



Reality Check on Governor Rick Scott's Reasons For Not Defunding Planned Parenthood

1) GOVERNOR SCOTT'S CLAIM:

It would violate federal law if Governor Scott terminated Planned Parenthood's Medicaid contract.

"In a rare moment of agreement, Scott and Planned Parenthood questioned the governor's authority to do that. 'If the state were to take action to exclude Florida Planned Parenthood affiliates from Medicaid this would be in clear violation of federal law,' Planned Parenthood Spokesperson Goodhue wrote. 'Only around \$45,000 in state match goes through the federal Medicaid program to Planned Parenthood offices in our state, and that is guided through the federal Medicaid formula in compliance with federal law,' Scott spokeswoman Jackie Schutz wrote in an email."

--Margie Menzel, Oct 1, 2015, CBS / News Service of Florida

REALITY:

States not only have the obligation, but the legal right to terminate the Medicaid contracts of those healthcare providers who are no longer deemed qualified. In fact, the powers of a state Medicaid program to exclude a provider are broader than those of the federal government. A state Medicaid program may exclude a health care provider from participation "for any reason for which the Secretary could exclude the [provider] from participation" (i.e., the grounds for discretionary exclusion enumerated above) "[i]n addition to any other authority." 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(p)(1) (emphasis added).

Moreover, exclusion of Medicaid providers for a variety of reasons is relatively common and rarely challenged. According to the HHS Office of the Inspector General, over 9,000 providers have been excluded as Medicaid providers over the last two decades. In Florida, executive action has terminated hundreds over the past two decades. Exclusion of a Medicaid provider is thus nothing new. It is a common experience for states to suspend or terminate a Medicaid provider's participation in the program. Planned Parenthood is no exception.

Finally, it should be noted that the disqualification of Planned Parenthood from any state Medicaid program would not deny anyone a meaningful choice of providers. Planned Parenthood represents a very small part of the Medicaid-eligible providers in every state. Governor Scott clearly has the authority to disqualify Planned Parenthood, and he should not give Planned Parenthood a free pass. Were they any other Medicaid provider, they would have already been disqualified.

2) GOVERNOR SCOTT'S CLAIM:

Planned Parenthood receives state funding for good women's health programs which do not violate any state or federal laws.

"The state has contracts at three Planned Parenthood clinics which are used for newborn health screens and various health services. Those contracts require Planned Parenthood to comply with all state and federal laws." [Scott spokeswoman Jackie Schutz]"

--Margie Menzel, Oct 1, 2015, CBS / News Service of Florida

REALITY:

Our state tax dollars are not being sent to an organization which complies with all state and federal laws. Planned Parenthood chapters across the country work together as a “federation” and have an extensive record of audits, investigations and fines for waste, fraud and illegal activity, and are currently being investigated, criminally and civilly, at every level for offenses including failure to report statutory rape, failure to comply with parental involvement laws, and failure to comply with health and safety clinic regulations.

Women and children should have access to the best care. Governor Scott can and should facilitate this goal by directing tax dollars away from Planned Parenthood and to one or more of the 600+ federally qualified community health clinics which are not scandal ridden and provide a broader spectrum of health services to women, men, and families.

3) GOVERNOR SCOTT’S CLAIM:

When violations of the law are found, he investigates and enforces the law.

“When we found that some of their [Planned Parenthood] facilities were not complying with state law, we held them accountable,” Scott said in a statement released by his office.”

-- Brendan Farrington, Oct 1, 2015, Associated Press / SaintPetersBlog

REALITY:

The job of any Governor is to enforce the law, and we appreciate Governor Scott for doing that. Yet any Governor, regardless of whether they are pro-life or pro-abortion, should enforce the law and hold people accountable for violating it. This includes dutifully investigating serious allegations of misconduct, and Planned Parenthood has certainly had its fair share of allegations. Governor Scott’s statements that he will ensure healthcare clinics comply with the law are at odds with this fact. Hundreds of thousands of Floridians have worked for and elected the Governor who ran on a platform vowing he would defend life and protect the health and safety of women. Under Governor Scott’s jurisdiction, however, Planned Parenthood in Florida and nationwide continues to avoid meaningful scrutiny despite waste, fraud and scandal. We are simply asking Governor Scott to do what six other states have done to defund Planned Parenthood from receiving our state taxpayer dollars.

4) GOVERNOR SCOTT’S CLAIM

Governor Scott unapologetically refuses to defund Planned Parenthood just because he does not want to.

“Gov. Rick Scott has no interest in cancelling the state’s Medicaid contracts with Planned Parenthood. Spokeswoman Jackie Schutz confirmed that the governor has no intentions to cancel the contracts after the conservative Florida Family Policy Council went after Scott on Thursday, demanding that he cancel the contracts.” – Michael Auslen, Oct 2, 2015, Miami Herald

REALITY:

Hundreds of thousands of pro-life voters in Florida elected Governor Scott and this is the most important pro-life issue that has faced our state in decades. It is not unreasonable to request that Governor Scott provide strong pro-life leadership and join the other Governors around the country who have stopped hard earned state tax dollars from going to the unethical, fraudulent and wasteful organization that is Planned Parenthood. Taxpayer funding should be redirected, away from Planned Parenthood and toward clinics neither under investigation nor engaged in illegal activity, thereby revealing options that provide the best care for women and children. If Governor Scott continues to refuse to defund the largest abortion provider in America then this moral and leadership failure will sadly become a permanent part of his political legacy.