

Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio
Planned Parenthood of Southwest Ohio
For Immediate Release: Monday, December 14, 2015

Ohio Politicians Promise to Introduce Legislation Further Restricting Access to Abortion in Ohio

Columbus, OH -- Politicians in Ohio today promised to introduce new legislation to further restrict access to safe, legal abortion in the state and mandate additional government intrusion into women's personal medical decisions. Politicians in Ohio, including the Governor and Attorney General, have done [everything possible](#) to eliminate access to safe, legal abortion -- [secretly writing abortion restrictions into law](#), enacting 17 anti-women's health measures in the last five years, and even appointing the head of Ohio Right to Life to the state medical board. In recent years, Ohio [has shuttered over one third of health centers](#) that provide abortion in the state, more than any other state but Texas, even forcing women to [cross the border into Michigan](#) to get abortions.

The announcement of potential legislation comes after Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine made [inflammatory and false allegations](#) against Planned Parenthood -- claiming in a press conference on Friday that the nonprofit improperly handled fetal tissue, which is absolutely not true. Attorneys for Planned Parenthood affiliates in Ohio [filed suit yesterday](#) in federal court to protect access to safe, legal abortion for Ohioans and prevent DeWine from intruding in women's medical decisions.

In the lawsuit filed yesterday, Planned Parenthood made clear that:

- Planned Parenthood has agreements with medical removal companies who handle fetal tissue respectfully and safely, in accordance with the law that's been in place for 40 years in Ohio.
- Planned Parenthood handles fetal tissues just like other health care providers handle all sorts of medical material. It is either treated by sterilization or incineration, and then disposed of.
- The false claims are motivated by politics, not by the facts and not by medicine, and are intended to block women's access to safe, legal abortion in the state.

While specific bill text was not released, [reports](#) say that future legislation would mandate a woman choose either burial services or cremation for fetal tissue. Existing Ohio law already sets clear standards requiring the fetal tissue be handled safely and respectfully.

Statement from Stephanie Kight, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio:

"At Planned Parenthood, we respect and support each woman's ability to make the deeply personal decision about whether to choose adoption, end a pregnancy, or raise a child. "There are already laws that require safe tissue disposal and we follow them. This bill is not meant to protect women, but is part of an effort from anti-abortion politicians to make abortion illegal in all cases.

"The legislature should focus their attention on promoting laws that build strong communities and support women and their families, rather than interfering in complicated private medical decisions."

Statement from Jerry Lawson, CEO of Planned Parenthood Southwest Ohio:

“Planned Parenthood handles medical tissue like other health care providers do. Just like people would expect, we work with medical removal companies to ensure fetal tissue is handled respectfully and safely, in accordance with state law. Annual inspections over the last decade by the Ohio Department of Health have found that to be true. This legislation is just part of this administration's longstanding political agenda to ban abortion in all cases. We won't let that happen.”

On Friday, Ohio's Attorney General confirmed that the accusations that Planned Parenthood "sold fetal tissue" were completely unfounded and untrue. These false claims have been made and disproved over and over again. Officials in eight other states (Washington, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri and South Dakota) have now cleared Planned Parenthood affiliates of all wrongdoing. In addition, seven states (Iowa, Delaware, Idaho, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Virginia, and Colorado) have declined to even investigate Planned Parenthood — finding nothing to substantiate claims of wrongdoing. These new accusations that Planned Parenthood is improperly disposing of fetal tissue are also flat-out false.

###

Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio (PPGOH) was founded to provide Ohioans with safe, accessible, and trusted reproductive health services, regardless of ability to pay. PPGOH is an affiliate of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the nation's leading sexual and reproductive health care provider and advocate. The mission of PPGOH is to strengthen individuals, families, and communities by promoting healthy and responsible decision-making about parenthood, relationships, and sexual health. PPGOH serves a sixty-eight county area, including metropolitan areas such as Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Youngstown, Mansfield, Toledo, Columbus, and Athens.

Serving 20 counties in Southwestern Ohio and three in Northern Kentucky, Planned Parenthood Southwest Ohio strengthens the community by providing access to high quality health care and education that empower people to make informed private decisions about their reproductive lives and sexual health. With seven health centers throughout the region, it is Planned Parenthood's goal to provide reproductive health care services to any individual who wants or needs them, to advocate public policies which guarantee each individual's access to services, to advocate individual's right to privacy and their ability to make reproductive decisions free of coercion, and to provide human sexuality education which enhances the health and well-being of individuals in the community. Planned Parenthood Southwest Ohio Region is an affiliate of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.