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Planned Parenthood decried as 'racist'

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By Julia Duin - A coalition of black leaders and pastors called on the federal government yesterday to "defund" Planned Parenthood from receiving \$336.7 million annually in government funds and accused the family planning giant of targeting unborn black children.

Standing on the lawn in front of the Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington building at 1108 16th St. NW, black leaders cited a series of YouTube videos recorded by a group of students from the University of California at Los Angeles.

The students posed as donors who wanted their money to help abort a black child. Recordings of their conversations with clinic workers in New Mexico, Ohio, Idaho and Oklahoma posted on YouTube showed the workers agreeing to the donations.

"Let's demand the firings of those employees," said the Rev. Clenard Childress, founder of BlackGenocide.org.

"Black America must wake up and stand up to this racist organization that purposely plans abortion facilities firmly in black and minority neighborhoods and urban communities, sometimes right next door to schools," said Day Gardner, president of the National Black Pro-Life Union. She gestured toward a charter school a few doors away.

In one YouTube exchange, James O'Keefe, a first-year law student at UCLA and an adviser for the Advocate, a pro-life student newspaper, called the Columbus, Ohio, Planned Parenthood affiliate on July 10 to say he wanted to donate the money "because there's definitely way too many black people in Ohio."

The unidentified Planned Parenthood worker responded, "Well, for whatever reason, we'll accept the money."

In a statement last month, Planned Parenthood said, "Two local employees violated the organization's principles and practices when they responded to deceptive calls from a political opponent who posed as a racist donor and secretly taped the conversations.

"It is clear these employees made serious mistakes, and we apologize again for the way this was handled." The organization said it was "training employees in communication skills for handling racist or other offensive callers."

Some of the about 30 black leaders present said Planned Parenthood should fire the employees. Rep. Trent Franks, Arizona Republican, appeared at the demonstration to say he will introduce legislation making it illegal to abort on the basis of sex or race.

"If the Democrats can't vote for that, then they can't vote for anything," he said.

A related bill, the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act to defund Planned Parenthood, sponsored by Rep. Mike Pence, Indiana Republican, is in committee.

In a statement released yesterday, Planned Parenthood Federation of America said 97 percent of its health care services "are related to prevention" and said its work should not be politicized.

"Planned Parenthood partners with both local and federal governments to fill the gap through which millions of Americans would fall without our support. It's time to stop playing politics and start working together toward commonsense solutions to keep all Americans healthy and safe," it said.

Planned Parenthood's annual report says it received more than one-third of its \$926.4 million 2006-07 budget from federal grants and contracts, including Title X family planning funds. In 2006, it performed 289,750 abortions in the U.S., although it says it does not use federal funds for the procedure — a distinction pro-life groups dismiss because money is fungible.

Although blacks represent 13 percent of the U.S. population, 37 percent of all abortions are performed on black women, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a New York-based nonprofit focused on sexual health. The Web site www.blackgenocide.org estimates that 10 million to 13 million black pregnancies — about one-third of black America's current 36 million population — have been aborted since the procedure was declared a constitutional right in 1973.

Participants in the demonstration said the YouTube video proved what they have suspected for years about Planned Parenthood, whose founder, Margaret Sanger, said in a Dec. 19, 1939, letter that, "We don't want word to get out that we want to exterminate the Negro population." The text of the letter was read aloud by Miss Gardner.

"Most of these clinics are in the black community," said the Rev. Jesse Lee Petersen, founder of the Los Angeles-based Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny.

"Why? Because the black community has allowed this to happen." Mentioning the name of a nationally known black pastor from Dallas, he said, "Where is T.D. Jakes? If he cared about black women, he'd be here."