

Colorado 11-8-99

Planned Parenthood does the right thing

Planned Parenthood has finally been driven to do what they should have done nearly 20 years ago. It recently split the organization and decided to play by societal rules and honor the law. They were forced to accept that they have no legal right to

receive funds for abortion services.



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Community

In 1984, a majority of people voted to add an amendment to the Colorado Constitution that forbid the use of public funds in performing abortions. Contra-

ception and abortion are two different issues in the minds of voters. Previous administrations under Govs Richard Lamm and Roy Romer basically ignored the law, even after Planned Parenthood sued and lost, and then, appealed and lost.

Finally, and only after funds were cut off, Planned Parenthood did what it should have done years ago. It split off abortion services from the contraceptive services organization so that it may continue to obtain government funding for contraceptive services not affected by the 1984 amendment. In spite of fear tactics used to mislead the public into thinking that funding for women's health services "may" not occur, there's no doubt Planned Parenthood will receive funding for those services.

It should have separated the organization a long time ago in order to preserve its integrity and not appear defiant of the law. It's no wonder Planned Parenthood received criticism for accepting public money for abortion services. After all, in doing so it ignored the amendment to the Colorado Constitution and the wishes of a majority of voters. Previous state government leaders enabled it to do so by blatantly granting funds for 15 years in spite of the Constitutional amendment.

The following is taken from the Colorado Constitution, Article 5, Section 50. It is titled "Public Funding of Abortion Forbidden," and says "No public funds shall be used by the State of Colorado, its agencies or political subdivisions to pay or otherwise reimburse, either directly or indirectly, any person, agency or facility for the performance of any induced abortion, provided however, that the General Assembly, by specific bill, may authorize and appropriate funds to be used for those medical services necessary to prevent the death of either a pregnant woman or her unborn child under circumstances where every reasonable effort is made to preserve the life of each."

There are exceptions outlined in the Human Services Code which allow abortions for life-threatening circumstances. That should have appeased those who didn't vote for the change to the Constitution.

It is not difficult to understand why Jane Norton, the new Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, decided to take a bold step in cutting off funding to Planned Parenthood. Abiding by the law — what a concept! She risked much criticism and bravely decided we aren't supposed to pick and choose which laws to abide by and which to ignore, based on whether you like the particular law or not.

Imagine this — what if the tables were turned? What if the majority of people had voted to grant public funding of abortion services and the state government withheld the funding arbitrarily? Imagine the resulting cry for justice and requests for abiding by the law if the tables were turned. Before criticizing the Colorado Department of Public Health for abiding by the law, think about what you'd do if the tables were turned and it was an issue that mattered to you!

People sometimes see what they want to see and don't see what they don't want to see. It's important to respect the law, whether you are pro-choice or pro-life. If you don't like the law, work to change the law, but don't ignore it.

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