



Planned Parenthood Texas Votes 2018 State Candidate Questionnaire

Planned Parenthood Texas Votes (PPTV) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization formed as the advocacy and political arm of the Planned Parenthood affiliates in Texas. PPTV engages in educational and electoral activity including legislative advocacy, voter education, and grassroots organizing. Planned Parenthood Texas Votes PAC (PPTV PAC) is a non-partisan political action committee committed to supporting pro-women’s health candidates for state office.

Planned Parenthood Texas Votes expects that endorsed candidates will maintain a voting record that is 100 percent in support of reproductive health policies.

If you **do not** want the endorsement of Planned Parenthood Texas Votes PAC, check here:

Candidate Name: _____

State Senate/ House (circle) District: _____ **Party:** _____

Name of Campaign Committee: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Website: _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

Campaign Manager: _____

Email: _____ **Cell phone:** _____

Campaign Finance Contact: _____

Email: _____ **Cell phone:** _____

Campaign Communications Contact: _____

Email: _____ **Cell phone:** _____

Email this completed form to **Dyana Limon-Mercado** at dyana.limon-mercado@pptexasvotes.org or mail to her attention at Planned Parenthood Texas Votes, P.O. Box 41646, Austin, Texas, 78704. If you have questions, feel free to contact Dyana at (512) 276-8078.

*At some health center locations



Candidate Name: _____

RESPECTED AND TRUSTED PROVIDERS AND ADVOCATES

Planned Parenthood is the nation’s leading provider and advocate of high-quality, affordable healthcare for women, men, and young people, as well as the nation’s largest provider of sex education. With more than 600 health centers across the country, 34 of those in Texas, Planned Parenthood organizations serve all patients with care and compassion, with respect and without judgment. Through our health centers, community programs, and online resources, Planned Parenthood is a trusted source of reliable health information that allows people to make informed health decisions. Backed by eight million supporters, more than 700,000 of those here in Texas, Planned Parenthood fights to ensure that all people can get the health care services they need. Planned Parenthood does all this because it cares passionately about helping people lead healthier lives. Planned Parenthood opposes discrimination in all its forms and provides equitable health care to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, language, religion, sex, age, disability, citizenship or immigration status, marital status, creed, sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity.

OUR CORE ISSUES

Protecting the Ability of Planned Parenthood Health Centers to Provide Care

With more than 34 health centers across the state, Planned Parenthood provides a wide range of preventative health services to more than 110,000 patients a year. Planned Parenthood health centers provide affordable birth control, HPV vaccines, lifesaving breast and cervical cancer screenings, male sexual health exams, testing and treatment for STDs, HIV screenings, pre-exposure prophylaxis*, an HIV prevention method, transgender hormone therapy*, miscarriage management, fertility management* and other health care services. Planned Parenthood also operates health centers that provide pregnancy options information, referrals for adoption and prenatal care, and abortion services.

In recent years, the ability of Planned Parenthood health centers to continue to provide preventive health care services, including birth control and cancer screenings, has been under attack. In 2011, the state legislature cut the family planning budget by two-thirds and tiered Planned Parenthood health centers last to receive state funds for family planning. Additionally, the legislature banned Planned Parenthood centers that do not provide abortion services from participating in any state programs including the Healthy Texas Woman Program, the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program and the HIV Prevention Program. These measures were all approved by the legislature despite the fact that Planned Parenthood health centers in Texas have partnered with the state for over 40 years to provide preventive health care services. According to a 2017 report by the Center for Public Policy Priorities, Texas women lost access to health care after the state excluded Planned Parenthood from the Women’s Health Program – from 2011-2016 almost 40% of women participating in the program lost access to care and more than 40% lost access to contraception.

*At some health center locations

1. Will you oppose efforts that prevent Planned Parenthood health centers from receiving federal, state and local funding to provide preventive health care?

Yes

No

2. Will you support common sense policies and programs that promote greater access to family planning services and education program in order to reduce unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases?

Yes

No

Affordable, Accessible Reproductive Health Care Services

Making health care, including family planning, more accessible and affordable is one of the most important issues facing our state. Planned Parenthood health centers are an integral part of the health care system in this country. Through Planned Parenthood health centers, people have access to the essential primary and preventive health care services that promote and protect their health and well-being. In fact, many patients rely on Planned Parenthood health centers as their main source of health care.

1. Will you support legislation that would improve and increase access to family planning services that are specific to preventive health care, including family planning supplies such as birth control?

Yes

No

Emergency Contraception

Emergency contraception (EC), sometimes known as the “morning-after pill” or emergency birth control, is a safe and effective means of preventing pregnancy. Available for nearly 40 years, it contains hormones found in birth control pills and can be effective if used up to five days (120 hours) after intercourse. Access to EC is crucial in situations such as rape, or when contraceptive methods have failed. EC has no impact on an existing pregnancy. Nonetheless, groups opposed to this method of contraception falsely claim that it can end a pregnancy, and disseminate misinformation about its safety and efficacy. The FDA and medical societies have made clear that EC is a safe and effective method of birth control, not abortion. In 2006, EC was FDA-approved for sale behind-the counter without a prescription to women age 18 and older, and in 2013, a court ruled that EC be made available without age restrictions. However, some health care providers are not informing patients about the availability and efficacy of EC, and some pharmacies are refusing to stock or dispense it.

1. Will you support legislation and other efforts at the state level to ensure full coverage of and access to emergency contraception for all people?

Yes

No

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Texas has the highest rate of teen births in the country and holds the number one spot for repeat teen births. According to the Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, whereas other states and cities have lowered teen birth rates by expanding access to birth control and sex education and making long-acting, reversible contraception — like IUDs or hormonal implants — readily available, especially to Medicaid patients, Texas has largely done the opposite. A quarter of Texas school districts do not offer sex education, while nearly 60% teach abstinence-only programs, according to the Texas Tribune. Abstinence-only sex education has repeatedly proven ineffective and often presents inaccurate information that leaves participants even less prepared for sex. States that teach abstinence tend to have higher teen pregnancy rates.

Texas needs policies to ensure that teens have access to comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education by requiring medically-accurate, evidence-based sex education in public schools when it is taught. Evidence-based sex education includes abstinence messages as well as medically accurate information about preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

1. Do you support age-appropriate, evidence-based sex education programs that include accurate medical information to prevent pregnancy and protect against sexually transmitted disease?

Yes No

2. Will you support Texas' participation in evidence-based pregnancy prevention programs?

Yes No

3. Will you oppose state funding for ineffective abstinence-only programs?

Yes No

Crisis Pregnancy Centers

In the last five legislative sessions, Gov. Perry and Gov. Abbott supported funneling taxpayer money away from proven family planning programs and to the Alternatives to Abortion program. The 'alternatives' that this program finances includes crisis pregnancy centers that exist to prevent people facing unintended pregnancies from accessing their full range of reproductive health options. Many of these centers represent themselves as health clinics, despite offering no health care services. Since 2005, approximately \$60 million in state money has been taken away from clinics that provide preventive health care, including family planning services, and given to crisis pregnancy centers, including the Heidi Group, that are biased and unregulated. On September 26, 2017, a watchdog group filed a complaint with the Travis County District Attorney's Office seeking an investigation of the Heidi Group for misappropriating taxpayer funds. Some states passed a law that requires pregnancy-related service providers that are not medically licensed to disclose that fact to women seeking their services.

*At some health center locations

1. Would you support discontinuing funding of this costly, wasteful program?

Yes No

2. Would you support state regulation and oversight of Crisis Pregnancy Centers?

Yes No

Abortion Access

Planned Parenthood Texas Votes believes that decisions about whether to choose adoption, end a pregnancy, or raise a child must be left to a woman, her family, her faith, with the counsel of her doctor or health care provider. Politicians should not interfere in a person's personal medical decisions regarding pregnancy. Opponents of safe and legal abortion have tried to erode access to abortion through a range of abortion restrictions, including targeted restrictions of abortion providers (TRAP) designed to shut down health centers, and laws designed to shame and judge women.

Since 2011, the State has passed an onslaught of medically unnecessary laws severely impacting access to abortion making Texas one of the most hostile states for people seeking abortion and health care facilities and physicians who provide abortion in the country.

Leading medical organizations, including the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), oppose procedure-specific requirements that interfere with the doctor-patient relationship or a physician's medical judgments about what information or treatment is in the best interest of the patient. The AMA opposes interference in the clinical examination room and calls on policymakers to leave determination of what constitutes medically necessary treatment where it belongs - in the hands of physicians and patients.

In the 2016 *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* decision, the US Supreme Court struck down abortion restrictions in Texas (passed in 2013) that required abortion facilities to be the equivalent of ambulatory surgical centers and mandated abortion providers have admitting privileges at a local hospital; these measures had greatly diminished access to services while in effect. The Court's ruling underscored the need to consider scientific evidence in evaluating the constitutionality of abortion restrictions.

The high court's ruling has not stopped Governor Abbott or state legislators who oppose abortion from passing even more provisions aimed at preventing access to abortion. In 2015, the Texas Legislature passed a law that amends the judicial bypass requirements regarding abortions creating insurmountable barriers for teens who cannot safely obtain parental consent for the procedure. Most recently, the legislature passed a law that prevents Texans from using their private insurance to cover abortion even in the cases of rape, incest or fetal abnormality.

It is the policy of Planned Parenthood to ensure that every Texan have the right to seek and obtain safe, legal abortions under the standards set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court. Anti-choice organizations have continually tried to erode the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision by trying to impose damaging restrictions.

1. Will you support Roe v. Wade as the law of the land and oppose any effort to undermine access to safe, legal abortion?

Yes No

2. Will you oppose legislation that limits the right of a person to make personal decisions for their health, including: attempts to legislate a person's intentions for deciding to end a pregnancy, criminalize health care providers, or otherwise interfere with the doctor-patient relationship?

Yes No

3. Will you oppose legislation that serves no medical benefit and seeks to shame Texans by asking them personal questions surrounding their pregnancy?

Yes No

4. Will you support access for minors to confidential reproductive health care information and services?

Yes No

5. Will you oppose efforts designed to restrict access to safe and legal abortion, such as medically unnecessary requirements of abortion providers and abortion facilities?

Yes No

Champion's Commitment

Planned Parenthood Texas Votes strongly encourages endorsed candidates to go above and beyond maintaining a 100 percent voting record by being a champion of women's health issues. Below is a list of ways for endorsed candidates to be a champion for Planned Parenthood issues, health centers, patients, and the communities we serve.

Note: Responses to the statements below will not factor into the endorsement process and are a means of gauging a candidate's commitment to reproductive health issues. Please check the boxes below that indicate your commitment to Planned Parenthood.

My Commitment to Planned Parenthood

- I will speak out publicly in support of Planned Parenthood.
- I will speak out publicly in support of access to family planning and reproductive health care.
- I will attend a Planned Parenthood function or event.
- I will visit and tour a Planned Parenthood health center.

Candidate Signature

Date

Email this completed form to **Dyana Limon-Mercado** at dyana.limon-mercado@pptexasvotes.org or mail to her attention at Planned Parenthood Texas Votes, P.O. Box 41646, Austin, Texas, 78704. If you have questions, feel free to contact Dyana at (512) 276-8078.