



Planned Parenthood's Richards Asserts That Abortion Is Matter of "Economic Security and Opportunity"

In a recent op-ed piece for the women's fashion magazine *Elle* Cecile Richards, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, asserted that "reproductive health" — a euphemism for both contraception and abortion — "isn't a theoretical issue, a social issue, or a distraction — it's a fundamental issue of economic security and opportunity."



Lamenting that not a single question about "reproductive rights" was asked during eight Democratic presidential debates, Richards wrote:

It's time to move this issue from the sidelines to the center of the conversation — because women's reproductive rights are essential to our country's economic success. And they are absolutely on the line in this election.

Richards' article was filled with claims that defy basic rules of logic, such as use of the common fallacy *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* ("after this, therefore because of this"). For example:

Today, the number of women who finish four or more years of college is five times what it was before birth control became legal. One study even found that the Pill is responsible for a third of women's wage gains since the 1960s.

With the many changes in our society that occurred since the 1960s (when oral contraception became available — before then it was not "illegal"; it simply did not exist), it is impossible to determine which factors were responsible for more women finishing college. The same is true for women's wage gains, which are likely just a natural consequence of these college-educated women becoming more interested in careers. Yet, Richards would have us believe that women owe all of their economic advancement to Planned Parenthood's campaign to promote birth control.

Richards harkened back to when the first Planned Parenthood "health center" opened nearly a century ago, claiming that "it was then illegal to give out or seek out information on how to prevent pregnancy."

That claim is a gross exaggeration. While it is true that the 1873 Comstock Act prohibited the mailing of "any article or thing designed or intended for the prevention of conception or procuring of abortion," as well as contraceptive information, through the mails, it impacted person-to-person activities only in the District of Columbia and in federal territories. And while half of the states adopted similar laws that also prohibited possession and sale of obscene materials, including contraceptives, the claim that even information on how to prevent pregnancy was universally banned cannot be substantiated.

Planned Parenthood (which until 1942 was called the American Birth Control League) was founded by Margaret Sanger. An article posted by *Life News* last year documented how Sanger's promotion of birth control was based on eugenics, "the belief and practice that aims to eliminate certain groups of people." The article provided seven revealing quotes from Sanger showing that Planned Parenthood's founder



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was a racist who had a definite agenda geared toward reducing America's black population. Among the statements Sanger made:

- "We don't want the word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population."
- "We should hire three or four colored ministers, preferably with social-service backgrounds, and with engaging personalities. The most successful educational approach to the Negro is through a religious appeal."
- "I accepted an invitation to talk to the women's branch of the Ku Klux Klan."
- "Birth control is nothing more or less than ... weeding out the unfit."
- "I think the greatest sin in the world is bringing children into the world."

The article also quoted Dr. Alveda King (the niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.), who summarized Planned Parenthood's abortion-on-demand philosophy:

The most obvious practitioner of racism in the United States today is Planned Parenthood, an organization founded by the eugenicist Margaret Sanger and recently documented as ready to accept money to eliminate black babies.

In spite of Planned Parenthood's origins as an organization that advocated for the elimination of the black race, Richards had the audacity in her op-ed to pretend to champion African American "women of color." She wrote:

But when access to reproductive health care is restricted, it's women of color and low-income women who pay the highest price. In the first three months of 2016, politicians across the country introduced more than 400 new abortion restrictions that put reproductive health care even further out of reach for women who already face the greatest obstacles to care. Combined with laws like the Hyde Amendment, these restrictions make it nearly impossible for low-income women and disproportionately women of color to exercise their full reproductive rights.

Throughout her article, Richards cited Hillary Clinton, which is not surprising for someone with a long history of ties to the Democratic Party. Before taking her post at Planned Parenthood, Richards served as president of America Votes, a coalition of national Democratic Party-affiliated organizations. Prior to that, she was deputy chief of staff to former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. Richards' mother, Ann Richards, was a Democratic governor of Texas.

Asserting that "reproductive health" (which includes not only contraception, but abortion) is not a social issue but "a fundamental issue of economic security and opportunity," Richards cited Clinton's statement on the matter: "It goes to the heart of who we are as women: our rights, our autonomy, our ability to make our own decisions."

Richards also applauded Clinton for "traveling the country talking about what we need to do to support women and families — because our country can only live up to its potential when women live up to theirs."

She went on to say that Clinton is "the only candidate with a plan to break down all the barriers that keep women on the sidelines of our economy — including barriers to quality, affordable reproductive health care and safe, legal abortion."

It is interesting how advocates of "safe, legal abortion" never mention how unsafe the procedure is for the unborn babies whose lives are terminated by the procedure.



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Richards and Planned Parenthood have managed to get away with overt political endorsements of pro-abortion candidates because its advocacy activities are executed by the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, which is registered as a 501(c)(4) charity. Unlike 501(c)(3) organizations, which are prohibited from supporting political candidates, and are subject to limits on lobbying, 501(c)(4) organizations can engage in unlimited lobbying so long as it pertains to the organization's mission. Planned Parenthood endorsed Barack Obama in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections and in the 2014 election cycle, it spent \$6,587,100 on contributions to candidates and political parties (overwhelmingly to Democrats) and on independent expenditures.

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