

Why House GOP Leader Won't Shut Feds Down Over Planned Parenthood Funding

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy said Monday he expects lawmakers to debate federal funding this month for Planned Parenthood as they consider spending legislation for the current fiscal year, but he did not expect a government shutdown over funding for the women's health group.

McCarthy, responding to questions about whether the deadly shooting at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado would affect Republican opposition to funding the group, told reporters he expected a "healthy debate" before the bill is passed to fund the government through next September.

The deadline for passage is Dec 11.

Three people were killed and nine wounded at the clinic in Colorado Springs on Friday. Robert Lewis Dear, 57, was expected to face multiple counts of murder and attempted murder in the attack.

Planned Parenthood has said reports that the shooter told investigators "no more baby parts" after his arrest showed he had an anti-abortion agenda.

McCarthy said he personally opposes spending tax dollars on funding for Planned Parenthood, but sidestepped questions about whether there would be a provision in the government spending bill that would defund the organization.

"I expect there to be a healthy debate on everyplace the government spends money," he said. "I do not see a shutdown happening in this process."

He also brushed aside suggestions that Republican rhetoric criticizing the organization had played any role in

encouraging attacks on Planned Parenthood.

“This individual, this shooting, the thing that drove him most was he was a very evil, crazy man,” McCarthy said.

Conservatives have accused Planned Parenthood, a nonprofit that provides a range of health services, including abortion, of illegally selling baby parts, an accusation it strongly denies.

McCarthy noted that before the shooting incident, the Republican-majority House had put together a select committee to investigate Planned Parenthood, and “we’ll see where that plays out.” {eoa}

(Reporting by Susan Cornwell and Susan Heavey; Editing by Doina Chiacu and David Gregorio)

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