

Remarks by Linda Waite-Simpson on Gov. Scott's budget
February 13, 2017

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide comments on the Governor's proposed FY2018 budget. My name is Linda Waite-Simpson and I am both a Planned Parenthood supporter and volunteer as well as a former state legislator. I am here to offer remarks specifically about the essential health services provided by Planned Parenthood to our Medicaid population. As you know, the federal government is attempting to further restrict states from using their Medicaid block grant dollars for health care when provided by Planned Parenthood or any health care facility that provides abortion services. I believe that this restriction is not only unconstitutional at the federal level, but also at the state level. It specifically targets funding for all health care services offered by institutions that provide legal and safe abortions when the reality is that abortion services constitute less than 5% of the services provided by Planned Parenthood. About 14% of the total number of pregnancies ended in abortion in 2014, the latest statistic available. This is the lowest rate we have ever had and that is due in large part to easy and affordable access to birth control.

As you all stood arm in arm with Governor Scott last week in denouncing the president's immigration plan, I hope you will also stand arm in arm with Governor Scott to protect Planned Parenthood from further defunding, regardless of what happens in Washington DC. As someone who has spent numerous hours as a volunteer greeter at the clinic on St. Paul St. in Burlington, I can tell you that I have never, in all my days of volunteering for many organizations, had so many people thank me for my service as they did on the street in front of the clinic. I think they would want you to stand up for Planned Parenthood too.