**The Republican War on Knowledge**

The war Republicans have been waging on a Planned Parenthood, which provides so much in the way of valuable services to society, needs to stop. Recently, Tennessee Representative Marsha Blackburn published an un-redacted letter onto the website for the Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives. By doing this, she leaked to anti-abortion activists the personal information of several doctors and other staffers working for Planned Parenthood. Blackburn was called out for having a “reckless disregard” for the safety and privacy of the staff members in question, as this painted targets on their heads. Later, the un-redacted report was replaced with one which redacted the offending material. Supposedly, the prior release of the un-redacted version was an accident. If it was not, it would be only the latest in a long line of attacks by conservatives on the organization.

Up until recently, these attacks have mostly been relegated to legislation attempting to defund Planned Parenthood, but they have gotten much worse. In March, a list of names of Planned Parenthood employees was released by Republicans, among those Republicans being Blackburn herself. Considering this, it cannot really be in any way easy to dismiss this most recent release as an accident. It is important to state what Planned Parenthood does in order to explain why this has been happening.

Planned Parenthood is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide several services. Among these (though they are far from the only services provided) are birth control info, sex education, testing for sexually-transmitted illnesses, and, the most well-known: abortions. Many may not have heard of any except for the last one. That is understandable, as it is the one service anybody has focused on whenever talking about the organization. This is especially true for conservatives.

The reason conservatives keep attacking Planned Parenthood is rather simple: creating ignorance. Granted, the hordes of protesters outside of every clinic may not understand what Planned Parenthood actually does, but Republican politicians persist in operating an investigative committee based on sting videos which have been debunked. That can mean one of two things: It can mean either single-minded persistence on the part of the politicians in question, or an impressive degree of ignorance. Getting to be a Representative in the federal government can be very difficult for a person with little awareness, so it is most likely the former.

Keeping in mind people in high positions of power have to know that abortion is far from the only service provided by Planned Parenthood, why are Republicans so persistent in trying to get the entire organization shut down over one service that is merely controversial? The fact of the matter is, conservatives have long thrived on public ignorance of the issues. (It is important to note that ignorance of political issues is not the same thing as being uneducated. One can have a poor understanding of current events, but still have had a good education.) An on-going example is when all people of the Muslim faith are painted with the same brush as those few who follow the likes of ISIS.

As conservative politicians have shown a hatred of sexuality, it makes sense that they would want to use legislation to make Planned Parenthood disappear. After all, the more ignorant many members of the American public are about sex, the easier it will be for Republicans in the government to legislate the activity. As long as they can make their attacks on Planned Parenthood employees seem to be either for the public good, like with their attempts to cut government funding of Planned Parenthood, or accidental, as they are claiming with recent attacks, they believe the public will be none the wiser.

These attacks on Planned Parenthood must stop. They endanger the lives of many people, doctors and patients alike. The attacks breed ignorance and fear. And it is all part of the Republican Party’s war on knowledge.

**Source:** <http://thinkprogress.org/health/2016/06/08/3786082/planned-parenthood-leak-subpoena/>