

This White House seems to want good politics, not good policy. Officials in this administration have said they want to make electricity rates skyrocket, and they want to make examples out of people who get in the way. They are tired of having to work with the Congress the people elected. That is why the administration is now trying to impose these deeply regressive regulations—regulations that may be illegal, won't meaningfully impact the global environment, and will likely harm middle and lower class Americans the most—by executive fiat. It represents a triumph of blind ideology over sound policy and honest compassion.

In Kentucky, these regulations would likely mean fewer jobs, shuttered powerplants, and higher electricity costs for families and businesses. I am not going to sit by while the White House takes aim at the lifeblood of our State's economy. I am going to keep doing everything I can to fight them.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the revelations we have seen from Planned Parenthood are deeply disturbing. They raise fundamental questions about what kind of society we want to be, so I want to thank Senators ERNST, PAUL, LANKFORD, and a number of others, for accepting my invitation to lead the effort on the Senate's response.

The legislation they worked to develop is all about restoring America's commitment to care and to compassion. It would fund women's health, not Planned Parenthood, and we will take a vote to advance it tonight. Instead of subsidizing a political group, this bill would protect Federal funding for health services for women. Instead of subsidizing a political group, this bill would ensure funds continue to flow to community health centers and hospitals that provide more comprehensive health services and may have many more facilities nationwide. Instead of subsidizing a political group, this bill would help women receive health services, such as screenings, prenatal and post-natal care, well-child care, diagnostic laboratory and radiology services, immunizations, and other care they need. That is a true commitment to women's health. That is real compassion.

I know Democrats have relied on Planned Parenthood as an ally recently, but they must be moved by the horrifying images we have all seen. They must be shocked by the utter lack of compassion that has been on display. They must care about women's health as much as they care about some scandal-plagued political organization. That is why tonight I am asking them to truly reflect on what is important. I am asking them not to block this funding for women's health just to protect some political group mired in scandal. Women deserve better, and our country deserves better.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, here is an excerpt from an article in the Republican leader's hometown newspaper, the Louisville Courier-Journal:

Sara Hall started going to Planned Parenthood when she was in her late teens and needed birth control, and she's gotten care there ever since.

Without them, "I wouldn't have a doctor to see. I don't know where I would have gone. It would have meant I wouldn't get the care I needed."

Like Sara, millions of American women depend on Planned Parenthood for much needed health services. Every year, Planned Parenthood helps women, just like Sara, get the important services they need, such as birth control measures, but it is more than just birth control.

Here are a few of the health services Planned Parenthood provides to American women, and they did it, for example, in 2013. Half a million women went to Planned Parenthood for breast cancer screening, 400,000 women received a cervical exam from Planned Parenthood's medical staff, and 4.5 million treatments and tests for sexually transmitted diseases and infections were performed. Yet, here we are once again, faced with another Republican attempt to limit women's access to health care.

A few hours from now, the Senate will vote on a Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood. Let's understand what that vote means. Defunding Planned Parenthood would limit American women's access to critical health services, such as contraception, breast and cancer screenings, and well-women visits. This legislation is just another Republican attack on the health care of millions of women, like Sara from Kentucky.

Over the past few months, Republicans have worked to trick American women into believing Republicans don't want to limit women's access to contraceptives or other critical health services provided by Planned Parenthood, but votes like the one we are going to take in a couple of hours lay bare the truth. The cold, hard fact is that a vote to defund Planned Parenthood is a vote to limit women's access to cancer screenings, contraceptives, and other important services that Planned Parenthood provides.

Our Nation is already facing a shortage of primary care providers. For many women, Planned Parenthood is their preferred medical provider. One in five American women will go to Planned Parenthood for services at some time during their lives. Defunding Planned Parenthood and reducing the number of providers available for women to receive contraceptives and other critical health services

would reduce women's access to good health, and more importantly, their access to care, which is very direct and to the point.

To put it another way, the demand for care would still exist, but there would be fewer providers to render this care. And for many women, Planned Parenthood may be the only provider where they can seek medical help. Republicans are trying to eliminate their access to health centers.

Last Thursday, I listened to the senior Senator from Texas, where he claimed this bill we are going to vote on soon would actually increase access to care for women. I am surprised this distinguished Member of the Senate, a longtime member of the Texas Supreme Court, would say something like that.

He and other Republicans believe, I guess, that clinics like community health centers will pick up the slack should Planned Parenthood be defunded. That is simply not true. I am a strong supporter of community health centers. It is part of ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act, because I believe in community health centers. We put billions of dollars in that bill, and during the years it has been in existence, it has done so much to provide help for community health centers, but we still have far, far much to do. There are not enough community health centers, even with what we have done, to increase their ability to meet the current demand. To throw in a few more women who have been knocked out of Planned Parenthood—and "a few" is a pejorative term; it would be millions of women—is wrong.

The director of women's health policy at the Kaiser Family Foundation says: "Across the nation, Community health centers are already at capacity."

Take a look, for example, at the assistant Republican leader's home State of Texas. A recent report from George Washington University detailed what it would take for other providers to replace Planned Parenthood—exactly what the senior Senator from Texas has suggested.

For example, in Midland County, TX, there would have to be an increase of 537 percent by non-Planned Parenthood clinics, if Planned Parenthood is defunded. Lubbock County would see an increase of 250 percent. Community health centers cannot handle that, nor can they handle that increase in heavily populated Dallas County, where it would be an almost 200-percent increase.

What the Republican legislation does is makes it nearly impossible for women who need medical attention to get the care they need. If women cannot go get health care from Planned Parenthood, where do they go?

Take a look at what happened in the State of Indiana in 2011, when that State's legislature voted to deny State funding for Planned Parenthood health centers. Republicans then argued that

other health care providers would bridge the gap and absorb Planned Parenthood patients. They asserted that other providers would take care of those women just fine.

So what are those other health care providers for women that the Indiana Republicans said could take the place of the State's Planned Parenthood health centers? Prisons—listen to this—prisons, they suggested, juvenile detention centers, and homeless shelters. These are certainly not the kinds of places my Republican colleagues would want to send their daughters, sisters or wives for care.

It is common sense—if you take away Planned Parenthood health centers, women will have no ability to access care, and most will go without the care they need.

The Republican senior Senator from Maine agrees. Here is what she said:

The problem is, in my state and many others, Planned Parenthood is the primary provider of women's health services in certain parts of my state. So I don't know how you would ensure that all of the patients of Planned Parenthood could be absorbed by alternative care providers.

In Nevada, Planned Parenthood centers there serve about 22,000 patients a year. Where will these patients go if the Republicans' legislation passes? I do not know. They will not get the care they need, that is for sure.

Senate Republicans are not being fair to American women. They are trying to shift the responsibility to someone who does not exist.

It is our responsibility in the Senate to ensure that American women have access to care. It is our obligation to protect our wives, our sisters, our daughters, and our granddaughters from the absurd policies of a Republican Party that has lost its moral compass. Today, Senate Democrats will do just that. This Planned Parenthood bill is not going anywhere in the Senate. Senate Democrats will fight this vigorously and any other attempt from Republicans to deprive American women health care.

Mr. President, I do not see anyone here to speak. I would ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

PROHIBITING FEDERAL FUNDING OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1881, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 169, S. 1881, a bill to prohibit Federal funding of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise to discuss Federal funding for Planned Parenthood.

Every now and then we see something that is so horrific that we must answer it. And by now, we are all familiar with the deeply disturbing videos of Planned Parenthood doctors cavalierly discussing their practice and methods of harvesting baby body parts.

Like so many Nebraskans, I am shocked by the lack of compassion for these women and their unborn babies.

My colleague and friend from Iowa, Senator JONI ERNST, has introduced legislation that takes immediate action and cuts off funding for this scandal-plagued organization. I am proud to join her in sponsoring this very important legislation.

This bill has nothing to do with whether one is pro-life or pro-choice. It is not going to settle the issue of abortion, which has divided our country for over 40 years. This bill simply says that taxpayer dollars should not go to organizations mired in scandal and likely illegal activity. This has nothing to do with ideology. It has nothing to do with religious conviction. This is about the responsible and conscientious use of Federal tax dollars.

Elected officials have a responsibility to be wise stewards of public funding. I believe it is irresponsible to continue to support funding for a group that has lost the public's trust and engages in violations of Federal law.

I believe it is important to note that Federal law clearly prohibits abortion providers from the intentional manipulation of the bodies of unborn children for the purposes of obtaining body parts. Section 498A of title 42 of the U.S. Code clearly states:

In research carried out under subsection (a) of this section, human fetal tissue may be used only if the attending physician with respect to obtaining the tissue from the woman involved makes a statement, made in writing and signed by the physician, declaring that—No alteration of the timing, method, or procedures used to terminate the pregnancy was made solely for the purposes of obtaining the tissue.

A video released on July 21, 2015, details a Planned Parenthood doctor discussing using a "less crunchy" abortion technique to get more whole specimens. Let me repeat the law: A doctor must certify that "no alteration of the timing, method, or procedures used to terminate the pregnancy was made solely for the purposes of obtaining the tissue."

Senators can reach their own conclusions.

I think the truth is pretty self-evident, and I believe the law and these videos speak for themselves.

I wish to address another important point. This legislation is not an attack on women's health. To the contrary, as a mother and a grandmother, I am

steadfastly committed to ensuring that all women have access to high-quality medical care. The legislation I intend to support today redirects funds to local health departments, hospitals, and community health centers.

Our focus should be on supporting organizations that prioritize women's health, not organizations hiring pricey PR firms for damage control.

Across the country there are 1,200 Federally qualified health centers and 9,000 clinic sites. These community health centers vastly outnumber the roughly 700 Planned Parenthood facilities nationwide. In Nebraska, we have 6 health centers and 36 clinic sites that have served over 64,000 people. These centers serve all of Nebraska—from the panhandle to our metropolitan areas in Omaha and Lincoln. Fifty-two percent of those patients are uninsured and 30 percent are on Medicaid. Meanwhile, there are only two Planned Parenthood centers in Nebraska.

So it begs the question: Wouldn't patients be better served if that money was redirected to community health centers? I believe the answer is yes. These health centers deliver many—and sometimes more—of the health services provided by Planned Parenthood. In 2012 alone, federally qualified health centers performed 400,000 mammograms and over 2 million cervical cancer screenings.

These health centers are better able to respond to the needs of these women because they are closer to the communities they serve. They are indispensable in providing preventive health services and preventive screenings to the uninsured and our medically underserved populations.

In conclusion, I believe elected officials have a basic duty to stop sending tax dollars to an organization mired in scandal and likely illicit activity.

It is time for us to come together and support truly compassionate care for women and their unborn children. It is time to cut funding for Planned Parenthood and to use that money for its original intent, which is providing resources and care for women's health.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on an issue that has shaken the moral compass of our society. The phrase "it's a boy" is one we often use when celebrating new life. Instead, this was spoken by a Planned Parenthood employee as the body of an unborn baby boy was picked apart and harvested for organs, such as a liver, kidneys, and heart. We have watched