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[Home](#) > [2011](#) > [April \(Web-only\)](#)

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## Fact-Checking Claims about Planned Parenthood

*Congress is expected to vote today on a resolution that would eliminate any federal funding for Planned Parenthood or its affiliates.*

**Tobin Grant** | posted 4/14/2011 02:00PM

Activists are making claims about what Planned Parenthood does, and the veracity of some of these have already made [headlines](#). Congress is expected to vote today on a resolution that would eliminate any federal funding for Planned Parenthood or its affiliates. Federal funds that currently go to Planned Parenthood (and any other organization) cannot be used for abortion, but it is Planned Parenthood's role in providing abortions that have made it a target of pro-life legislators. After Senator Jon Kyl said abortion is "well over 90 percent of what Planned Parenthood does," his staff [said](#) that the remarks were "not intended to be a factual statement." Here are what two groups—Planned Parenthood and the Family Research Council—are telling supporters.

### Planned Parenthood

**Claim 1:** *Three percent of all Planned Parenthood health services are abortion services.*

Planned Parenthood offers fewer factual claims than its opponents, but a common factoid in discussions on the role of abortion in the organization's work is [Planned Parenthood's statement](#) that abortion makes up a small fraction of its health services. The key phrase in this statement is "health services." This is not the same as percentage of its budget or number of clients. In 2009, [Planned Parenthood](#) conducted 332,278 abortions. This is three percent of the 11 million services it provided. Clients, however, often receive multiple services. A woman receiving a yearly gynecological exam would likely be counted as one of the 900,000 pap tests, 800,000 breast exams, and other services. Planned Parenthood had [3 million clients](#), making women receiving an abortion around 10 percent of its clients.

**Claim 2:** *Barring Planned Parenthood health centers from providing care through federal programs would cut off millions of American women from birth control, cancer screenings, HIV tests, and other lifesaving care ... Any elected official who votes for this extreme proposal is voting against access to lifesaving cancer screenings, HIV testing, and birth control.*

The bill would bar only Planned Parenthood from federal funds. It does not lower federal spending. The funds would likely go to other organizations. Even if the funds were removed, they make up about 10 of Planned Parenthood's revenue, making it unlikely that "millions of women" would no longer have access to affordable medical services.

**Claim 3:** *Anti-choice extremists lost the fight over the budget bill, but they haven't given up on their campaign to deny women access to basic health care.*

Name-calling aside, the veracity of this statement rests on what is meant by "basic health care." If this includes abortion services, then the statement is true. If not, then it depends on whether

you believe pro-life legislators who are adamant that they are not seeking a reduction in federal spending for women's health care.

## **Family Research Council (FRC)**

Activists backing the ban on federal funding for Planned Parenthood often use similar factual claims. FRC lists many of these claims in its appeal to supporters, but many are not unique to FRC.

*Claim 1: Planned Parenthood annually receives \$363,200,000—33 percent of its income—from "government grants and contracts," that is, from taxpayer dollars.*

True. However, most of these government grants and contracts come from state funds, not the federal funds under consideration. Planned Parenthood and its 85 affiliates receive less than \$100 million each year in federal funds, according to the Government Accounting Office (GAO).

*Claim 2: With this money, Planned Parenthood claims it performs "benevolent services." However 97.6 percent of the "services" they provided for pregnant women in 2009 ended in the abortion of the women's children, and only 2.4 percent involved prenatal care or adoption referral.*

Planned Parenthood does not report how many pregnant women enter its clinics. The statistics are based on Planned Parenthood's report of three types of services that must apply to pregnant women only: abortions, prenatal care, and adoption referral. Other women may enter the center for a pregnancy test or other health services (which would mean the abortion percentage is inflated). The number of prenatal and adoption referral cases could be counting the same women twice (which would mean the abortion percentage is deflated).

*Claim 3: Income from abortions constitutes 37 percent of their total profit!*

False. Thirty-seven percent of Planned Parenthood's revenue comes from its health centers; potentially one-third of this health center revenue comes from abortion. Planned Parenthood does not list revenue from specific procedures, but pro-life activists estimate that around 10 percent of the organization's revenue comes from abortion. In other words, pro-life groups' best guess is that around one-third of one-third of the revenue comes from abortion. Further, health center money from abortion would be deemed revenue instead of "profit" since Planned Parenthood is a non-profit and because it would calculate profit as income minus expenditures.

*Claim 4: The abortion giant performed fewer than 20,000 other services in its last reporting year—including zero mammograms. All while performing 332,278 abortions.*

False. The number of "20,000 other services" comes from Planned Parenthood's report of 19,796 primary care clients. The same report lists over 11 million services, including 1.8 million cancer prevention or screening and nearly 4 million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted diseases.

*Claim 5: The nonprofit organization had income over expenses of \$85,000,000 in 2008, and \$63,400,000 in 2009. It reports some offsetting investment losses—but welcome to the club.*

True. However, while FRC acknowledges investment losses, it does not mention that in 2009 this meant a net loss of \$4.9 million for Planned Parenthood. The organization reported a profit in 2008, but the rate was about the same as for FRC that same year.

Claim 5: *Its annual budget today exceeds \$1 billion. The money would be better served going to Title X recipients who do not have abortion as their central product.*

It is not clear how FRC defines a "central product." Whether measured by revenue, clients, or services, abortion is not Planned Parenthood's most common service.

When the vote is taken today, legislators on both sides of the issue are very likely to repeat many of these claims. In the end, however, it may matter little whether abortion is Planned Parenthood's "central product" or a very small part of what it does. For pro-life groups, the ultimate goal is to eliminate any funds to groups that provide even one abortion. Planned Parenthood is the first--and largest--target. Today's votes are will be harbingers for how this fight will play out during the remainder of this congress.

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