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HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515–6115

Majority (202) 225–2927
Minority (202) 225–3641

September 27, 2011

The Honorable Cliff Stearns
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Stearns:

We are writing regarding your September 15, 2011, letter opening a far-reaching investigation into Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its affiliates. We question the basis for the investigation and whether Planned Parenthood is being singled out as part of a Republican vendetta against an organization that provides family planning and other medical care to low-income women and men.

Your letter states that the "Committee is examining the institutional practices and policies of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its affiliates, and its handling of federal funding." It then makes an extraordinarily broad and burdensome request for documents. The letter asks Planned Parenthood and all 83 of its affiliates for internal audit reports covering up to a 12-year period; for state audits covering a 20-year period; for detailed information about any improper billing; and for sensitive information about the services and referral practices of Planned Parenthood affiliates and clinics.

The letter also requests information about billing practices; segregation of funds; and policies and procedures in place with regard to criminal conduct, sexual abuse, and sex trafficking.

We are aware of no predicate that would justify this sweeping and invasive request to Planned Parenthood. The HHS Inspector General and state Medicaid programs regularly audit Planned Parenthood and report publicly on their findings. These audits have not identified any pattern of misuse of federal funds, illegal activity, or other abuse that would justify a broad and invasive congressional investigation.

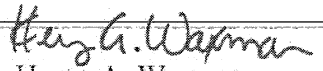
This year, House Republicans have voted twice to strip Planned Parenthood of federal funding.[1] You strongly supported these efforts, stating that "defunding Planned Parenthood should be a fiscal and moral priority for Congress."[2] You also unfairly smeared the organization when you claimed that Planned Parenthood is "willing to use public funds to commit a federal crime" and is "willing to ignore the law in promoting its services."[3]

These unfounded legislative attacks on Planned Parenthood have consistently failed. They were opposed by the Senate and President Obama and are not supported by the American people. It would be an abuse of the oversight process if you are now using the Committee's investigative powers to harass Planned Parenthood again. Your fervent ideological opposition to Planned Parenthood does not justify launching this intrusive investigation.

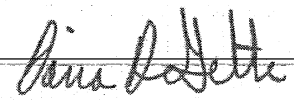
We are committed to strong congressional oversight. But we are opposed to investigations that appear to be designed to harass and shut down an organization simply because Republicans disagree with the work that it does. Planned Parenthood provides family planning and other essential services to low-income women and men across the United States. It deserves our support for its important and life-saving work – not another unfair and unjustified assault.

We hope that you will reconsider this investigation.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member



Diana DeGette
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations

cc: The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

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[1] Amendment No. 11 to H.R. 1, Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (Congressional Record, H776 (Feb. 14, 2011)); H. Con. Res. 36 (Congressional Record, H2798 (Apr. 14, 2011).

[2] Rep. Cliff Stearns, Defund Planned Parenthood (Feb. 2011) (online at http://biggovernment.com/cstearns/2011/02/12/defund-planned-parenthood-2/).

[3] *Id.*