



Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 24, 2019

Planned Parenthood Set to Lose Millions in Federal Funding Under New Trump Rule

The Trump administration issued a [final rule](#) on Friday that could cut tens of millions of dollars in payments to Planned Parenthood. The new rules apply to the federal government's Title X Family Planning program, enacted in 1970 under Richard Nixon. Title X grants funds to community-based clinics that offer family planning services such as contraceptives and related counseling. The program's annual budget is \$286 million per year.



The new rule would require “clear financial and physical separation between Title X funded projects and programs or facilities where abortion is a method of family planning.” The new rule also prohibits “referral for an abortion as a method of family planning,” but still allows abortion counseling if no referral is involved.

The changes are being made, in part, so that providers “are not required to choose between participating in the program and violating their own consciences by providing abortion counseling and referral.”

The new rule places Planned Parenthood and any other clinic that does abortions in a bind. They must either forgo tens of millions of dollars provided to them under Title X or stop providing abortion related information and services.

Planned Parenthood has already announced plans to challenge the new rules in court. They have also announced that they will no longer apply for Title X funding if the new rules go into effect. Several states have also announced their intention to sue over the new rules. Among those intended to litigate are Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, and Washington Governor Jay Inslee.

“Planned Parenthood cannot participate in a program that would force our providers to compromise our ethics,” said Leana Wen, the president of Planned Parenthood.

Critics of the new rule say that it amounts to a “domestic gag rule,” which keeps providers from offering the full array of counseling services on reproductive choices. In a call-to-action on their webpage, Planned Parenthood said the new rule “puts healthcare at risk for four million patients and keeps patients from getting information about all of their health care options.”

But because providers are still allowed to counsel about abortion — they just can't make referrals for it or use the same facilities as another organization that provides abortions — the “gag-rule” nomenclature falls a little flat.

Pro-life forces — who refer to the new Title X rule as the “Protect Life Rule” — are hailing it as a victory in their decades-long quest to make the world safer for the unborn. In a statement, pro-life group the [Susan B. Anthony \(SBA\) List](#) said, “The rule advances President Trump's promise to stop taxpayer



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funding of abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood, who will no longer receive Title X funding if they choose not to comply.”

SBA List President Marjorie Dannenfelser said, “The Protect Life Rule does not cut family planning funding by a single dime, and instead directs tax dollars to entities that provide healthcare to women but do not perform abortions.”

“The Title X program was not intended to be a slush fund for abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood,” Dannensfelser said.

Pro-abortion Democrats are obviously perturbed by the rule change. Representative Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), the head of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, called the new rule “another blatant attack on women’s health by the Trump Administration that violates the Title X statute and defies Congressional intent.”

But, to a certain extent, House Democrats’ hands may be tied as to how much they can do about the changes. They could try to redirect Title X funds to Planned Parenthood and other abortion clinics through an annual appropriations bill, but the GOP-controlled Senate stands ready to block such action, not to mention that President Trump has already vowed to veto such a bill.

The GOP is claiming a victory in the long, brutal war over abortion. Senate leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) penned an op-ed on Friday, in which he wrote, “President Trump answered calls from my Senate Republican colleagues and me by taking steps to block federal family planning funds from organizations that make referrals or use the same facilities as abortion clinics, such as Planned Parenthood.”

It is a victory. But the battle over abortion is a long and arduous one. Two days before the Trump administration issued its new rule on Title X, the [Vermont House passed legislation](#) guaranteeing a woman’s right to receive an abortion, even if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned. The new Vermont law still must be approved by the State Senate and the governor, but many believe it goes even farther than the controversial New York law signed in January by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

But one step at a time. It’s not the completed federal de-funding of Planned Parenthood — not yet. But the political battle to save the unborn can only be won incrementally. Depriving Planned Parenthood of much of its federal funding is a big deal. Assuming the new rule on Title X passes judicial muster, it’s a big step.

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