to local health clinics to provide contraception, natural family planning, cancer screenings, and other services. These funds cannot be used for abortions, but it is up to federal regulations on whether they can go to abortion businesses or not. Since 1993, Planned Parenthood has been able to receive Title X funds as a direct grantee and subgrantee until 2019 when President Trump issued new regulations separating abortion facilities from the Title X Family Planning Program.
- Abortion businesses cannot use federal funds directly for abortions. However, they do receive millions of dollars to perform other services which then frees up more private money to hire abortionists, pay for abortions, or build abortion facilities. There are several pass-throughs before the federal funds end up in the hands of Planned Parenthood affiliates. Even so, this still equates to \$500 million annually in federal funding.

DEVELOPING LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO DEFUND ABORTION

Legislatures can do more to fully cut off abortion businesses from government funding. Congress needs to codify the Hyde Amendment into permanent law so that it is not subject to annual attacks through the federal spending process. Congress can also take legislative action to ban abortion businesses from Medicaid, Title X, and other various federal programs. So far, Congress has not taken substantive action to further defund abortion businesses. Therefore, state legislatures have taken the initiative to end subsidies for the abortion industry.



Sixteen states have passed laws to cut out abortion businesses from receiving any federal Title X family planning grants. In addition, 16 states have gone even further to defund abortion businesses from state funding and grants, and 12 states have taken legislative or administrative action to cut out abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood from Medicaid. However, because of the federal Medicaid statute which restricts the state's ability to regulate Medicaid providers, no state has been successful in defunding abortion businesses completely in Medicaid.

Abortion is an act which ends the life of an innocent human being and can cause lasting physical and mental harm to the mother. Though legal, abortion is a moral wrong and is not something that should be endorsed or subsidized by the government. Research shows that the Hyde Amendment alone has saved a total of 2,409,311 lives. The common ground consensus that public funding should not be used for abortion has been in place for decades. This policy should not only be maintained, but further strengthened to ensure that no taxpayer funding goes towards promoting abortion as legitimate health care.

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