

# Power Up!

... A newsletter filled with thoughts for powerful Planned Parenthood people.

October Edition



## Defunding Bill Fails

By Jenny Kinne, West Michigan Organizer

It is hard to believe that our conservative leadership has threatened to shut down the National Government over Planned Parenthood AGAIN. Women's healthcare has become such a powerful political tool that it governs our national budget conversations... What?! That never gets less crazy to me.

Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz told reporters to GOP should use "any and every procedural tool available" to defund Planned Parenthood. Never mind that Planned Parenthood services millions of women and families with birth control, STI testing, pregnancy testing, vasectomies, prenatal care, and more. No! Abortion, a Constitutional and basic healthcare service, has become so deeply politicized that it can shut down the most powerful government in the world.

Thankfully, a bill aiming to defund Planned Parenthood's non-abortion services failed in the US Senate. The fight is not over, however. Simply watch the GOP Presidential Candidate Debates, and you can see that Planned Parenthood will be at the forefront of an ugly debate for the foreseeable future. One of the best things we can do right now is share our stories. It is time for our government, elected officials, and candidates to know that Planned Parenthood benefits real women and families – we are not convenient political statements; we are people.



## House Hearing on Planned Parenthood

By Linda Hanes, West Michigan Volunteer

On Sept. 29, Planned Parenthood's president, Cecile Richards testified in a congressional hearing at the behest of conservative republicans calling for the defunding of Planned Parenthood in reaction to the heavily edited viral videos put out this summer by The Center for Medical Progress. As a side note, The Center for Medical Progress is not actually a medical organization - the name was used as a front for anti-abortion activists.

Cecile Richards had the best of intentions to inform Congress and the public of the services Planned Parenthood offers, but the hearing turned into mansplaining 101. During the hearing, Richards was interrupted by various republicans a total of 44 times. Richards maintained her composure as she attempted to offer comprehensive answers about fetal tissue donation, Planned Parenthood's services, and the organizations finances. But she was continually interrupted and bombarded with more questions before she could even finish speaking.

Planned Parenthood receives \$450 million each year from the federal government although no federal funds can go to abortion care because of the Hyde Amendment. Republicans were arguing that all funding should be ceased in light of the tissue donation controversy. In addition to misinformed questions about the "sale" of fetal tissue, Richards was also questioned repeatedly about her salary which democratic representative Carolyn Maloney pointed out was an absolutely absurd thing to drill someone about. "I first would like to register my opposition and my objection to the chairman beating up on a woman, on our witness today, for making a good salary," Maloney said. "In the entire time I've been in Congress I've never seen a witness beaten up and questioned about their salary."

The whole ordeal was disappointing and counterproductive seeing as someone is brought to speak at a congressional hearing so that they can actually speak their side. The hearing became more of a witch hunt than an actual governmental process. This was a literal case of men speaking on the behalf of women and not allowing a proper and fair testimony to be made simply because of ignorance. Where this could have been an opportunity for both republicans and democrats alike to have an open conversation about abortion and Planned Parenthood as an organization, it became nothing more than a zoo; an act put on for show but not effective in practice.



## Why I Volunteer for Planned Parenthood

By Linda Hanes, West Michigan Volunteer

I absolutely love being a volunteer at Planned Parenthood! It not only makes me feel better to know that I am giving back to my community, but it has also helped me to find a purpose in life. As a college student about to graduate, I felt a little lost and unsure what direction I wanted my life to go in. But Planned Parenthood has helped me discover a passion for public health.

I had always cared about Planned Parenthood but going to the activist nights has really given me the confidence to be able to share the message of the work Planned Parenthood does. In addition, I have been able to network and be inspired by likeminded people in my community who have been able to act as a mentor to me. I feel so empowered by my involvement with the organization because every month at the activist nights I learn that I can really make a difference in our country and change the public perception of Planned Parenthood.

This past summer I was able to work at a tabling event during the Gay Pride Festival in Kalamazoo and it was an amazing experience! It was so nice to get out and talk to my friends and neighbors about the services Planned Parenthood offers. It was unbelievably gratifying to have people come up to me and tell me their stories of how Planned Parenthood has helped them throughout their lives. Especially working at a gay pride event, it made me feel proud of this organization that I love when someone would say that as a member of the LGBT community, they valued PP as a safe space to go for non-judgmental, accurate medical care.

Through my work with Planned Parenthood, I have been fortunate to meet other passionate individuals and together we were able to organize a counter-protest in the beginning of October when a right to life group camped out in front of our local Planned Parenthood calling for its defunding. The counter-protest was wildly successful and we were even able to make it on the news. My favorite part about the whole thing was holding up a "honk 4 choice" sign which showed just how much support we had. We effectively drowned out the hate filled speeches of our opponents with encouraging honks and cheers. It was a small act that I think was able to make a big difference because even if one person drove by, saw us, and felt supported in their decision to have an abortion, then the day was a major accomplishment. I would urge any other supporters of PP to get out there and be vocal. In this political climate we need to make sure our needs and wants are heard.



## Why I Stand with Planned Parenthood

By Amanda Le'Anne, West Michigan Volunteer

I'd like to share my story on why I stand with Planned Parenthood. Even in high school I used Planned Parenthood to make reproductive choices for myself but it wasn't until I was 25 that Planned Parenthood saved me. In 2009 I was a US Navy Veteran, a college student, and a woman who went to the bar one night as the designated driver for her friends. I was drinking water all night, but that night I was drugged with the date rape drug GHB. It is odorless and colorless and my rapist didn't realize I was drinking water.

9 hours from my last memory I was found 10 miles away from the bar that I was last at, with no memory of the previous hours and my clothes torn off. In my hysteria, I was taken to a local hospital, which happened to be the local Catholic hospital as I am a practicing Catholic. They didn't do a rape kit or give me anything to prevent pregnancy from my rape because of their "Catholic Values". Instead after finding GHB in my system, I had to go down to the local Planned Parenthood where they provided me with care.

For one year I got treatment at Planned Parenthood. This was a blessing for many reasons. One, I couldn't afford healthcare so I was on a sliding scale for my treatments (this was before the Affordable Healthcare Act time and I had a pre existing condition rendering me without Health Insurance). Two I had to get testing for STI testing and treatments at

one month, two months, three months, six months and one year. Sadly, I contracted Herpes from my rape which still to this day is a reminder of that night when I have an outbreak. At the time it was close to \$400 for a months supply of Valtrex without insurance at my local pharmacy. Without the care of Planned Parenthood I would have been much worse off.

If Planned Parenthood is defunded, what will happen to the next rape victim? What happens to the young couple who is not ready to start a family? Or how will they get their education on safe sex? What happens to the student who needs to get her Pap Smear and Breast Exam? This is why I stand with Planned Parenthood. They saved me in 2009. I was treated with respect and dignity and was not slut shamed for what happened to me. (Nor should any rape victim). I was taught safe sex practices, and as a practicing Catholic, how to use the Natural Family Planning Method properly (because going to my church wasn't an option to get education).

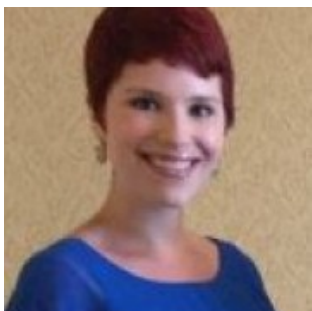
Unlike many religious people I believe it's a right to decide when you want to reproduce. As a veteran, I served my country so all Americans were equal, this does not change depending on your gender, religious, or socioeconomic status. Laws are to be made to protect people and I whole heartedly believe in freedom OF religion and freedom FROM religion. I have many friends who are pro-life and dislike Planned Parenthood for what "they" do, according to the media. I'm Pro-Planned Parenthood because I am Pro-Life. I believe when you have the choice to decide when is the best time to bring another human into this world you are doing everyone a service. I couldn't have supported a child then, or now, nor do I want to.

When I watch politicians now, I'm reminded of my oath I took when I joined the military. I did not wear a military uniform to only watch public officials create laws that hurt my fellow American citizens. I now have healthcare and a great Ob/Gyn and general practitioner who manages my care. But I know that if for any reason I couldn't see them I would always be able to go to Planned Parenthood. I know my story on why I support Planned Parenthood is one that sadly, many women share. I know many other stories as well.

I take my little sister for example. A few years ago she had a scare of Ovarian Cancer. Turns out she had a Molar Pregnancy. It was testing done at Planned Parenthood that discovered that and I know my little sister goes to our local Planned Parenthood for her yearly pap smears.

To defund Planned Parenthood would be a mistake. Over half a billion dollars is given to Planned Parenthood between the federal, state and sometimes local governments. Its is because of the Hyde Amendment, that abortions are NOT funded through government funds. (Except in the case of rape, incest or the life of the mother which many would agree is appropriate). This is something the media and anti-Planned Parenthood supporters often times forgets to mention as a scare tactic. I know Planned Parenthood was and is available to me and millions of other Americans.

I plan to use my voice as a Veteran to do exactly what Planned Parenthood does, to educate people and to tell my story. Because one day, I hope when the time is right, I will be able to bring my future daughter (or son) to experience the greatness of Planned Parenthood.



## **#PinkOut for Planned Parenthood!**

**By Lauren Bacans, Mid Michigan Organizer**

What do Planned Parenthood supporters do when false attacks go viral? We take over the internet.

On September 29, supporters around the world participated in #PinkOut – a day to celebrate the healthcare services and support Planned Parenthood

provides to women every day.



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In Michigan, all 21 health centers, the administrative sites, and call centers participated in #PinkOut Day with staff parties, photos and more for a total of 25 staff events! In the field, we held 4 external Outreach events in 3 cities including – a legislative photos opportunity, a press conference, a happy hour, and a canvassing day, engaging 21 volunteers throughout the course of the day. Of course, Michigan turned the internet pink as well! Throughout the day, we posted 53 times on a variety of social networks, and our content was shared 93 times. Michigan knows how to #PinkOut. You can see all of our photos on Facebook!



Of course, it wasn't just staff joining in the fun. On campus, Students for Choice took over!



University of Michigan Students for Choice took over campus! Overnight before #PinkOut, they chalked the main passing area of campus (The Diag), and painted The Rock pink. Painting the rock is a campus tradition for student organizations. During #PinkOut, they took over the Posting Wall, an indoor passing area in one of the most highly trafficked campus buildings to create a giant Planned Parenthood logo. Their activism isn't ending with that though! They used their momentum to host a Planned Parenthood Diag Day on October 1st!

Eastern Michigan University Students for Choice set up in the Student Center with a table, petitions, and a photo campaign. They even used #PinkOut to launch their Instagram account! A newer student group, they've received immense amounts of support on campus, and #PinkOut was no exception. Their photo campaign had dozens of participants. #PinkOut helped them to recruit new members for the ambitious events they're planning later this year!

Michigan State University Students for Choice used #PinkOut to launch their Instagram! They have a number of campus events and trainings in the works and used the day to build excitement and find new supporters. Students for Choice members joined the PPAM's #PinkOut Healthy Neighborhood Canvass as well, to build support for the Lansing area health center.

Kalamazoo Activists came out to support and appreciate Planned Parenthood at a Pink Out Happy Hour that included games, prizes, and wonderful conversation.

Finally, PPAM's East Michigan Organizer, Christina, accompanied 5 volunteers to Washington, D.C. for the national #PinkOut celebration. While there, Michigan volunteers met Planned Parenthood Action President Cecile Richards, went on visits to 5 Congressional offices, and even tried to deliver petitions to John Boehner (who didn't answer his door).