



Indiana First State to Cut Planned Parenthood Funding

The state of Indiana has become the first in the Union to cut off all government funding to Planned Parenthood. Though the effort has been touted as a success for both the pro-life movement and the Indiana taxpayers, it could potentially present problems for Indiana's Governor Mitch Daniels, who is considering a presidential bid.

On Wednesday, Indiana's House of Representatives voted 66 to 32 to approve a bill that cuts \$3 million in federal money that the state distributes to Planned Parenthood. The legislation also bans all abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy unless there is evidence of a significant threat to the mother's life or health. Finally, the bill requires doctors to inform women seeking abortions that life begins at conception and that those doctors performing abortions have admitting privileges at other hospitals.

The bill was already approved by the Indiana Senate earlier this month.

The Blaze describes the impact of this vote:

The action opens a new legislative front in the conservative assault on Planned Parenthood, which has been targeted for its abortion services. Efforts to cut off federal funds in Congress failed this month, but bills are moving in a number of statehouses.

The push to cut federal funding of Planned Parenthood has gained momentum since the 2010 midterm elections, which resulted in more Republican Governors and larger Republican majorities across the country. As a result, tough restrictions on abortions have already been approved throughout the nation.

For example, in North Carolina, the proposed state budget has a ban on state contracts with Planned Parenthood, while Texas House Republicans have stripped \$60 million from the state budget for family planning services. Likewise, New Jersey's Governor Chris Christie cut \$7.5 million from the state budget for abortion clinics.

Indiana's bill has been sent to Governor Daniels' desk for his signature, placing him in rather a predicament. *The Blaze* writes:

If he signs the measure, Indiana risks losing \$4 million in federal grants for family planning services. If he vetoes it, Daniels could antagonize ardent social conservatives already wary of his public statements about the importance of focusing on economic issues this year. (Daniels made the truce comment last June.)

Daniels has indicated that he will be announcing whether he will run for President after the legislature adjourns on Friday. If he does in fact elect to launch a presidential bid, however, he would be able to point to the bill as evidence of his opposition to abortion rights and his commitment to social conservatism.

If the Indiana bill does become law, it could help Indiana's Representative Mike Pence, who has voiced an interest in a run for Indiana Governor. Pence has been a leading proponent in the fight in Congress



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 28, 2011

to block federal funding of Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood officials are urging Daniels to veto the bill and have already threatened to challenge the measure in court if necessary. The agency claims that federal law does not provide states discretionary power to choose which medical providers receive payments from Medicaid, which pays Indiana's Planned Parenthood \$1.3 million per year.

Daniels has declined to comment on the legislation until it is on his desk awaiting action. Once the bill arrives on his desk, he has seven days to take action. A failure on his part to take any action would allow the bill to become law once the seven days have passed.

According to Planned Parenthood, abortion services account for a mere 3 percent of the services it provides. The organization asserts that it provides worthy services such as 1 million cervical cancer screenings across the country, 800,000 breast exams, and 4 millions tests and treatments for sexually transmitted diseases. Supporters of Planned Parenthood contend that cutting funding to the organization will hurt poor women who have limited choices for health care.

Opponents to Planned Parenthood funding contend, however, that any money that is funneled to the organization is indirectly funding abortions.

"If we're buying the roof over their head or their paper clips, we're still subsidizing abortion," explained Republican State Representative Matt Ubelhor (pictured above), who sponsored a bill to ban state grants to Planned Parenthood of Indiana.

Ubelhor made his intentions to cut Planned Parenthood funding clear when he defeated the Democratic incumbent. Ubelhor pointed out that the states should not wait for [Congress](#) to take action on the issue. "I think as a state we should do as much as we possibly can," he asserted.

Abortion-rights activists have already announced their intent to fight Indiana's legislation, as well as other anti-abortion legislation across the nation.

Elizabeth Nash of the Guttmacher Institute — a reproductive health research organization that supports abortion rights — observed, "These battles have been going on for decades. They rise and they fall, but right now they seem to be the worst that we've seen." She added that the campaign against bills that cut federal funding of Planned Parenthood will redirect attention to state budgets that are by nature impacted by such legislation.

"These efforts are not in the interest of public health, they are ideological," she said.

Sue Swayze of Indiana Right to Life indicates that Indiana's legislation is a good start, and she expects to see more such action in other states. "I think it will give folks who might otherwise have been reluctant to either face the controversy, period, or to put their state on the line, motivation to know that there is some support in Congress for it," she noted.



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