

Democratic Filibuster Kills Bill to Defund Planned Parenthood

Last night, the U.S. Senate voted in favor of a bill to end all funding of Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider – but it failed, anyway. The measure, S. 1881, would block funding of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and its affiliates. The vote to advance the bill was 53 to 46, with 60 votes required to overcome a Democratic filibuster. The measure had originally been introduced by Sen. Mike Lee, R-UT, as an amendment to another bill. An amendment would need only 51 votes to pass. Instead, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-KY, made the measure a stand-alone bill, which required an impossible 60-vote margin. (McConnell voted against the bill, not because he opposed it, but so that he could reintroduce the bill later.) Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-SC, skipped the vote to attend a campaign function in New Hampshire. On the most recent previous occasion when the Senate voted on whether to defund Planned Parenthood, on April 14, 2011, only 42 senators voted for the bill. “Planned Parenthood’s political arm is a major backer of many Democratic senators – who today voted to block a bill to defund their political ally,” said Carol Tobias, National Right to Life president, after last night’s vote. “We recognize that cutting off this politically connected abortion mega-marketer is a long-term project, and we are encouraged that today’s tally represents a marked increase in opposition to Planned Parenthood since 2011, when only 42 senators voted to support a cutoff.” “Shame on Senate Democrats for voting to allow hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to fill the coffers of the nation’s largest abortion provider,” she said. Sponsored by Sen. Joni Ernst, a freshman Republican from Iowa, S. 1881 states, “Notwithstanding any other provision of law,

no federal funds may be made available to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, or to any of its affiliates, subsidiaries, successors, or clinics.” The bill also contains language to provide that “all funds no longer available to Planned Parenthood will continue to be made available to other eligible entities to provide women’s health care services.” There are an estimated 9,000 community health centers in the United States, versus 700 Planned Parenthood facilities, according to Kristen Day, the executive director of Democrats for Life of America, which also supported the bill. Two Democrats, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Joe Donnelly of Indiana, voted for the bill last night. (One Republican, Mark Kirk of Illinois, voted no.) Sen. Ernst introduced S. 1881 last week following a series of videos released by the Center for Medical Progress. The videos, which underscored the need for passage of legislation to cut off all federal funds to Planned Parenthood and its affiliates, show top Planned Parenthood officials discussing the harvesting and trafficking of body parts from unborn babies killed by abortion. A new video was released this morning. “Senator Ernst’s bill would push the snout of Planned Parenthood, a bloated abortion megamarketer and a fetal organ trafficker, out of the U.S. Treasury feeding trough,” said Douglas Johnson, legislative director for National Right to Life. About one-third of all abortions in the U.S. are performed at Planned Parenthood-affiliated facilities. According to their most recent annual report, Planned Parenthood received at least \$528 million annually from the federal government or other levels of government. “Abortion is big business for Planned Parenthood, and they don’t need taxpayer dollars to aid the expansion of their deadly empire,” Tobias said.