



OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

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In Case You Missed It

Statesman Journal: Oregonians deserve discussion of Planned Parenthood

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[Statesman Journal](#)

It is unfortunate that a legislative committee, at the behest of state House Speaker Tina Kotek, has canceled a recently announced hearing on Planned Parenthood activities in Oregon.

Whether one supports or opposes Planned Parenthood is not the issue here. Rather, it is the legislative process.

Kotek said she would encourage Planned Parenthood to respond in writing to questions raised by House Republicans. She released a statement this week saying, in part: "I am a strong supporter of Planned Parenthood and have seen zero evidence to support the allegations that their opponents have drummed up in recent weeks. Still, out of respect for those House members, I would have supported a straightforward, fact-based hearing to address their letter. Instead, House Republicans made it clear that they intended to turn this hearing into a political stunt, bringing D.C.-style games to the Oregon House."

Because of its role in providing abortions, Planned Parenthood has long been a political lightning rod. The intensity was magnified by the release of videos that purport to show Planned Parenthood officials talking about providing aborted fetal tissue for medical research. In fact, Congress may be on the verge of shutting down the federal government — an irresponsible action — as it debates whether to cut off federal funding to Planned Parenthood.

In Oregon, Democrats control the Legislature and largely can do as they wish. So it appeared that Rep. Mitch Greenlick had struck a blow for bipartisanship and collaboration when he agreed with Republicans' request for a House Health Care Committee hearing on Planned Parenthood next week. Then he was overruled by Kotek.

Republicans said they sought the hearing to get an Oregon take on the national allegations, including whether Planned Parenthood in Oregon was complying with federal and state laws.

In a letter to Greenlick last month, Republicans said, "Such a hearing would provide Planned Parenthood with the opportunity to prove, 1) that it is using understandable informed consent documentation for the women using their services; 2) the purposes for which fetal body parts have been used; 3) the nature and type of storage of body parts; 4) how and to whom body parts are transported; 5) actual costs incurred by Planned Parenthood in its processing of body parts; and 6) the source and amount of payments made to Planned Parenthood for transmission services."

Those are reasonable topics. One would hope they could be discussed more rationally in the Oregon Legislature than in the hyper-partisan Congress.

It's doubtful that the legislative hearing would have become any more of a sideshow, circus or distraction than many past hearings, including ones championed by Democrats. Both parties hold hearings to make political points.

By refusing to hold the hearing, Democrats lost the opportunity for Planned Parenthood to stand up to its accusers. They added one more hole in the Legislature's reputation. And they handed Republicans one more campaign issue for next year's legislative elections.

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