

Dawn Laguens, Executive Vice President of Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Good morning, thank you all for joining us and thanks to my co-presenters, a very exciting day to announce this new round of offense.

For over a year, we've been organizing and rallying and resisting the dangerous policies both from the Trump-Pence administration, as well as congressional attacks, beating back bills that would have blocked access to Planned Parenthood, taking away health insurance from millions of people. We've seen women and men across industries, from Hollywood to hotel workers who have broken their silence about how our bosses and coworkers have frankly abused them in body and spirit— and in every aspect of life, women are demanding equality and justice. But we can't, of course, win that fight fighting on defense alone, we need a strong offense, we need to expand access to the reproductive health care that powers women's lives and their dreams. Especially as we've see through leaked memos and the kinds of proposals coming out of the Trump-Pence administration, a real plan to actually roll back these basic rights in health care.

That's why today Planned Parenthood is announcing the next phase of offense and announcing a new initiative to fight forward, along with many partners across the country. This sweeping initiative is going to be actually trying to work in every single state, to find a place even in the toughest places, to expand access.

We're going to start this week by rolling out legislation in more than a dozen states and the District of Columbia, and again, we will take this offensive fight to all 50 states. I would like to give a few examples of how we're going to expand and how we are fighting already to expand access and then let my co-presenters give a little bit more of the specifics.

- In Missouri, we're fighting for a bill that would repeal the state's harmful and completely medically unnecessary abortion waiting period — which essentially puts women in a 72-hour time out before they can access safe and legal abortion and sends a message of “we don't trust you.”
- In Maine, we're supporting the state attorney general's bill that would allow nurse practitioners to provide the abortion pill for patients. If passed, safe, legal abortion would be more accessible to patients who face structural barriers like those who live in rural communities and would provide access earlier in pregnancy for people seeking abortion
- You'll hear more on this call about an amazing New Jersey bill to restore access to care at Planned Parenthood and other providers that was decimated over these last years.
- And California very exciting, has a campus-led effort, [the Assembly] passed a bill that would require University of California and California State University campuses to supply the abortion pill at campus health centers... the first of its kind in the country.

It's not just in state houses: on 112 campuses, students are actively gathering petition signatures to pressure their respective administrations to commit to the continued coverage of birth control under student and staff health insurance plans. And we imagine this will spread to an even wider number of campuses in the months ahead. There's a lot of energy and activity with students, as we know, powering the resistance, as people say, but also the persistence in pursuit of the world that we want.

We can actually improve people's lives and health in measurable ways by putting these kinds of laws in place. Oregon is a great example-- a law passed last year, thousands of people now have comprehensive coverage for reproductive health care, including preventive health care, safe legal abortions. That's regardless of immigration status, gender identity, or any of the other factors that can sometimes limit people's access. What we know is when people have access to a full range of reproductive care and access their rights in real time, their economic rights are improved, their educational rights are improved, their family's health and economic well-being is improved and our community and our country are strengthened. There's data to support every single one of those claims.

Every time we march and rally, we're not just opposing the policies of the Trump-Pence administration and people who oppose access in Congress. We're really fighting for a future where all people — no matter where they live, who they love or how much money they make — have the freedom to access the health care they need and to live the lives they want.

And just to remind people, health care is the means by which we deliver on our big idea, but the big idea behind Planned Parenthood for more than 100 years is that your body is your own and unless you can control your own body, you cannot be free and you cannot be equal.

So today we take the next step in making that big idea come true for all the people in this country.

Representative Edith Ajello, State of Rhode Island House of Representatives

So that you don't get distracted with addition and subtraction as I talk about my personal history I am 73 years old.

In 1965 to celebrate my 21st birthday my boyfriend suggested /planned my first sexual intercourse. I still smirk thinking about that as a birthday gift for me. I learned a few weeks later that I was pregnant...My first experience with intercourse. I was then at the end of my junior year at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA. I was panicked/traumatized and most concerned that I would not be able to successfully complete the most challenging course of that semester, in fact the most challenging course of my college career. I was simply not ready to be pregnant,

to be a parent. That professor led me to Dr Robert Spencer, in Ashland, PA, who was known far and wide as a compassionate man.

He could be counted upon to go into mines to treat injured and sick coal miners. He was also known far and wide for providing abortions which were illegal until the 1973 *Roe v Wade* decision.

I consider myself extraordinarily lucky to have had an abortion provided by Dr Robert Spencer in the years before abortion became legal, before a woman's right to control her own body was recognized by the Supreme Court in 1973. I was/am a middle class, well educated white woman. Women like me have always been luckier because we don't face the same prejudices and barriers. In the 60's and before that, too many women had back alley abortions. Too many women died of sepsis and too many women were rendered infertile by unsafe abortions.

Today, abortion is extremely safe because it is legal. Because it is legal, it's taught in medical schools, subject to ongoing research, and a part of regular medical practice for many gynecologists.

I fear that the current president and national legislative majorities will take us back to a time before *Roe*, and leave more women to turn to unsafe options. However, in this time of grave and growing threat to reproductive freedom at the federal level, Rhode Islanders are mobilizing like never before to defend and expand our reproductive rights. We have seen this movement in the thousands who joined the women's March on Jan 21st of last year and again on January 20th of this year. We've seen it in the hundreds who came to the State house over the last year to speak with their legislators and testify before legislative committees. We've seen it in the thousands of postcards in support of the Rhode Island Health Care Act that were delivered to elected officials last session. We've seen it in the phenomenal growth of the Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom, which now has 19 member organizations. Lawmakers are listening. Legislation I have introduced with Senator Gayle Goldin would protect a woman's right to a safe, legal abortion in our state -- and safeguard it against threats from the Trump-Pence administration. It would also repeal a number of restrictions passed in recent years since *Roe v Wade*, most of them enjoined by the courts but nevertheless still on the books.

Dozens of our colleagues are standing with us because they know that the attacks on reproductive freedom are not hypothetical. And they're not what people in our state want. It's time we make sure all our voices are heard so that all people have the freedom to control their own bodies and don't face the same harrowing decision I did as a young woman.

Christine Sadovy, Political and Legislative Director of Planned Parenthood of Northern, Central, and Southern New Jersey

Good morning. I'm Christine Sadovy, and I am the Legislative Director with Planned Parenthood in New Jersey.

In 2010, former governor, Chris Christie, eliminated a long-standing line item from the state budget that allowed Planned Parenthood and other family planning providers to offer birth control, cancer screenings, and STI testing and treatment to 136,000 people each year.. And in the eight years of his administration, we saw the real-life impact on our patients who lost access to care, either because there were no other providers in their community, or because others could not serve our patients.

And the health and lives of New Jerseyans were put at risk.

There was a 35% increase in bacterial STDs across the state. There was an increase in breast and cervical cancer cases, too, with a disproportionate 25% increase among Latinas.

The people in our state would not have it -- and they made their voices heard.. Last year, thousands marched in the Women's March, they wrote letters to the editor, called their elected officials, and held rallies at their legislators' offices in district and in our state's capital. And they voted and ran for office. That culminated with an election that shifted power dynamics in our state in 2018.

And now, we have an Administration that is listening clearly to the people in our state. And with our legislative champions, who have been fighting for years to restore this funding, we can turn this around and expand reproductive health care access for the people of New Jersey.

We have just one more vote on the Assembly floor this Thursday before this funding restoration bills gets to Governor Phil Murphy, who's pledged to sign it into law. This will make a difference in the lives of tens of thousands of New Jerseyans who rely on us for care.

It is a new day in New Jersey. We're fighting forward for our patients. And we are proud to show what's possible when we unite to protect our rights and freedoms.

Mauricio Calvo, Executive Director of Latino Memphis

Buenos dias. Latino Memphis is the largest Latino serving organization in west Tennessee, working with low income families in issues related to education, social services, and immigration. At the end of the day, Latino Memphis is working to help create a vibrant Latino middle class - something that is relevant not only to Latinos, but to the entire community. *Access to health care is a key component to our community's ability to control their life's path.*

In America, we believe that access to health care is a basic human right. That's why Latino Memphis is proudly partnering with Planned Parenthood in coalition with several other organizations in pushing for a bill that would protect access to birth control for all Tennesseans.

We are now taking the organizing power we've worked to build over the past year to now enact policies that are actually good for women and families.

In Tennessee, we just announced **HB-2627, the Women's Health Equity Bill**, that requires all health benefit plans to provide coverage for contraception and other women's preventive health services. It's basic and common sense.

The Trump-Pence administration is not only separating our families through harsh immigration policies. But it is also, among countless other unacceptable policies, attempting to infringe on our freedoms and take away our rights.

This bill is a response to the Trump administration's action to eliminate the guarantee for birth control coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This is taking away rights and opportunities away from people who already face unequal and unfair treatment.

Historically marginalized communities, including immigrants and new Americans, not only have worse access to reproductive health care — they also have worse health outcomes as well as higher rates of unintended pregnancy. This is a result of barriers that can make it difficult, or nearly impossible, to access health care, including poverty, lack of transportation, lack of paid sick leave, lack of childcare, lack of insurance, the risk of detention and deportation, and a historical distrust of the medical community, even it comes to victims of crime.

Eliminating birth control coverage can make it impossible to get the care they need. This bill takes concrete steps to protect birth control coverage in Tennessee and help safeguard every person's right to control their own body.

It is up to us to work together in Tennessee to dismantle the roadblocks the Trump-Pence administration has placed in the way of healthcare access. }

Everyone, including new and aspiring Americans, deserves the freedom and opportunity to control their lives at the most basic level: our bodies, our families, and our life's path. Latino Memphis recognizes Planned Parenthood is at the forefront of inclusive reproductive health care. The Spanish speaking community relies on Planned Parenthood health centers in Tennessee for preventive health services. Together, Latino Memphis and Planned Parenthood work to ensure access to comprehensive reproductive health care many in our community would otherwise not be able to access.

No matter what Trump, Pence, or other politicians might say, nobody can be truly free or equal without the ability to control the decisions they make about their bodies.

This is why Latino Memphis is proud to join Planned Parenthood in its fight to push policies in Tennessee that expand access to reproductive health care.

Tennessee is one of a dozen states this week to unveil a bold policy agenda that is demanding we not only fight against bad policies, but that we push for good ones too.