

## Defunding's Other Fronts

**Planned Parenthood battles to keep clinics open in the Deep South**

Southern states, including those trying hardest to prevent Planned Parenthood from receiving other federal public health contracts, are already a virtual desert of Planned Parenthood services, according to data the women's health organization recently provided to Congress.

Nationwide, Planned Parenthood provided services for an average of 8.4 patients per 1,000 people in 2013, according to the organization's recent report to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. In individual states, the number of patients range from a high of 26 per 1,000 residents in Vermont to less than 1 per 1,000 in Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina and West Virginia. The organization has no patients or clinics in North Dakota.

Planned Parenthood Southeast, an affiliate of the national organization, annually serves 17,000 patients across Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi, but has a total of just eight clinics in those states.

The affiliate's chief executive, Staci Fox, says she'd like to open more clinics but must focus instead on making sure patients and staff members are safe and that existing clinics can remain open.

"We serve three states that have some of the worst outcomes and poorest popula-



**TEXAS TOAST:** Anti-abortion activists rally in Austin in July after controversial videos are released showing an executive for Planned Parenthood discussing the sale of fetal tissue.

tions," Fox says. "Finding the resources for expansion aren't at our fingertips and the reimbursement environment for health care is not friendly ... We work every day to keep our doors open."

The national data was presented to the committee in the wake of its investigation into a series of videos showing a Planned Parenthood executive talking about how aborted fetal tissue is extracted for medical research. The organization and many of its supporters have asserted that the videos were edited to misrepresent Planned

Parenthood's practices.

"Planned Parenthood's No. 1 priority is ensuring the health and safety of our patients," says Dawn Laguens, executive vice president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "This is why, despite political attacks that hurt real patients, we're doing everything in our power to protect access for women across the country including opening new health centers in states like Texas, Louisiana and North Carolina."

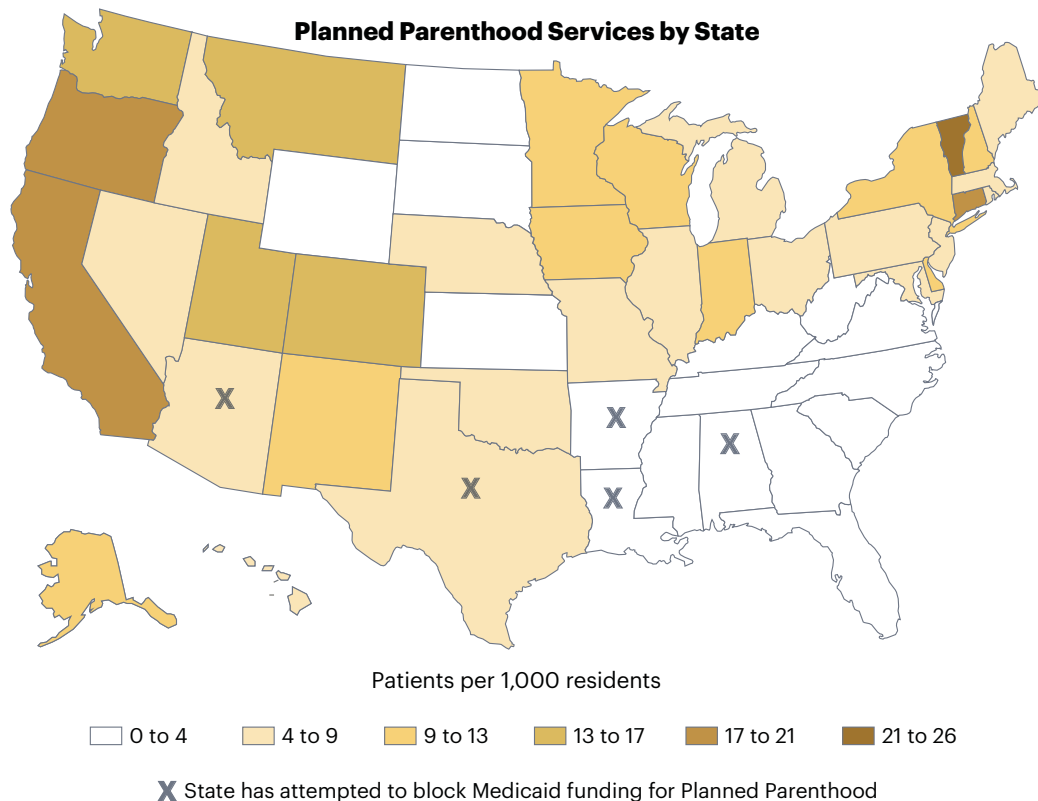
The organization says each year it provides about 2.7 million women and men in the United

States with services that include pap smears, cancer screenings and sexually transmitted disease testing, as well as information about contraceptives. The abortion services it provides represent about 3 percent of its overall activity, the group says.

Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott announced that the state would end its Medicaid contract with Planned Parenthood on Oct. 19, the same day that a federal judge stayed efforts by Louisiana to do the same. Arkansas and Alabama are also in court over the same issue. Those states were ordered to continue

# Service Gaps

The nation's biggest organization providing reproductive health care is distinctly regional.



Source: Planned Parenthood

Randy Leonard/CQ Roll Call Graphic

their relationship with Planned Parenthood while suits to sustain the contracts are considered.

Federal courts prevented Arizona and Indiana from discontinuing Planned Parenthood contracts in 2011.

At the same time, state legislatures are getting savvy about finding new ways to cut Planned Parenthood funding through various grants and contracts for health services, according to Elizabeth Nash, senior state issues associate for the Guttmacher Institute, which studies and advocates for reproductive health services.

“For so long all of these fights at the federal and state levels were around family planning dollars but now it’s branching out to other funding streams,” Nash says.

For example, North Carolina lawmakers passed a two-year budget bill in September that prevents Planned Parenthood from receiving funds for family planning services, pregnancy prevention programs and adolescent parenting programs.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony List, an anti-abortion group, says that Planned Parenthood’s role as a women’s health care specialist is not a good business

model. She says the organization doesn’t provide women with other needed primary care services like diabetes and hypertension screening, something that community health centers could do.

“A good model would be to provide all services in one place,” Dannenfelser says. “If you call yourself the pre-eminent provider for women you should be prepared in every instance to administer to the health care need of the whole woman whether you’re very young or middle age or very old.”

— Marissa Evans

## Mountain of Controversy

**WHAT HAPPENED?** Gov. Nathan Deal of Georgia found himself in a tight spot after a board his office appoints recommended erecting a monument to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. atop state-owned Stone Mountain, where towering likenesses of several Confederate leaders are carved into one face of the quartz monzonite dome.

**WHAT WENT WRONG?** After the Stone Mountain Memorial Association announced plans to build the monument, both the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference protested. “Neither side wants its legacy associated with the other’s,” the Atlanta Journal Constitution reported.

**THE GOVERNOR’S TAKE:** “I thought it was a unique idea. But like any good idea, unless you have people to buy into it, what may be a good idea may not prove to be so good after all,” Deal said, according to the Journal Constitution.

**WHAT’S NEXT:** Deal says the final decision will be left up to the memorial association and Herschend Family Entertainment, which operates the park.

— Tony Gnoffo

