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## **The ACLU and Planned Parenthood File Lawsuit Challenging Education Defunding Law**

Des Moines, Iowa — Today, the ACLU of Iowa, on behalf of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, filed a lawsuit to block a law excluding Planned Parenthood of the Heartland from receiving crucial funding to provide sex education for youth in Iowa.

The lawsuit is in response to House File 766, a bill passed by the Iowa Legislature and signed into law this month by Gov. Kim Reynolds. The new law bars organizations that provide abortions or advocate in support of access to safe and legal abortion from receiving certain grants that support sex education for the youth of Iowa. The law excludes Planned Parenthood, which has successfully competed for these funds and used the state-approved curriculum to provide sex education to tens of thousands of Iowa youth since 2005.

*“Planned Parenthood has been the trusted provider of comprehensive sex education in Iowa for decades—and for nearly 15 years under one of the federal programs that the Reynolds administration just defunded. By signing this law, the Governor is undermining the health of young people in our state, making it more difficult for them to get the tools they need to make healthy decisions, now and for a lifetime,”* **said Erin Davison-Rippey, the State Executive Director for Iowa.**

*“To exclude a well-regarded organization that has an historical track record of effectiveness simply because you’re opposed to abortion is highly counterproductive. It is well known that sex education keeps young people healthier, safer, and less likely to have an unintended pregnancy, and Planned Parenthood is the long-standing leader in providing these programs for*

*Iowa youth,” said Sarah Stoesz, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood North Central States, which includes Iowa. “Unfortunately, this defunding is part of a nationwide effort to substitute narrow ideology for facts, science, and broadly held expert opinion. This effort will have a lasting and damaging effect on our young people.”*

The lawsuit, filed in Polk County District Court, asks the court to temporarily block implementation of the law until it can be further considered by the court. It also asks for a permanent injunction and that the court declare the law unconstitutional.

“This defunding effort undermines the important healthcare education needs that Iowa teens have across the state for accurate, reliable information about their bodies and their relationships, and violates the Iowa Constitution because it targets Planned Parenthood for defunding based on its unrelated provision of essential abortion services to Iowa women, as well as based on its exercise of free speech about abortion rights,” **said Rita Bettis Austen, ACLU of Iowa legal director.**

Sections 99 and 100 of House File 766 bar any organization that “provides or promotes abortion” (or that is an affiliate of or refers to such an organization) from receiving Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) and Community Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (CAPP) grant funding. These grants support sex education and related services to youth in Iowa and require grantees to use state-approved curriculum.

Planned Parenthood of the Heartland (PPH) currently receives funding from both grants and would be excluded from the programs as a result of the new law, despite the organization’s successful track record providing sex education programs for youth across the state. At this time, PPH has grant applications pending for the coming year for both programs. The Iowa Department of Human Services and Department of Public Health that sponsor the grant programs are currently expected to announce award recipients on May 17 (CAPP) and May 22 (PREP).

The lawsuit argues that the law is unconstitutional under the Iowa Constitution in the following ways:

- It violates free speech by punishing PPH for its constitutionally protected advocacy for abortion rights and affiliation with other organizations that also advocate for abortion rights and/or provide abortion services.
- It violates due process by denying government funds to PPH because the organization provides access for Iowa women to exercise their constitutionally protected right to safe and legal abortion care.
- It also violates equal protection by singling out abortion providers for defunding.

The file-stamped petition and motion for a temporary injunction filed in Polk County District Court by the ACLU of Iowa can be found here:

[https://www.aclu-ia.org/sites/default/files/05771\\_eqce084508\\_brif\\_7033916.pdf](https://www.aclu-ia.org/sites/default/files/05771_eqce084508_brif_7033916.pdf)

[https://www.aclu-ia.org/sites/default/files/05771\\_eqce084508\\_pfld\\_7033912.pdf](https://www.aclu-ia.org/sites/default/files/05771_eqce084508_pfld_7033912.pdf)

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Planned Parenthood of the Heartland is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that provides, promotes, and protects reproductive and sexual health through health services, education, and advocacy. An affiliate of America's most trusted provider of reproductive health care, PPHeartland is proud to offer a full range of high-quality services at 10 health centers in Iowa and Nebraska.

[www.ppheartland.org](http://www.ppheartland.org)

The ACLU of Iowa is a private, non-partisan organization that fights to advance civil liberties for all. It is the state affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU prides itself in upholding everyone's civil liberties, no matter who they are or what they believe. We work to assure the rights of all Iowans—from atheists to devout Christians, from labor unions to businesspeople and more—to make sure the constitutional rights of all are preserved. For more information, please go to [www.aclu-ia.org](http://www.aclu-ia.org).