

# Will Republicans Shut Down the Government to Defund Planned Parenthood?

Congressional Republicans showed no signs on Wednesday of having a clear plan for averting a U.S. government shutdown in three weeks over funding for Planned Parenthood, though senior party leaders have made clear they want to avoid that scenario.

As has happened before, a shutdown on Oct. 1 would likely rattle financial markets. But Republicans had little to say about this in their remarks about the women's health group and conservatives' demands that its federal funding be cut off.

After an hour-long, closed-door meeting of fellow party members, House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner said there were "no decisions at this point" on the content of a stopgap funding bill for the federal fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

Boehner, speaking to reporters for the first time since returning to Washington after a five-week summer recess that ended on Tuesday, also could not say when he would bring a spending bill to the House floor for passage.

The House has only seven legislative days before the Sept. 30 end of the fiscal year and the expiration of federal funds, which would trigger a shutdown.

With that deadline looming, passions were running high among conservatives who want to cut off federal funding for Planned Parenthood. Their demands follow the online release recently of secretly taped videos that show technicians for the women's healthcare provider handling fetal tissue following abortions.

The videos were produced and posted by an anti-abortion group, the Center for Medical Progress, which alleges Planned Parenthood has improperly sold fetal tissue for profit.

Planned Parenthood, which gets more than \$500 million a year in federal funds, has said it has done nothing illegal and has accused the center of selectively editing the videos.

Exiting the closed party meeting, Republican Representative Trent Franks of Arizona told reporters: "The bottom line is, if we don't protect these babies, Planned Parenthood will continue to murder them and then extract their little body parts."

Representative Bill Flores described to reporters the dilemma he and many of his fellow Republicans face. He said the overwhelming majority of his Texas constituents want to cut Planned Parenthood's funding but balk at the prospect of shutting the government down to do it.

#### FAMILIAR PATH

Republicans have tried before to undo federal programs they oppose by attaching controversial legislation to must-pass spending bills. For more than two weeks in October 2013, many federal programs stopped after Republican Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and others tried, but failed, to kill President Barack Obama's landmark healthcare law as part of a government funding bill.

Earlier this year, some Department of Homeland Security operations halted when Republicans, again unsuccessfully, tried to overturn an Obama executive action on immigration.

As Republicans huddled, the House Judiciary Committee held a hearing on the controversial Planned Parenthood videos.

Because the group gets federal funding, lawmakers are obliged "to do what we can to ensure federal taxpayers are not

contributing to the sorts of horrors reflected in the undercover videos,” said committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte of Virginia.

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