



October 7, 2015

Vote "NO" on H. Res 461

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union, please find attached our letter urging a NO vote on H. Res. 461, which would establish a select panel of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Please contact Georgeanne Usova with any questions at (202) 675-2338 or gusova@aclu.org.

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Sincerely,

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Georgeanne M. Usova
Legislative Counsel

ACLU Recommends a NO Vote on H. Res. 461

H. Res. 461 would target Planned Parenthood by establishing a select panel of the Committee on Energy and Commerce to investigate the organization, based solely on widely discredited, heavily edited videos.

This resolution continues the recent onslaught of attacks against Planned Parenthood specifically and women's access to safe, legal abortion broadly. Although this resolution does not explicitly name Planned Parenthood, there is no question that it is yet another facet of the ongoing smear campaign against the organization, premised entirely on deceptively edited videos¹ that misrepresent the practice of fetal tissue donation for medical research. Investigations recently completed in six states have cleared Planned Parenthood of all wrongdoing.² Additionally, none of the congressional committees already investigating Planned Parenthood have found any evidence of unlawful activity³—in fact, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, even stated that he is “not suggesting they broke the law.”⁴

Despite the fact that numerous investigations are already underway and Planned Parenthood has cooperated fully by turning over tens of thousands of pages of documents and voluntarily providing answers to extensive questions from Congress,⁵ H. Res. 461 would launch an additional unnecessary and potentially very wide-ranging investigation. The broad language of the resolution could result in the creation of a new forum to attack not only Planned Parenthood, but also the practice of safe, legal abortion—an essential health care service to which women have a constitutionally protected right.

This latest attempt to undermine Planned Parenthood threatens to devastate access to the high quality, affordable health care services that its health centers provide to 2.7 million women and men every year. Patients across the country trust and rely on Planned Parenthood for vital preventive care, including cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, and contraception, in addition to abortion. Planned Parenthood is a critical safety-net provider: one in five women will visit Planned Parenthood for health care during her lifetime, and many low-income women and women of color rely on Planned Parenthood for primary care. This resolution is squarely aimed at cutting off their access to comprehensive health care.

For the above reasons, we urge you to vote NO on H. Res. 461.

¹ Jackie Calmes, *Planned Parenthood Videos Were Altered, Analysis Finds*, N.Y. Times, Aug. 27, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/28/us/abortion-planned-parenthood-videos.html?_r=0.

² Investigations in Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and South Dakota have cleared Planned Parenthood of wrongdoing. See, e.g. Irin Carmon, *Missouri finds no wrongdoing in its Planned Parenthood investigation*, MSNBC, Sept. 28, 2015, <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/missouri-finds-no-wrongdoing-its-planned-parenthood-investigation>; Sarah Ferrid, *GOP: Defund Planned Parenthood even if it didn't break the law*, The Hill, Sep. 13, 2015, <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/253452-gop-defund-planned-parenthood-even-if-it-didnt-break-the-law>.

³ House Energy and Commerce Committee Democrats issued a report in September finding no wrongdoing by Planned Parenthood. See, e.g., Erin Mershon, *E&C Dems find no evidence of wrongdoing at Planned Parenthood*, Politico, Sept. 9, 2015, <http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-pulse/2015/09/pulse-scoop-e-c-dems-find-no-evidence-of-wrongdoing-at-planned-parenthood-210120#ixzz3noaJFjIZ>.

⁴ Peter Sullivan, *House GOP presses Planned Parenthood with new questions*, The Hill, Oct. 21, 2015, <http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/255652-house-gop-presses-planned-parenthood-with-new-questions>.

⁵ Letter from Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings et al. to Chairman Jason Chaffetz, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Oct. 6, 2015), <http://democrats.oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/documents/2015-10-06%20EEC%20and%20Dems%20to%20Chaffetz%20re%20PPFA%20Interrogatories%20to%20Daleiden.pdf>.