

False: “Abortion is Only 3% of Planned Parenthood’s Services”

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Planned Parenthood describes itself as “many things to many people.”^[i] That is true, in large part, because Planned Parenthood is in reality not what the organization presents itself to be.

For example, in the words of Planned Parenthood, abortion is “a very small part” of its operations, but simple math demonstrates that Planned Parenthood’s abortion business brings in, at bare minimum, a non-trivial 99 million dollars a year. Planned Parenthood has promoted the idea that re-directing funding away from Planned Parenthood to other providers would cause women to “lose access” to “mammograms,” while no Planned Parenthood clinic is even authorized to perform mammograms. And although Planned Parenthood routinely seeks to undermine its critics as “political,” it is Planned Parenthood that is, as Cecile Richards has said, a “kick-butt political organization.”^[ii]

Countless “white lies” are the building blocks of Planned Parenthood’s façade. The following three claims in particular need to be deconstructed as an illustration of the depths of Planned Parenthood’s duplicity.

“Abortion is only 3% of Planned Parenthood’s services.”



Planned Parenthood’s public insistence that abortion plays a *de minimis* role in its operation suggests it understands an important point: most Americans do not embrace its radical pro-abortion agenda. Polling shows that the overwhelming majority of Americans oppose abortion-on-demand.^[iii] Subsidizing “big abortion” is certainly a minority view. So Planned Parenthood does not want to be branded as an abortion business.

But Planned Parenthood has a competing interest: wanting to be known, in some circles, for being an abortion provider. Though not appealing to the taxpayer, abortion is certainly an attraction for some of Planned Parenthood’s high-level donors.^[iv] And Planned Parenthood has to do at least some advertising to reach its abortion patients. Abortion, as will be discussed below, generates a significant portion of its annual clinic revenue.

So Planned Parenthood tries to walk a “fine line,” not relegating its abortion business to secrecy, but diminishing the role it plays. Therein lies the genius of the “3 percent of services” claim—a sham statistic, but one that Planned Parenthood has been incredibly successful in selling to the American public.

To arrive at that 3 percent figure, Planned Parenthood does some fudging and misdirection. Planned Parenthood depreciates the role abortion plays by defining its “services” in such a way that it avoids accounting for their time and expense. A single pregnancy test is designated by Planned Parenthood as a “service” and thus given equal weight to a far more time-consuming and expensive surgical abortion procedure, another Planned Parenthood “service.” Likewise, each pack of birth control pills is considered a service and carries the same weight in the calculation as an abortion. Using this rubric, Planned Parenthood justifies the claim the President of Planned Parenthood, Cecile Richards, has made that abortion is, “a very small part of what we do.”^[v]

In terms of time, patients, and revenue, abortion is far more to Planned Parenthood than 3 percent. (And several recently unsealed “whistleblower” lawsuits call into question whether the 3 percent claim is true even under Planned Parenthood’s formula, as the lawsuits allege over-reporting of other “services.”^[vi])

Though you won’t hear Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards offer this statistic in an interview, her organization’s own materials acknowledge that 11 to 12 percent of its patients receive abortion services.^[vii] Although a more honest depiction than a breakdown by “services,” this figure still does not capture what abortion means to Planned Parenthood’s bottom-line.

When it comes to telling America how much money it makes from abortions, Planned Parenthood is dead silent.

It only takes simple math, however, to come up with a conservative estimate. According to Planned Parenthood’s latest available annual report, it performed 329,445 abortions in 2010.^[viii] Its website states that a surgical abortion generally costs between \$300 and \$950 in the first trimester^[ix] and a chemical abortion costs between \$300 and \$800.^[x] Thus, using its lowest advertised price of \$300, Planned Parenthood made—at minimum—\$98,833,500 from abortions in 2010.

Nearly 99 million dollars from abortion is already a substantial figure. Considering even first trimester abortions can cost two to three times that amount, Planned Parenthood is assuredly generating much more revenue from its abortion business. That is anything but trivial.

“You know, mammograms...”

To successfully understate its abortion business and garner support from those who are otherwise uncomfortable with abortion, Planned Parenthood knows it needs to overstate the non-controversial services it provides. When it comes to breast health services, Planned Parenthood has been doing more than “talking-up” what it does, Planned Parenthood has perpetuated a myth about something it does not provide: mammograms.

As recently as June 2012, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has confirmed that no Planned Parenthood clinic is authorized to perform mammograms.[xi]

However, on February 21, 2011, when Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards appeared on Joy Behar’s talk show to discuss pending legislation that would cut federal funding to Planned Parenthood, Ms. Richards stated, “If this bill ever becomes law, millions of women in this country are going to lose their health care access, not to abortion services, to basic family planning – you know, mammograms, cancer screenings, cervical cancer...”[xii]

On top of her misleading suggestion that disqualifying Planned Parenthood from receiving taxpayer dollars is synonymous with cutting funding for healthcare services, no Planned Parenthood clinic provides mammograms, as Ms. Richards (at minimum) implied. As Planned Parenthood’s president, Ms. Richards must be well-aware that none of her nearly 800 clinics nationwide are even authorized to provide mammograms. Yet she deceptively chose mammograms as the first example of services that would be “lost” if Planned Parenthood lost federal funding.

Although pro-life groups immediately and repeatedly have exposed Ms. Richards’s words as untrue,[xiii] her myth continues to be repeated by Planned Parenthood defenders. Even President Obama has echoed her false claim, stating that cutting Planned Parenthood off from taxpayer funds would deny “preventive care, like mammograms, that millions of women rely on.”[xiv]

In 2012, Planned Parenthood had an additional reason to let this particular fib run rampant. In order to more effectively fight breast cancer, the Susan G. Komen Foundation changed its grant standards, giving money on an “outcomes based granting strategy” instead of to “pass through” organizations like Planned Parenthood, which do not provide mammograms. An inflated and fictitious image of what services Planned Parenthood provides was helpful in suppressing the truth—that Komen determined women are better served by directing its grants elsewhere—to make way for Planned Parenthood’s alternate narrative, that Komen was “succumbing to political pressure.”[xv]

However, facts are facts. No matter how many times, or by whom, a lie is repeated, it does not become true.

“Untainted by a political agenda.”

Planned Parenthood’s response to video evidence of its employees’ apparent willingness to aid sex-traffickers included denouncing those groups investigating as a “political operation.”[xvi] Efforts to enact laws ensuring the health and safety of women seeking abortions are routinely “condemned” by Planned Parenthood as being “based on [a] political agenda.”[xvii] According to Planned Parenthood, the Komen Foundation’s decision to raise its grant standards to more directly benefit vulnerable women was “politics interfering with women’s health.”[xviii] And Planned Parenthood claims that, unlike those that warn of increased risks following abortion, Planned Parenthood’s own medical information and patient counseling are “untainted by a political agenda.”[xix]

Ironically, while “political” motivation seems to be Planned Parenthood’s favorite charge in attempts to discredit anyone who would regulate, investigate, or cut ties with the abortion industry, Planned Parenthood itself is a highly political machine.

As AUL has detailed in *The Case for Investigating Planned Parenthood*, Planned Parenthood has a long history of routinely opposing legislation that protects women and girls and engaging in efforts to overturn common-sense laws.[xx]

The organization’s political nature has become more apparent under the direction of its current president Cecile Richards.

Ms. Richards, the former deputy chief of staff to Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), herself fondly describes her journey from being a young girl working on political campaigns to being at the helm of Planned Parenthood as having her life “come full circle.”[xxi]

In 2008 Ms. Richards declared, “We aim to be the largest kick-butt political organization.”[xxii]

Planned Parenthood is not only political, it is increasingly partisan. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), a pro-choice Republican who was endorsed and supported by Planned Parenthood Action Fund until she voted in favor of now-Justice Samuel Alito’s confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court, has observed, “Why should I try to make their case in the Republican caucus? I can’t answer my colleagues when they say to me that Planned Parenthood is just a political party, because it is true.”[xxiii]

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Planned Parenthood of New York City's "pointers" for addressing "tricky subjects" includes "Deflect – Treat tough questions as general issues and don't respond to specifics." [xiv] Planned Parenthood does much more than "deflect," it misleads the public. Planned Parenthood's deceptive public relations campaign has enabled the organization to be perceived as "many things to many people," but no amount of spin can change the facts about the nation's largest abortion provider.

[i] See *Who We Are*, Planned Parenthood, available at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/who-we-are-4648.htm> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[ii] Leslie Wayne, *Liberals Aim to Win*, The Caucus: The Politics and Government Blog of the Times, The New York Times, Mar. 19, 2008, available at <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/03/19/liberals-aim-to-win/> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[iii] See e.g. *Abortion*, Gallup, available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1576/abortion.aspx> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[iv] For example, outspoken abortion proponent George Soros has donated over \$2.5 million to Planned Parenthood through his Open Society Institute. See Anna Maria Hoffman, *Tides Foundation, Soros Send Millions to Planned Parenthood*, Lifeneews.com, Jun. 26, 2012, available at <http://www.lifeneews.com/2012/06/26/tides-foundation-soros-send-millions-to-planned-parenthood/> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[v] *The Joy Behar Show: Planned Parenthood Changing Plans?* (HLN Feb. 21, 2011). Video available at *Cecile Richards of Planned Parenthood & Rep. Gwen Moore on Joy Behar*, YouTube (Feb. 22, 2011) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I82QY65sVSA&feature=player_embedded (at 3:36) (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[vi] See e.g. Third Amended Complaint at 30, *United States and Texas ex rel Reynolds v. Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast*, No. 9-09-cv-125)(E.D. Tex. Oct. 28, 2011). Karen Reynolds, a former Planned Parenthood employee, alleges, among other claims, that the Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast clinics regularly billed government programs for services never performed. See also Second Amended Complaint at 45, *United States and Iowa ex rel Thayer v. Planned Parenthood of the Heartland*, No. CV00129 (S.D. Iowa July 26, 2012). Sue Thayer, a former Planned Parenthood employee in Iowa, alleges that Planned Parenthood of the Heartland clinics "knowingly and intentionally separated out charges for services and products rendered in connection with such abortions, including, without limitation, office visits, ultrasounds, Rh factor tests, lab work, general counseling, and abortion aftercare..."

[vii] See e.g. Planned Parenthood Fed'n of Am., Inc., *Planned Parenthood by the Numbers* (2012), available at http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP_by_the_Numbers.pdf. (last visited Sept. 17, 2012). In 2011, "Planned Parenthood by the Numbers" reported that 12 percent of its patients received abortion services.

[viii] Planned Parenthood Fed'n of Am., Inc., *Annual Report 2009-2010 5* (2011), available at http://issuu.com/actionfund/docs/ppfa_financials_2010_122711_web_vf?mode=window&viewMode=doublePage (last visited Sept. 14, 2012).

[ix] See *In-Clinic Abortion Procedures*, Planned Parenthood, available at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/abortion/in-clinic-abortion-procedures-4359.asp> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[x] See *The Abortion Pill (Medication Abortion)*, Planned Parenthood, available at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/abortion/abortion-pill-medication-abortion-4354.asp> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[xi] See <http://www.adfmedia.org/files/DOC702.pdf> (last visited Sept. 14, 2012). Responding to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request by Alliance Defending Freedom attorney Casey Mattox, HHS stated that a "thorough and diligent investigation" uncovered no instances of Planned Parenthood clinics authorized to perform mammography. See also Casey Mattox, *Obama Administration: Planned Parenthood Does Not Perform Mammograms*, Townhall, Sept. 7, 2012, available at http://townhall.com/columnists/casemattox/2012/09/07/obama_administration_planned_parenthood_does_not_perform_mammograms/page/full/ (last visited Sept. 14, 2012).

[xii] *The Joy Behar Show: Planned Parenthood Changing Plans?* (HLN Feb. 21, 2011). Video available at *Cecile Richards of Planned Parenthood & Rep. Gwen Moore on Joy Behar*, YouTube (Feb. 22, 2011) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I82QY65sVSA&feature=player_embedded (at 3:59) (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[xiii] See e.g. *Mammosham*, Live Action, available at <http://liveaction.org/blog/planned-parenthood-ceos-false-mammogram-claim/> (last visited Sept. 14, 2012). "In the tapes, a Live Action actor calls 30 Planned Parenthood clinics in 27 different states, inquiring about mammograms at Planned Parenthood. Every Planned Parenthood, without exception, tells her she will have to go elsewhere for a mammogram, and many clinics admit that no Planned Parenthood clinics provide this breast cancer screening procedure."

[xiv] See Steven Ertelt, *Obama Falsely Claims Planned Parenthood Does Mammograms*, Lifeneews.com, Apr. 6, 2012, available at <http://www.lifeneews.com/2012/04/06/obama-misleads-falsely-claims-planned-parenthood-does-mammograms/> (last visited Sept. 14, 2012).

[xv] "Alarmed and Saddened" by Komen Foundation Succumbing to Political Pressure, *Planned Parenthood Launches Fund for Breast Cancer Services*, Planned Parenthood (Jan. 31, 2012), available at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/alarmed-saddened-komen-foundation-succumbing-political-pressure-planned-parenthood-launches-fun-38629.htm> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[xvi] See e.g. *Statement from Stuart Schear, Vice President for Communications, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, on Live Action's Latest Dishonest Videos*, Planned Parenthood (Feb. 8, 2011), available at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/statement-stuart-shear-vice-president-communications-planned-parenthood-federation-america-liv-36136.htm> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[xvii] See e.g. *Planned Parenthood Federation of America Condemns Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell*, Planned Parenthood (Dec. 29, 2011), available at <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/planned-parenthood-federation-america-condemns-virginia-governor-bob-mcdonnell-38429.htm> (last visited Sept 17, 2012).

[xviii] *Planned Parenthood says Komen decision causes donation spike*, Washington Post, February 1, 2012, available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/planned-parenthood-says-komen-decision-causes-donation-spike/2012/02/01/gIQAQLsxiQ_story.html (last accessed July 17, 2012).

[xix] See http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/Anti_Choice_Claims_About_Breast_Cancer.pdf (last visited Sept. 17, 2012). Planned Parenthood makes this claim in its attempt to refute evidence of an increased risk of breast cancer following abortion. For more information on the increased risk, see e.g. Thorp, Hartmann & Shadigian, *Long-Term Physical and Psychological Health Consequence of Induced Abortion: Review of the Evidence*, 58 *Obst. & Gyn. Survey* 67 (2003); Russo, J., Russo, I.H., *Toward a Physiological Approach to Breast Cancer Prevention*, *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev.* 1994 Jun; 3:353-64. See also Janet Daling, et al., *Risk of Breast Cancer Among Young Women: Relationship to Induced Abortion*, 86 *J. Nat'l Cancer Inst.* 1584 (Nov. 1994). The study also concluded that if an 18-year-old, pregnant for the first time, decides to abort, her risk of breast cancer is almost doubled. A 1989 study by Holly Howe in the *International Journal of Epidemiology* found a 50 percent increased risk of breast cancer after abortion. See Howe et al, *Early Abortion and Breast Cancer Risk Among Women Under Age 40*, 18 *Inter'l J. Epid.* 300 (1989). In a 1994 study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, NCI researcher Janet Daling, who is personally "pro-choice," found that "among women who had been pregnant at least once, the risk of breast cancer in those who had experienced an induced abortion was 50 percent higher than among other women." See Janet Daling, et al., *Risk of Breast Cancer Among Young Women: Relationship to Induced Abortion*, 86 *J. Nat'l Cancer Inst.* 1584 (Nov. 1994).

[xx] See *The Case for Investigating Planned Parenthood* (Americans United for Life 2011), available at <http://www.aul.org/aul-special-report-the-case-for-investigating-planned-parenthood> (last visited Jun. 7, 2012).

[xxi] See e.g. *Cecile Richards (6/14/11)*, YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPWKVKbR1mc> (2:26-3:19) (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[xxii] Leslie Wayne, *Liberals Aim to Win*, *The Caucus: The Politics and Government Blog of the Times*, *The New York Times*, Mar. 19, 2008, available at <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/03/19/liberals-aim-to-win/> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012). "Ms. Richards said that liberals will have to put aside any notions of political purity and "work for folks who are not perfect." To back that up, Ms. Richards said that Planned Parenthood plans to draft "patient escorts" who accompany women to their health care clinics for door-to-door campaigning. Planned Parenthood board members also plan to help with fund raising."

[xxiii] Campbell Brown, *Planned Parenthood's Self-Destructive Behavior*, *The New York Times*, Jun. 23, 2012, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/24/opinion/sunday/planned-parenthoods-self-destructive-behavior.html?pagewanted=all> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

[xxiv] Planned Parenthood of New York City, *Tricky Subjects: How to Talk about Abortion, Birth Control, Sex Education and Reproductive Rights without Feeling Nervous* (2006). Document obtained by Students for Life of America and available at <http://studentsforlife.org/files/2012/07/Scanned-from-a-Xerox-multifunction-device0011.pdf> (last visited Sept. 17, 2012).

LifeNews Note: [Americans United for Life](#) is a leading national pro-life organization.