



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 7, 2019

## Planned Parenthood Launches #SayAbortion Campaign in Iowa

Planned Parenthood of the Heartland has placed billboards throughout Des Moines, Iowa, applauding women who feel no shame or remorse for having abortions. Breitbart News reports the billboards are expected to pop up in other Iowa cities as well as part of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland's campaign to break "the cycle of silence and stigma" surrounding abortions.

The #SayAbortion billboard campaign includes messages that boast, "I had an abortion, and I am not ashamed"; "I had an abortion, and it was just health care"; and "I had an abortion, and I am not apologizing for it."

The campaign intends to advance the narrative that abortion is merely "safe, common health care."

Planned Parenthood's website asserts, "We #SayAbortion to create a culture where abortion is understood as a basic human right, an essential part of health care, and a normal part of life."

According to Planned Parenthood of the Heartland's website, abortion stories are "unique," and sharing them is an effective way to diminish the stigma of abortions.

Dr. Jill Meadows, medical director for Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, said in a [statement](#):

Planned Parenthood envisions a culture where abortion access is understood as a basic human right, an essential part of health care and a normal part of life. We are amplifying the voices of real people who have had abortions, we are talking about abortion care out loud, and we are shifting the narrative so all people can talk openly about abortion with sensitivity to the complexity of real-life individual experiences.

Planned Parenthood's website shares three stories from the #SayAbortion movement. One is Amanda's, who proudly declares, "I had two abortions, and I am not ashamed." The [press release](#) for the campaign shares more stories of women who unabashedly have had abortions.

The webpage also claims that women are not the only ones who have abortions, once again shirking science in order to appease the small transgender community:

Most of the available statistics about abortion refer exclusively to women, who are not the only people who have abortions. Planned Parenthood is committed to amplifying the voices of trans-masculine and nonbinary folks who also need and deserve access to abortion care. Your voice is needed in the movement for reproductive health and you are welcome in our health centers — no



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matter what.

Iowa's Planned Parenthood is gearing up for a battle against the state's new fetal heartbeat bill, which was signed into law by Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds in May. Planned Parenthood and another abortion facility filed a lawsuit to challenge the law, which bans abortions once a fetal heartbeat is detected, typically at six or seven weeks' gestation.

The #SayAbortion campaign is just one of several movements intended to normalize abortions and remove their stigma. The #ShoutYourAbortion movement, for example, started as a social-media campaign that encouraged women to share stories about their abortions.

KUOW reports that the #ShoutYourAbortion movement began in 2015 after Seattle bartender Amelia Bonow shared her abortion experience on Facebook in a post in which she described her "near inexpressible level of gratitude." Bonow's post was then shared by her friend Lindy West on Twitter with the hashtag #ShoutYourAbortion, prompting other women to begin sharing their "abortion stories."

Since its inception, Bonow has developed an entire movement and organization based on the notion that women should not be ashamed of their abortions. The movement's website claims that women have used the hashtag #ShoutYourAbortion to "reject the expectation of silence and shame." The site claims that the goal is to kill anti-choice legislation by making the act of talking about abortion as "normal as the procedure itself."

By the end of 2018, the movement released a coffee-table book that featured "abortion stories" and "abortion art." And Bonow and some of the other leaders of the movement began creating abortion fashion: clothes that feature phrases such as "Everyone knows I had an abortion," and "Abortion is normal."

"I think we should be making and engaging with all sorts of creative work about abortion, and of course fashion is part of that," she said. "The way I see it, the conversation about abortion is starting to percolate to the surface in all kinds of ways, and stuff like abortion positive t-shirts are a part of the overall change."

Whether the #SayAbortion campaign will experience similar success remains to be seen, but some critics assert that the #SayAbortion campaign is misplaced in Iowa.

Maggie DeWitte, executive director of Iowans for Life and a founding member of a coalition of anti-abortion groups, said of Planned Parenthood and the billboards: "They are trying to bolster a larger movement in Iowa that they simply don't have."

She added, "Iowans care about families. They care about women, and they don't want to see abortion in our state."

According to LiveAction.org, abortion rates in Iowa have "tumbled more than 51 percent" in the past decade and 21 Planned Parenthood centers have closed between 2010 and 2017, leaving just eight remaining in the entire state.

However, a Des Moines Register/Mediacom Iowa Poll last fall showed that 54 percent of Iowans believe abortion should be legal in most or all cases. It seems abortion advocates have been far too successful in controlling the message on abortion and have made people forget that it is ultimately the act of ending the life of an unborn child.



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