

"THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS" PLANNED PARENTHOOD'S RHETORICAL RESPONSE TO THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

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"The mission of Planned Parenthood is to provide comprehensive reproductive and complementary health care services in settings which preserve and protect the essential privacy and rights of each individual; to advocate public policies which guarantee these rights and ensure access to such services; to provide educational programs which enhance understanding of individual and societal implications of human sexuality; to promote research and the advancement of technology in reproductive health care and encourage understanding of their inherent bioethical, behavioral, and social implications."

- Planned Parenthood's Mission Statement

In the midst of Donald Trump's presidential campaign, during a Republican debate in Houston on February 25, 2016, he promised to defund Planned Parenthood "because of the abortion factor, which they say is 3 percent."¹ Now, as the President of the United States, he has not forgotten his promise. The Trump Administration has proposed many legislative actions that would severely impact Planned Parenthood's governmental funding. He proposed a 2018 budget that contained "provisions prohibiting certain

¹ "Transcript of the Republican Presidential Debate in Houston," The New York Times. February 26, 2016, accessed September 23, 2018, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/26/us/politics/transcript-of-the-republican-presidential-debate-in-houston.html>.

abortion providers from receiving Federal funds from [the Department of Health and Human Services].”² This includes organizations that receive funding from Title X, the nation’s “only dedicated source of federal funding for family planning.”³ Furthermore, their proposed GOP health care bill states in Section 103 that, for an entire year, federal funding may not be available to family planning organizations that provide abortions, including Planned Parenthood.⁴

According to Dr. Chloe Ciccarriello (2017), Planned Parenthood would lose “more than \$500 million in government funding per year, about two-fifths of its total revenue” as a result of the Trump administration’s efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.⁵ Since Medicaid funds “cannot be used for pregnancy termination unless the mother’s life is in danger,” these defunding efforts would actually prevent Planned Parenthood from “billing the federal government for contraception and other reproductive health care services” they provide, including general health care, pregnancy testing, LGBT services, patient education, and STD testing, treatment, and vaccination, something that would largely threaten the health and safety of millions of men and women.⁶

The issue that has been recently threatening Planned Parenthood is the enforcement of Trump’s Global Gag Rule. On President Donald Trump’s fourth day in office, he “signed an executive order imposing the global gag rule, an anti-abortion policy that under other conservative presidential administrations has caused

² United States. Office of Management and Budget. *An American Budget*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2018. 56-57.

³ "Title X." National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association, accessed September 23, 2018, http://www.nationalfamilyplanning.org/title_x.

⁴ American Healthcare Act of 2017. H. Res, 1628, 115th Cong., 1st Congress. *Congressional Record* 120. (2017-2018).

⁵ Chloe Ciccarriello. "Defunding Planned Parenthood – The Stakes for America’s Women." *JAMA Internal Medicine* 177, no. 3 (2017): 1, accessed September 23, 2018. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2017.0178.

⁶ Ciccarriello, “Defunding Planned Parenthood – The Stakes for America’s Women,” 1.

serious disruptions to U.S. overseas family planning efforts.”⁷ The overall goal of the domestic gag rule is to attempt to reduce the number of abortions by either making it illegal for family planning organizations to discuss abortions with their patients or by taking away Title X funding.

While this order caused widespread concern, there was large disagreement about what the implications of the legislation would mean for the United States and for the world. Starrs (2017) details the effects of the gag rule in other countries. As one example, the gag rule imposed in Ghana actually caused the abortion rates in poorer areas to be higher than usual because of the lack of available contraceptive services.⁸ Furthermore, it has been proven that the largest implication of the gag rule is its attempt to take away women’s rights to easily accessible contraceptive services, increasing the likelihood of unintended pregnancy thus increasing the use of abortion.⁹

Bingenheimer and Skuster (2017) lay out three objections that critics generally raise when responding to Trump’s gag rule: “(1) that the rule fails to accomplish its presumed objective of reducing the number of abortions; (2) that it negatively affects the health and well-being of individuals and populations in affected countries; and (3) that it interferes with government’s ability to meet their international obligations”.¹⁰ This article details an interesting study by Bendavid, Avila, and Miller in which they examined data from 261,116 women from 20 sub-Saharan African countries between the years 1994 and 2008.¹¹ They categorized the interviews based on whether the gag rule was inactive (1994-2000) or active (2001-2008) and determined that activation of the global gag rule in 2001 resulted in a “2.55 times

⁷ Ann M. Starrs. "The Trump Global Gag Rule: An Attack on US Family Planning and Global Health Aid." *The Lancet* 389, no. 10068 (2017): 1, accessed September 23, 2018, doi:10.1016/s0140-6736(17)30270-2.

⁸ Starrs, "The Trump Global Gag Rule: An Attack on US Family Planning and Global Health Aid," 1.

⁹ Starrs, 1.

¹⁰ Jeffrey B. Bingenheimer and Patty Skuster, "The Foreseeable Harms of Trumps Global Gag Rule," *Studies in Family Planning* 48, no. 3 (2017): 280, accessed September 23, 2018, doi:10.1111/sifp.12030.

¹¹ Bingenheimer and Skuster, 280.

greater increase in the odds of self-reported abortion”¹². This is a prime example of one of the concerns many experts have of the Trump administration reinstating this order.

There is one thing that critics can all agree on, however: Trump’s global gag rule will have serious implications for Planned Parenthood. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, Planned Parenthood would not be allowed to “perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning.”¹³ Planned Parenthood’s goal as an organization is to defend and protect the reproductive rights of women; this policy places restrictions on those rights. This would largely prevent Planned Parenthood doctors, nurses, and staff from having an honest, open, and transparent relationship with their patients, restricting their ability to refer their patients for abortion—even if the patient asks.

These attacks on Planned Parenthood have created a divided political and social environment, with those in support of Planned Parenthood on one side and those in opposition on the other. Furthermore, the crises in discussion have mandated a response from Planned Parenthood as an organization in order to garner support in their fight against the Trump administration. Since President Trump’s election, they have received “nearly 80,000 donations,” which Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards called “unprecedented.” The day after his inauguration, millions of men and women marched in the Women’s March, marking it the largest protest in United States history. These are just a couple examples of how Planned Parenthood has successfully called upon lawmakers, politicians, and United States citizens to accomplish their main objectives.

The goal of this analysis is to show how Planned Parenthood has responded to the Trump administration’s recent efforts to defund their organization, and how they have successfully utilized “call to action” rhetoric. Furthermore, this analysis will shed light onto the

¹² Bingenheimer and Skuster, 280.

¹³ "The Mexico City Policy: An Explainer," The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, May 16, 2018, accessed September 23, 2018, <http://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/fact-sheet/mexico-city-policy-explainer/>.

rhetorical strategies other organizations can utilize in order to properly respond to a crisis.

The History of Planned Parenthood

Pearl S. Buck, American writer and novelist, once said, “If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday.”¹⁴ Planned Parenthood’s 101-year history is extensive, impactful, and pertinent to understanding their values and goals as an organization today. The 1916 political climate, which Primrose (2012) described as “not friendly to the rights of women,” sparked Margaret Sanger to create the American Birth Control League in 1921 – an organization that would later transform into what society today recognizes as Planned Parenthood.¹⁵ The concept behind this organization began when feminist activists Margaret Sanger, Ethyl Byrne, and Fania Mindell were put in jail for spreading information regarding birth control and pregnancy – something that was illegal at the time. They fought for years to make birth control legal, and, in 1937, the American Medical Association “formally recognized birth control as a fundamental part of medical care.”¹⁶ Indeed, a 1938 *Ladies Home Journal* survey reported that seventy-nine percent of women supported the use of birth control.¹⁷ However, it was not until the 1960s that women gained easy access to contraception. Marked by the Women’s Rights Movement, the FDA approved the first birth control pill where women were offered an “easy, relatively safe, and effective means of personally controlling their reproductive systems for the first time.”¹⁸ This same movement also made abortion reform a hot topic of discussion. In 1973, the Supreme Court granted women a constitutional right to

¹⁴ Sarah Primrose, "The Attack on Planned Parenthood: A Historical Analysis," *UCLA Women's Law Journal* 19, no. 2 (2012): 165, accessed September 23, 2018.

<https://escholarship.org/content/qt38f952g1/qt38f952g1.pdf>.

¹⁵ Primrose, “The Attack on Planned Parenthood: A Historical Analysis,” 168.

¹⁶ Primrose, 182.

¹⁷ Primrose, 182.

¹⁸ Primrose, 184.

abortion through the court case *Roe vs. Wade*—a prominent decision that would ultimately be frequently referenced well into the present.¹⁹

Since the legalization of contraception and abortion, Planned Parenthood has grown into a global organization that offers a variety of services including Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing, pap smears, breast exams, cancer detection tests for men and women, counseling, and abortion services. Since its foundation in 1916, the overarching mission to defend the reproductive and sexual rights of women around the world has remained unchanged. With growing support came growing opposition, and protesters have done everything from peacefully rallying outside clinics to setting fires to them, to mobilizing defunding efforts. With the recent election of Donald Trump, Planned Parenthood has had to alter their message and fight harder than ever before to keep their doors open and provide basic health services to adult or adolescent women and men around the world.

Planned Parenthood's Crisis Rhetoric

Hoffman and Ford (2010) define an organizational crisis as “a specific, *unexpected*, and *nonroutine* event or series of events that create high levels of *uncertainty* and *threaten* or are perceived to threaten an organization's high priority goals.”²⁰ The issues that Planned Parenthood has faced in recent news certainly matches this definition and warrants a response. The Trump administration's recent defunding efforts (including the 2018 budget, their proposed GOP health care bill, and the global gag rule) are all challenges to Planned Parenthood as an organization because they have the potential to disrupt their ability to provide services, and ultimately threaten the ideals and values that are at the heart of their organization.

Hoffman and Ford (2010) also split a crisis into three pertinent stages: pre-crisis strategies, crisis response strategies, and post-crisis response strategies.²¹ Planned Parenthood's organizational responses

¹⁹*Roe v. Wade*, 410 US 113 (1973).

²⁰ Mary F. Hoffman and Debra J. Ford. *Organizational Rhetoric: Situations and Strategies*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 2010, 187.

²¹ Hoffman and Ford, *Organizational Rhetoric: Situations and Strategies*, 188.

fit in the context of the crisis response stage because they must “coordinate activities, disseminate information, and reduce uncertainty.”²² I analyze Planned Parenthood’s organizational response to this crisis through multiple texts they used to gather support in their fight against Donald Trump’s legislation and the recent defunding actions in the form of promotional videos, targeted emails, and Planned Parenthood’s website.

Three promotional video artifacts are analyzed. The first is a *Chicago Tribune* interview with Jennifer Welch, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Illinois, and the second is an interview with Cecile Richards, the President of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Here, both women respond to the opposition of Planned Parenthood and discuss some of the misunderstandings people have about the organization. These are crucial videos in understanding how the Trump administration’s defunding efforts, specifically with the proposed GOP health care plan, is going to negatively impact their organization and the women who seek their services. The third video is a personal memoir released about a Planned Parenthood patient, Christy, and how their services saved her life. This is a personal experience that is supported with heavy emotion, providing an excellent contrast to the other two rather official videos. All three of these videos were released in early 2017 when defunding threats were at their highest.

A work weeks’ worth of emails—five total—are also analyzed as artifacts. These emails are pertinent because they are centered around what is relevant at the time of their release. For example, when Trump made progress with the gag rule, Planned Parenthood sent out multiple emails in a row about the consequences of this order. These messages are tailored towards their supporters because they are sent to those who have signed up to receive their emails and promotions.

Finally, Planned Parenthood’s official website is analyzed to examine their appeals to ethos, pathos and logos, their call to action, their goals and values, and their services.

These artifacts were chosen because they appear to directly address the rhetorical situation. The main exigency at hand is the defunding efforts brought forth by the Trump administration. These

²² Hoffman and Ford, 189-90.

artifacts are all trying to prove the same message: the defunding actions taken by the Trump Administration are detrimental to Planned Parenthood and should be prevented. Furthermore, the different artifacts address three target audiences: the enabling, functional, and diffused audiences. The enabling audience can be one of two entities: the legislative bodies and their donors. Planned Parenthood needs government funding in order to provide a plethora of their services, and they also need proper laws and policies to be in place in order for them to operate as an organization.

The second enabling audience is the donors. Without donations, Planned Parenthood would not be able to operate; since they are a nonprofit organization, they rely on donations to help their organization run efficiently. The functional audience consists of the employees that help Planned Parenthood run on a daily basis as well as the executive officials that manage those employees and manage the organization as a whole. Planned Parenthood's patients are considered the most important functional audience. They are the central purpose of the organization and the ones who are affected by any negative legislation brought forth by the Trump administration that could potentially hurt Planned Parenthood. Finally, the diffused audience plays a major role in the situation. These are the people who activate for women's rights in support of Planned Parenthood. The media is also considered a diffused audience, and they can choose to conduct interviews with them, spread the truth about their organization, or create fallacious arguments for or against them.

To further establish the rhetorical situation, one must keep in mind Planned Parenthood's constraints and assets. Time, in this case, is both a constraint and an asset. Planned Parenthood has been a successful organization for over 100 years, which means that they have had a long time to learn how to handle crises and issues that arise. They have also had a long time to gain supporters. However, while they were gaining millions of supporters, they were also gaining millions of opponents.

The ways in which Planned Parenthood has responded to past rhetoric or experiences also affects how the message is interpreted by different audiences. For example, according to a recent article published by the Communications Network, Planned Parenthood was recently under scrutiny from an anti-choice organization called the Center for Medical Progress (CMP)—an

organization in name only created for publicity purposes. They captured “undercover videos of Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) executives allegedly discussing the sale of fetal tissue.”²³ What happened was “actors posing as buyers from a fictional medical company met with a PPFA official while hidden cameras rolled. CMP then sliced and diced three hours of footage to create an eight-minute clip” that made it appear as though PPFA was acting in an immoral manner.²⁴ Planned Parenthood was applauded at the proactive way in which they handled this crisis. Their response was an excellent example of how to deal with a crisis. First, they acted quickly and effectively. Second, they engaged through social media. Third, they emailed Congress about their concerns. This recent example is certainly an asset to the company. Of course, the law is also an asset. Court cases such as *Roe vs. Wade* and the Hyde Amendment protect Planned Parenthood to some extent.

Lastly, Planned Parenthood’s constraints are religious and/or moral beliefs. Major religious groups that oppose abortion are the Roman Catholic Church, Hinduism, the Southern Baptist Convention, certain Methodist churches, and certain Lutheran churches. Even though Planned Parenthood offers a variety of services, many people who have strong objections regarding abortions will not support it as an organization. The artifacts were chosen because they address how Planned Parenthood has responded to the Trump administration’s efforts to defund their organization, particularly how they utilized “call to action” rhetoric to address elements of the rhetorical situation.

Evaluating Planned Parenthood’s Rhetoric

In order to analyze the artifacts, I utilized the framework of neo-Aristotelian criticism where I “used classic rhetorical concepts (modes of proof, canons of rhetoric) to analyze how well a rhetor selected from what Aristotle (trans. 1932) called the ‘available means

²³ "Crisis Communication Lessons from Planned Parenthood." The Communications Network, accessed September 23, 2018, <http://www.comnetwork.org/insights/crisis-communication-lessons-from-planned-parenthood/>.

²⁴ “Crisis Communication Lessons from Planned Parenthood.”

of persuasion.”²⁵ I performed an evaluative reading, defined by Hoffman and Ford (2010) as “seek[ing] to evaluate the rhetoric’s ability to meet its goal” and to “determine effectiveness by comparing the rhetorical strategies that they found in the artifact with what they have learned about the rhetorical situation.”²⁶ The first step is to analyze the artifacts and describe the general rhetorical strategies present throughout them. Once the rhetorical strategies are laid out, the critic can “compare the rhetorical situation and strategies” in order to determine which strategies address the situation, “conduct a preferred reading” in order to “use your knowledge of the rhetorical strategies and the rhetorical situation to make an argument about what you think the rhetor wanted the audience to think, feel, or believe after receiving the rhetoric,” and, finally, “draw conclusions about how well the rhetoric met the demands of the situation and consider how it might have been more effective.”²⁷

Analyzing Planned Parenthood’s “Call to Action” Rhetoric

In addressing the Trump Administration’s recent defunding efforts, Planned Parenthood has incorporated a plethora of rhetorical strategies in their responses. In order to address the community, Planned Parenthood often utilizes appeals to ethos. On their website, there exists a “Who We Are” section that states two of their main goals as “providing trusted community health care” and “informing and educating the community,” where they can provide high-quality and affordable medical care.²⁸ Furthermore, they claim that their services reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections, appealing to the overall health of the community.²⁹ The goal of appealing to the community in such a way is to earn organizational credibility. They are trying to prove that their policies and procedures are an asset to society through the claim that they are improving quality of life.

²⁵ Hoffman and Ford, 106.

²⁶ Hoffman and Ford, 105.

²⁷ Hoffman and Ford, 107-108.

²⁸ Planned Parenthood, “Who We Are,” accessed September 23, 2018, <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/>.

²⁹ “Planned Parenthood, “Mission.”

In the third video, Christy acts as a member of Planned Parenthood's community and has utilized their services as her primary health insurance.³⁰ She is vouching for the organization's credibility and how it has impacted her life, therefore by extension of Christy's story, one can see how they impact many lives within the same community. The appeal being made here is that she trusts the organization enough to go there for primary care, so others should trust the organization too. By proving their competence as an organization and that they are directly benefitting the community, Planned Parenthood can illustrate the need for their services. The implicit message is that if the Trump Administration defunds their organization, they would be harming the millions of patients and all of the communities who benefit from their services. Thus, these artifacts provide evidence against Trump's proposed GOP health care bill.

Planned Parenthood also achieves an emotional response from their audiences through their utilization of appeals to pathos. All of the rhetorical artifacts analyzed appeal to the same basic need: the need for safe and affordable health care. Their website specifically states that "Planned Parenthood delivers vital reproductive health care, sex education, and information to millions of people worldwide."³¹ Their main goal is dedicating their time to provide all people, both men and women, high-quality, affordable, and reliable medical care. This need is at the heart of the mission of the organization, making people feel like their health and their security as individuals is pertinent. When this need is threatened by other organizations, or, in this case, the Trump Administration, it is evident that Planned Parenthood is fighting to uphold services that addresses that need.

The two other main appeals to pathos that directly respond to the Trump administration are common values and identification strategies. In video three, Christy says, "I didn't go to Planned Parenthood to make a political statement. I went to see my doctor.

³⁰ "Christy's Story: Planned Parenthood Video," YouTube Video, 0:30. March 13, 2017, accessed September 23, 2018, <https://youtu.be/-GyWvo6m9fk>.

³¹ Planned Parenthood, "Who We Are."

And that doctor saved my life.”³² In videos one and two, leaders Jennifer Welch and Cecile Richards emphasize two things: (1) the value that reproductive and sexual health care services are basic human rights³³ and (2) the value that Planned Parenthood puts women’s health and well-being ahead of politics. “Politics” are not at the center of their organization.³⁴ Christy experienced these two values during her Planned Parenthood experience, and it is evident that Planned Parenthood feels as though these values are being threatened by the Trump administration.

Planned Parenthood also utilizes the identification appeal of the transcendent/ assumed “we.” In their rhetoric, this appeal is most prevalent in the emails. In each one, Planned Parenthood assumes a position of “we.” For example, in an email sent on May 20, they say, “We’ve seen this scheme before...our answer now is the same as it was then: NO WAY.”³⁵ This quote is in direct response to one of the Trump administrations attempts to bargain with Planned Parenthood. First, as noted by Grossman, President Trump nominated Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court with an agenda to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*. In order to support his desire to defund Planned Parenthood, he hired Gorsuch who “has a troubling record of hostility on women’s equality and reproductive rights, having ruled in favor of employers imposing their religious beliefs on employees by denying them access to contraception, and he has been highly critical of abortion jurisprudence.”³⁶

³² “Christy’s Story: Planned Parenthood Video.”

³³ Antonio Perez, “Planned Parenthood of Illinois Chief Fights Opposition,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 25, 2017, accessed September 23, 2018, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/94435237-132.html>

³⁴ “Cecile Richards Speaks out Against the Bill to ‘Defund’ Planned Parenthood,” YouTube Video, 1:32, March 9, 2017, accessed September 23, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzDBLyXVlSI&feature=youtu.be>

³⁵ Appendix A.

³⁶ Daniel Grossman, “Sexual and Reproductive Health under the Trump Presidency: Policy Change Threatens Women in the USA and Worldwide,” *Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care*43,

Second, according to the May 20th Planned Parenthood email, Donald Trump told Planned Parenthood to “stop providing abortions or we’ll get Congress to block access to care at Planned Parenthood health centers.”³⁷ Through their repetitive use of the word “we,” they are aligning themselves with their audience to create that same sense of shared values. It is the implication that Planned Parenthood is not going to give into Trump’s ultimatum; their audience values their health rights and so does Planned Parenthood.

These appeals to needs, values, and identification create a passionate atmosphere that draws out different emotions from different people. Those who regularly utilize Planned Parenthood’s resources likely will be in full support and trust the organization entirely. Someone who went through something similar to Christy in the third video might get emotional and empathetic. Others might be sympathetic to her case. Those in opposition of abortion might have strong feelings of anger, distrust, or resentment towards the organization for providing that service. Therefore, these appeals will not have a moving effect on them. The rhetorical appeals utilized by Planned Parenthood are specifically directed towards their supporters as seen through their use of the transcendent “we.”

An important way that Planned Parenthood has responded to the Trump administration crisis is by clarifying some of the misconceptions surrounding their organization, funding, and the services they provide. They clarify these through appealing to logos. On their website, under the “About Us” section, Planned Parenthood provides anyone access to the annual reports from the last four years; these are the most comprehensive evidence of this appeal. In the 2016-2017 annual report, they provide a number of interesting statistics about their company. In 2016, Planned Parenthood health centers served 2.4 million Planned Parenthood patients, 9.5 million services, 4,434,039 STI testing and treatment, 2,701,866 birth control information and services, and 617,677 breast exams and pap tests.³⁸ They also broke down their services into percentages: 47% STI Testing and Treatment, 28% Contraception, 14% Other Women’s Health

no. 2 (2017): 3, accessed September 23, 2018, doi:10.1136/jfprhc-2016-101699.

³⁷ Appendix A.

³⁸ Planned Parenthood, “Annual Reports.”

Services, 7% cancer Screenings and Prevention, 3% Abortion Services, and 1% Other Services.³⁹

Furthermore, this report comes with a detailed breakdown of how government funding and donation money is spent, and clarifies that due to the Hyde Amendment, passed in 1976, federal funding cannot be used for abortion services unless the woman's life is in danger or if the pregnancy is due to rape or incest.⁴⁰ Many people in society believe that abortion services are the majority of what Planned Parenthood does. The organization provides these statistics as evidence that they do more than that. A lot of people do not realize that federal funding does not provide money for abortions, and that if the government defunds Planned Parenthood, it is going to be the ability to provide STI testing and treatment or the ability to provide "55 million women to no copay birth control" that will be negatively affected.⁴¹

One of Planned Parenthood's values is education, and many people are not aware of what Donald Trump's policies mean for women around the world and how it will affect Planned Parenthood. In their emails, Planned Parenthood utilizes appeals to logos as they explain in detail what Trump's gag rule will mean for Planned Parenthood and its patients. For example, in the second, third, and fourth emails, they state:

"The administration's gag rule includes two unprecedented attacks on patients and doctors: 1) Doctors and nurses across the country are forbidden from referring patients for abortion. Even if someone asks for information, even if their health is at risk, even if a safe and legal abortion is their best option; 2) There's no guarantee that you're getting full and accurate information about your health care. If someone discovers they're pregnant after being diagnosed with cancer, for example, their health care provider may not tell them that abortion is even an option. This rule is designed to block access to preventive care at Planned

³⁹ Planned Parenthood, "Annual Reports."

⁴⁰ Planned Parenthood, "Annual Reports."

⁴¹ "Cecile Richards Speaks out Against the Bill to 'Defund' Planned Parenthood."

Parenthood health centers, which serve more than 40% of the four million patients who rely on Title X (the nation's program for affordable birth control and reproductive health care)."⁴²

In order to have a strong argument and to prove why their organization does not deserve to be defunded, they needed factual evidence alongside the emotional appeals and the claims towards their organizational credibility. Furthermore, in order for people to be able to take a stand on the issue, they need to make sure their audience understands the implications of the policies and are well-educated and well-versed on the topic at hand. These rhetorical appeals properly address the exigency at hand and place the audience in an emotional state ready to accept their message and fight back against their common enemy: The Trump administration.

Planned Parenthood's successful utilization of "call to action" rhetoric is profound. It addresses different aspects of the rhetorical situation in a variety of ways. This "call to action" rhetoric addresses the exigency, Donald Trump's defunding efforts, and the three audiences. On the homepage of Planned Parenthood's website, there is a pink banner that reads, "Trump's Gag Rule - What You Can Do," with a "Take Action" button to the right.⁴³ This links to an information page with options to donate, to sign a petition, and to submit an official comment to the Department of Health and Human Services. If you scroll down on the same page, there is another pink banner that reads, "Birth Control is Under Attack," with a button to the right that says, "Fight Back."⁴⁴ This button also links to a page with an informative video and an option to sign a petition and donate money to Planned Parenthood. The appeals on these two pages are incentives for their audience to take action against the threats against Planned Parenthood. At the top of their homepage, there is a button that says, "get Involved," with a drop down of ways to donate, give, volunteer, or take action. They offer so many options for donations: one-time donation, monthly donation, memorial donation, specific donation, and even donation by mail. Their goal here is for everyone

⁴² Appendix A.

⁴³ Planned Parenthood, "Homepage."

⁴⁴ Planned Parenthood, "Homepage."

who feels the inclination to donate to have an easily accessible way to contribute.

However, even if a member of their audience cannot donate, they give them options to volunteer their time. Time is valuable, and they call upon their volunteers to assist in “meaningful work,” be part of a “collaborative team,” and contribute to their organizational “innovation and research.”⁴⁵ These are all examples of Planned Parenthood utilizing “call to action” rhetoric in order to maintain a strong volunteer base, a strong donor base, and provide employment to those who support their organization.

Their website largely reaches out to their donors (the enabling audience) to donate more money in order to keep their doors open if the government takes away their funding. Furthermore, their website reaches out to their patients (the functional audience). As a Planned Parenthood patient, you respect their organization, you recognize the fact they are your primary health care, and it is likely you want to make sure that other men and women who are struggling are able to have access to the same care you receive. They are the ones that will be able to make the most impact and spread the message to the diffused audience (other women’s rights activists). Their incredibly large network of supporters is such an asset to the company, and they do a phenomenal job at making sure their supporters feel empowered to take a stand against an issue.

The week’s worth of emails Planned Parenthood sent out also addressed the enabling, functional, and diffused audiences. There are links to take action by “texting ‘NOGAG’ to 22422 or signing this online petition” and a link to “advocatesaz.org.”⁴⁶ There is an image at the top of a woman holding a “Don’t Take Away Our Care” sign in a march for Planned Parenthood against Trump’s efforts.⁴⁷ There are links to “Donate Now” to Planned Parenthood to show your support and stand united.⁴⁸ There are options to “add your name and voice your opposition to this attempt to force doctors to break their code of ethics.”⁴⁹ It is also important to know that on May 18, May 20, and

⁴⁵ Planned Parenthood, “Jobs and Volunteering.”

⁴⁶ Appendix A.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

May 22, Planned Parenthood sent out the same email except with added detail each time.⁵⁰ This is proof that they felt a sense of urgency to get their message across and to encourage people to listen to their call to action rhetoric. These emails are calling upon their supporters to voice their opinion and making them feel like they have the power to make a difference. Many want to make their voices heard and to stand united with something – to feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves. These emails do just that. Furthermore, it is important to note that by signing these petitions or contacting the local senators or members of Congress that the audience is calling upon the legislative bodies to listen, to stand in opposition to the Trump administration, and to stop rulings that will impact the health of millions of Americans.

In the first two videos, the “call to action” rhetoric lies more in the stylistic strategies each speaker chose. In videos one and two, Welch and Richards spoke clearly and confidently. Welch’s interview held a conversational tone and it did not feel rehearsed – it felt personable. Both of them also chose to use powerful words in order to arouse emotion from their audience. They used words like “committed,” “proud,” and “threatening,” and phrases such as “we would do anything to serve our patients,” “we will not turn our backs on women,” and “put women’s health and well-being ahead of politics.”⁵¹ Powerful words and phrases are also commanding words and phrases. The goal of using them is to make the audience feel powerful and inspired to make a difference.

The “call to action” rhetoric also addresses some of the constraints. None of these artifacts specifically target a religion for being opposed to their organization. When Planned Parenthood specifies the fact that they differentiate politics from the general well-being of the public, they are not strictly appealing to those that are on their side. When they utilize appeals to logos and explain the services they provide, or the statistic that “1 in 5 women will come to Planned Parenthood for care in their lifetime,” they are addressing the people opposed to their organization by trying to make them realize that they

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Antonio Perez and “Cecile Richards Speaks out Against the Bill to ‘Defund’ Planned Parenthood.”

are more than just an agency that provides and refers abortions.⁵² By appealing to the general needs of human beings to have reliable and affordable health care, they are appealing to society as a *whole*.

Preferred Reading and Effectiveness

Overall, Planned Parenthood wants the audience to feel like they can put their trust in the organization, and wants them to believe that they are an organization there to benefit and save the lives of the general public by providing easy access to affordable and high-quality health care. It appears they want their audience to feel empowered to stand up for what they believe in. I think that they want their audience to be *proud* to stand with Planned Parenthood. I also believe they want people to know the truth about Planned Parenthood and the services they provide; they want everyone to be knowledgeable citizens. They are very conscientious in explaining the impacts of Trump's policies, explaining where funds are allocated, explaining facts regarding their outreach into the community, and explaining how their organization works and who will be most affected by these defunding efforts. Finally, they want people who might need STD testing...who might need help understanding the difference between a healthy and an unhealthy relationship...who might need pap smears or breast cancer screenings...who might be confused about their sexuality...who might want to get an abortion...who might need to know more about what it means to be pregnant to feel like they have a place to go—a place where they can be open and respected.

Planned Parenthood effectively utilizes rhetorical strategies in order to address their constraints, take advantage of their assets, and minimize the exigence. They tailor their messages to the people they know will be willing to accept it. In this case, it is crucial that they do so. If they can increase their donation amounts, convince millions of people to sign petitions in their defense, and call upon bipartisan elected officials to protest Trump's policies, then they have accomplished their goal. Planned Parenthood's mission statement, as quoted in the beginning of this article, rests at the heart of the organization. By not giving into the "bribery" from the Trump

⁵² Antonio Perez, "Planned Parenthood of Illinois Chief Fights Opposition."

administration to get rid of abortion for an increase in funding, by utilizing proper “call to action” responses from their supporters, by educating the general public on the facts and fallacies regarding these new policy proposals, by being a transparent organization who can literally break down their services into percentages, they have continued to fulfill their mission. By continuously hammering the press and sending repetitive emails to my inbox, they have stood by their convictions. Their utilization of general rhetorical strategies of appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos is extensive, and it has made me feel passionate about what the organization provides for communities around the world.

Conclusion

According to Hoffman and Ford (2010), the term rhetoric “often has negative connotations, as we hear people label some statement as ‘just rhetoric,’ or we hear them say, ‘The action doesn’t match the rhetoric.’ In reality, though, rhetoric is a neutral term that simply refers to the strategic use of symbols to generate meaning.”⁵³ This analysis discusses the rhetorical strategies implemented by Planned Parenthood related to the Trump administration’s recent defunding efforts by placing emphasis on their *response* and efforts to generate meaning—in contrast to the research available on the technicalities of the policies alone. It is important to examine how an organization responds to crisis and by what means the organization does so successfully and unsuccessfully. An organization in crisis can be a model on what to do and also it can be a model on what not to do. Understanding rhetoric is the first step in viewing organizations from an entity to an entity with power—the power to shape their image and their brand, the power to act with their ideals and values in mind, and the power to break stereotypes or play into them. Organizations have influence, and their ability to mentally and emotionally manipulate their audience to gain support is largely due to their rhetoric. While further research can be done to examine how the Trump administration has issued their own type of rhetoric in response to Planned Parenthood or surrounding their recent policies, this analysis of Planned Parenthood is a perfect example of how a

⁵³ Hoffman and Ford, 2.

company can efficiently get their message across and utilize their resources at hand to promote their opinions and lead a revolution against administrative power.

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