



Planned Parenthood of Montana

For Immediate Release

May 31, 2018

Governor Bullock Joins Growing Opposition to Trump’s Domestic “Gag Rule”

Planned Parenthood of Montana applauds Governor Bullock for standing with Montana women against attempt to cut them off from Planned Parenthood

Billings — Governor Bullock joined thirteen other governors across the country in sending a [letter](#) to Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar opposing the [Trump-Pence administration’s](#) domestic gag rule, which would make it illegal for health care providers to refer for abortion and impose new restrictions intended to block patients from Planned Parenthood health centers for birth control. They join the [73 percent of Americans](#), 200 members of Congress, and [110 public health organizations](#) who already oppose the rule. “We stand with women and men in our states by rejecting this Administration’s efforts to interfere in the doctor-patient relationship, eviscerate women’s access to family planning services, and force medical professionals to knowingly withhold information from their patients,” the governors said in the letter. “If the federal government breaks its commitment to states in the Title X program, we will react in kind and do what is necessary to protect the health of our constituents.”

The Trump-Pence administration introduced a nationwide gag rule this month, a radical departure from how health care has operated in the United States up until this point. The rule makes it illegal for doctors, nurses, hospitals, community health centers, and any other provider in the Title X program to tell patients how they can safely and legally access abortion. It would also introduce new rules designed to make it impossible for patients to access birth control and other reproductive health care at Planned Parenthood health centers across the country.

Thanks to Title X funding, Planned Parenthood of Montana is able to provide medical services, including birth control, STI testing and treatment, annual exams, and cancer screenings, on a sliding scale to 20 percent of their patients.

Statement from Martha Stahl, President and CEO at Planned Parenthood of Montana:

“We’re grateful to Governor Bullock for standing with Montana women, and rejecting this dangerous policy. 16,000 Montanans depend on Planned Parenthood for birth control and other basic health care. The Trump-Pence administration is taking direct aim at their health and rights, and we are glad that Governor Bullock is joining the growing nationwide opposition to these attacks.”

Signers of the letter included Governors Jay Inslee (WA), Gina Raimondo (RI), Andrew Cuomo (NY), Dannel Malloy (CT), Phil Murphy (NJ), Tom Wolf (PA), John Carney (DE), Ralph Northam (VA), Roy Cooper (NC), Mark Dayton (MN), John Hickenlooper (CO), Steve Bullock (MT), Kate Brown (OR) and David Ige (HI).

— more —

The proposed rule, issued by the Department of Health and Human Services, would do three main things:

1. Make it illegal for doctors, nurses, hospitals, and community health centers across the country that participate in the Title X program to refer their patients for safe, legal abortion.
2. Impose new restrictions designed to make it impossible for patients to get birth control or preventive care from reproductive health care providers like Planned Parenthood.
3. Remove the guarantee that people are getting full and accurate information about their health care from their doctors. For decades, Title X law has been clear: Health care providers cannot withhold information from you about your pregnancy options. This rule means they can.

Read the full letter from the 14 governors [here](#).

Key facts about Title X and Planned Parenthood:

- According to latest estimates, Planned Parenthood health centers served [four in 10 Title X patients](#) (41 percent) in 2015, despite only accounting for 13 percent of Title X centers.
- [Research](#) has shown that Planned Parenthood consistently outperforms other publicly funded providers, including FQHCs, when it comes to meeting the family planning needs of people across the United States by:
 1. Providing the full range of birth control methods on-site;
 2. Filling longer-term contraceptive prescriptions; and
 3. Offering shorter wait times and expanded health center hours.
- Community health centers will not be able to fill the huge void if Planned Parenthood is blocked from Title X program, dealing a major blow to health care access for thousands of low-income people across the country.
 1. [Community health centers themselves say](#) there is no way they could fill the gap if Planned Parenthood health centers were no longer allowed to serve these patients.
 2. The idea that other providers could absorb Planned Parenthood's patients has been resoundingly [dismissed by experts](#). In fact, Dr. Georges Benjamin, the executive director of the American Public Health Association, called the idea "[ludicrous](#)."
 3. Across the entire community health center network, [nearly half of sites](#) served fewer than 10 contraceptive patients annually.
 4. In fact, many of the lists of "replacement" providers don't even provide reproductive health care. [In Louisiana](#), the state list of alternative providers included dentists and nursing homes. [In Florida](#), it included school nurses. [In Ohio](#), it included food banks.

The Gag Rule has been met with immediate and widespread opposition

This gag rule has been rejected by the American public:

- [New polling](#) by Hart Research Associates shows that the 73 percent of Americans oppose the gag rule and policies the Trump-Pence Administration's have pushed take away women's basic rights to health care.
- [Hundreds rallied](#) outside of nearly every HHS building across the country to protest Trump's domestic gag rule.
- Dozens of protests are scheduled for Memorial Day recess outside of Member of Congress's offices to demand elected officials to oppose the gag rule.

The gag rule has been rejected by the medical community:

- [Major medical associations](#) like the American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, and more oppose this rule. In a press release, the AMA president said: "Gag orders that restrict the ability of physicians to explain all options to their patients and refer them—whatever their health care needs—compromise this relationship and force physicians and nurses to withhold information that their patients need to make decisions about their care."
- [100 public health organizations](#) have come out in opposition to a gag policy.

The gag rule has been rejected by elected officials:

More than [200 members of Congress](#) have come out in opposition to a gag policy.

Editorial boards across the country have slammed the gag rule:

- New York Times: [Pandering, and Endangering Women](#)
- The Seattle Times: [Reject back-channel attempt to defund Planned Parenthood](#)
- Las Vegas Sun: [Nevadans must remain vigilant to protect women's health](#)
- Washington Post: [Trump gives a gift to pro-life evangelical Christians — and hurts low-income women](#)
- Chicago Sun Times: [President Donald Trump again goes after women's reproductive rights](#)
- Bloomberg: [Trump Tries Restricting Abortion by Other Means](#)
- Los Angeles Times: [Once again, the Trump administration is out to mess with women's healthcare](#)
- Portland Press Herald: ['Gag Rule' would affect poor women's health care](#)

The gag rule will have political consequences:

Amy Walter, National Editor of Cook Political Report told Face the Nation that the domestic gag rule would have an impact on the midterms, [saying](#) she expects "Planned Parenthood will play a starring role" in key districts across the country and that this policy could be "more definitive in favor of Democrats than it is in favor of Republicans."

- Jamelle Bouie, Chief Political Correspondent at Slate [remarked](#) that the domestic gag will "energize" a "core group of democratic activists."