

Republicans Fail to Defund Planned Parenthood in Government Funding Bill

Despite pledges by some conservative Republicans to defund Planned Parenthood, House of Representatives Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi said no such proposal was included in a draft government funding bill sent to her this week.

The omission may be a sign that Republicans' zeal for the issue has waned following last Friday's deadly shooting at a Colorado Planned Parenthood clinic that left three dead and nine wounded.

Since the attack, in which Robert Lewis Dear has been charged with murder, Republicans in Congress have had notably less to say about the women's health group. Before the Thanksgiving holiday, some had demanded that any federal support for it be cut off.

Republicans have been long-time foes of providing government funding to the group because it provides abortions, though this represents only a small portion of the reproductive healthcare services it provides to millions of Americans.

In an interview with Reuters, Pelosi said Republicans left Planned Parenthood out of the offer they sent to her on Tuesday. The offer has been rejected by Democrats over 30 proposals they objected to, including "anti-environmental" language and restrictions on Syrian refugees.

"They had purposefully taken the Planned Parenthood language out," Pelosi said. "My understanding is there's some unease among their members ... so I don't know what they will do."

Congress must pass a measure by Dec. 11 to fund the government

through next September or trigger agency shutdowns. Republicans, who have majority control of the House, as well as the Senate, aim to have the bill on the House floor next week.

Planned Parenthood came under fire earlier this year after an anti-abortion group posted online videos that it said showed Planned Parenthood illegally selling tissue from aborted fetuses.

Planned Parenthood has said it has done nothing wrong and has said the videos were deceptively edited.

Conservative House Republicans have said they want some “pro-life” language, such as limits on Planned Parenthood, in the funding bill in order for them to vote for it.

While they favor cutting off federal funds to Planned Parenthood, some conservatives said this week that another approach could be to let states exclude abortion providers like Planned Parenthood from Medicaid payments.

Democrats oppose defunding Planned Parenthood, and Pelosi said they could not support pushing decisions on funding to the states. She said she did not know whether House Speaker Paul Ryan and other Republicans had dropped the Planned Parenthood matter for good.

“I think they know it was a loser,” Pelosi said of proposals to limit Planned Parenthood. {eo}

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