

How to Bird-Dogging

Getting Your Representatives On The Record on Title X

Bird dogging is asking a well-crafted question of a politician that forces them to reveal their position. Below is everything you'll need to know.

Choose a target:

- Bird-dogging is most appropriate for members of Congress who are undecided or unclear on their position or who are actively supporting the gag rule and opposing access to Planned Parenthood.

Prepare for your question:

- Blend in as a supporter at the event; clap loudly; present yourself invitingly to the speaker.
- If you come with a group, sit separately to increase your likelihood of being called on.
- Make yourself seen: raise your hand powerfully and make eye contact to get called on.
 - Not everyone is given equal access to safety and opportunity at these events. White allies who get called on can give the question to a person of color.
- Make sure you have at least two friends that are recording the encounter with a good view of the speaker and clear audio. If you are asking a question while they're shaking hands, keep a phone in your front pocket with the voice recorder on to capture better audio.

Ask the question:

- Identify yourself. If you're a constituent, say so. Tell them you're a volunteer with your Planned Parenthood Action Council.
- Keep it succinct; the longer the question, the easier it is for the speaker to evade.
- Identify your goal: what is the issue you want to get this candidate on the record on?
- Yes or no questions are great.

Sample questions:

- Will you commit to protecting Title X and blocking the domestic gag rule in the upcoming spending bill?
- Will you commit to opposing any bill that doesn't protect Title X and access to Planned Parenthood?
- If the Title X Protection is not included in the spending bill, how would you explain this to the millions of people who rely on Title X and Planned Parenthood whose health care is in jeopardy?
- Why do you support making it more difficult for people, including some of your constituents, to obtain birth control, HIV and STD testing, cancer screenings, and other essential health care?

After the question:

- Try to get a handshake/selfie with the representative, and reiterate their answer.
- Find any media in attendance and try to give them a 10-second soundbite of your recording to make it news a story.
- Post your encounter on social media using #ProtectX and email photos and video to defenders@ppfa.org so we can amplify your message.