



Bob Ferguson

## ATTORNEY GENERAL OF WASHINGTON

1125 Washington Street SE • PO Box 40100 • Olympia WA 98504-0100

November 16, 2015

The Honorable Judy Warnick  
The Honorable Mike Padden  
The Honorable Ann Rivers  
The Honorable Jan Angel  
The Honorable Jim Honeyford

The Honorable Jim Hargrove  
The Honorable Mark Miloscia  
The Honorable Randi Becker  
The Honorable Don Benton  
The Honorable Bruce Dammeier

Washington State Legislature  
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Senators:

On July 29, 2015, you requested that this office conduct an investigation of Planned Parenthood's Washington health centers following serious allegations of unlawful conduct made by an out of state entity related to the handling of fetal tissue and the performance of abortions.

In response, I directed two of my senior attorneys, Deputy Attorney General Paige Dietrich and Senior Assistant Attorney General Kristen Mitchell, to review whether there is any indication that Planned Parenthood locations in Washington are committing the alleged violations of state and federal laws. Enclosed is a memorandum from Ms. Dietrich and Ms. Mitchell describing what they did – reviewing the allegations, the law, the relevant videos and transcripts, and obtaining pertinent information from officials of Planned Parenthood and the University of Washington – and summarizing their findings.

In short, during our review, my office found no evidence to support these allegations or to indicate that Planned Parenthood is violating any state or federal law in the way it handles fetal tissue or performs abortions.

Planned Parenthood has four affiliates that operate 32 health centers providing health care services in Washington state. These services, primarily to women, include breast exams, cancer screenings, sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment, family planning services, and abortion services. There is no information whatsoever to suggest that any Planned Parenthood clinics in the state are violating Washington's ban on partial-birth abortion.

Of the 32 health centers, only one donates fetal tissue. The tissue is donated to the Birth Defects Research Laboratory at the University of Washington. It is used to research cures and prevention for heart damage, macular degeneration, newborn brain malformations and other birth defects. The research is funded by the National Institutes of Health and complies with the rigorous research

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standards required by that federal agency. The University of Washington supplies the shipping materials required for transport, and Planned Parenthood does not receive any compensation or cost recovery for the donation of tissue.

My office is not alone in finding no evidence to support the allegations against Planned Parenthood. As your letter notes, agencies in a number of states, operating under leaders of both parties, have undertaken reviews of Planned Parenthood's activities within their state borders. These states include Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota. To date, no state has found evidence to support the allegations raised in your letter.

Finally, women have the right to choose to have an abortion under both the U.S. Constitution and Washington state law. In Washington state, the people have spoken directly on this issue. In 1991, the voters of our state approved Initiative 120 affirming this right. Unfounded allegations against Planned Parenthood are troubling. They seek to discredit the organization and divert resources away from patient services, making it more difficult for Washington women to exercise their constitutional rights.

We conducted a review and found no evidence of any violations and no basis for further review. Accordingly, this concludes our review of the allegations raised in your letter.

Sincerely,



BOB FERGUSON  
Attorney General

RWF/jlg

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Jay Inslee  
Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives  
John Wiesman, Secretary, Department of Health  
John T. Slattery, Ph.D., University of Washington School of Medicine