



## At Presidential Debate, Obama Shills for Planned Parenthood

As expected, President Obama went to bat for Planned Parenthood during the October 16 debate with GOP rival Mitt Romney, blasting Romney's campaign rhetoric about defunding the abortion giant with the claim that "there are millions of women all across the country, who rely on Planned Parenthood for, not just contraceptive care, they rely on it for mammograms, for cervical cancer screenings." Pro-life leaders pointed out that in reality, Planned Parenthood clinics only refer for mammograms, but are not directly involved in the procedure.



Obama went on to claim that "George Bush never suggested that we eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood, so there are differences between Governor Romney and George Bush.... In some ways, [Romney has] gone to a more extreme place when it comes to social policy. And I think that's a mistake."

But [LifeNews.com](#) reported that in the early days of his administration, President Bush did, indeed, cut funding for groups that perform abortions. "In 2001, Bush issued a memo ensuring that the Mexico City Policy prohibited the USAID agency from funding pro-abortion groups," reported LifeNews, noting that the Mexico City Policy, "first instituted during the Reagan administration, prohibits the federal government from giving taxpayer funds to international organizations that perform or promote abortions in other countries, including the International Planned Parenthood Federation."

And in 2003, the Bush Administration again cut federal abortion funding, issuing a memorandum to the State Department that read in part: "Because family planning grants are awarded by the Department of State outside of USAID as well as through USAID, you are hereby directed to extend the requirements of the March 28, 2001, memorandum to all assistance for voluntary population planning furnished to foreign nongovernmental organizations."

As for Obama, Planned Parenthood has continued to reward him for his staunch support, announcing on October 16 that it would shell out some \$578,000 for new radio ads in Ohio and Virginia attacking Romney for his pro-life positions. According to LifeNews, the abortion giant has already spent some \$5.7 million targeting Romney, who insists that he opposes abortion except in the case of rape, incest, and to protect the life of the mother.

"Mitt Romney will put critical healthcare for women and families at risk and will let politicians interfere in your most private, personal medical decisions," one of the radio spots states. By contrast, "President Obama trusts women and knows the health care challenges families face."

While Obama's take on Planned Parenthood and abortion are crystal clear, what position Romney actually holds on the issue of life for the unborn remains unclear. It is true that in a February radio interview he declared that the federal government "should cut off funding to Planned Parenthood,"



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adding that “the idea that we’re subsidizing an institution that provides abortion, in my view, is wrong. Planned Parenthood ought to stand on its own feet and should not get government subsidy.” In that same interview Romney claimed that “I served as a pro-life governor [and] I’m a pro-life candidate. I simply do not want to participate in anything that takes the lives of an unborn child.”

During an event sponsored by the Family Research Council last October, Romney told pro-life attendees that conservative values must “encompass the life of an unborn child. There are, of course, strong convictions on both sides of this issue. Yet it speaks well of our country that almost all Americans recognize that abortion is a problem.” He added that “in the quiet of conscience, people of both political parties know that more than a million abortions a year can’t be squared with the good heart of America.”

At that same event, Romney declared: “I support the Hyde Amendment, which broadly bars the use of federal funds for abortions. As president, I’ll end federal funding for abortion advocates like Planned Parenthood. I’ll protect a health care worker’s right to follow their conscience in their work.” He also promised that he would “nominate judges who know the difference between personal opinion and law. It is long past time for the Supreme Court to return the issue of abortion back to the states by overturning *Roe v. Wade*.”

But those positions appear at odds with his past views when running for the U.S. Senate and for governor of Massachusetts, and how a President Romney would actually respond to the issue of abortion has many pro-life leaders worried, even as they give lip-service to supporting him. As Dr. Jack Kerwick noted last November in [The New American](#), in 1994, when Romney was running for the U.S. Senate seat then filled by Ted Kennedy, he came down solidly on the “pro-choice” side of the abortion issue, declaring that he was “committed to the belief that we can believe as we want, but we will not force our beliefs on others....”

“By 2002 — when he ran for the governorship of Massachusetts — things had not changed in this respect,” reported Kerwick. “Romney pledged to ‘preserve and protect a woman’s right to choose’ and his platform reiterated his stance on this topic: ‘The choice to have an abortion is a deeply personal one. Women should be free to choose based on their own beliefs, not [those of] the government.’”

It was not until his first presidential run in 2008 that Romney began to spout the above pro-life sentiments, a move that pro-life journalist Ben Johnson found disingenuous. Johnson noted that in March, when an amendment was introduced in the U.S. Senate would have allowed employers to opt out of offering contraception — including abortion inducing drugs — in health care coverage if it violated their religious beliefs, Romney was only dimly aware of the amendment’s existence, and did not seem especially concerned about its implications. That episode, Johnson wrote, put an exclamation point on how Romney seemed, early in the campaign, to respond to issues dear to pro-life activists: “he’s disengaged from our issues, dismissive of our concerns, and disinclined to give us the time of day.”

Also, according to Johnson, in 2003 “Romney endorsed Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson. Anderson’s history as a former board member of the Planned Parenthood Association of Utah and former president of the state chapter of the ACLU did not stop Romney from calling him ‘a strong leader and a great man.’”

And last year Planned Parenthood president Cecil Richards recalled that Romney “used to come to Planned Parenthood events. He asked for our endorsement.”



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While Romney certainly stepped up his pro-life rhetoric after he became the GOP candidate, many pro-lifers wonder how sincere he is, and are concerned that, if elected, he may reflect the Romney of old.

*Photo of Barack Obama from October 16, 2012 presidential debate: AP Images*



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