

# Planned Parenthood kept aborted babies alive to harvest organs, ex-technician says



The entrance to a Planned Parenthood Clinic is seen here in Oklahoma City on July 24, 2015. (Associated Press) **\*\*FILE\*\***

In an undercover video released Wednesday, a former technician for a tissue-harvesting company details how an aborted baby was kept alive so that its heart could be harvested at a California Planned Parenthood facility, raising more legal questions about the group's practices.

Holly O'Donnell, a former blood and tissue procurement technician for the biotech startup Stem Express, also said she was asked to harvest an intact brain from the late-term, male fetus whose heart was still beating after the abortion.

A Stem Express supervisor "gave me the scissors and told me that I had to cut down the middle of the face. And I can't even describe what that feels like," said Ms. O'Donnell, who has been featured in earlier videos by the Center for Medical Progress, a pro-life group that previously had released six undercover clips involving Planned Parenthood personnel and practices.

David Daleiden, the video project leader, said the undercover footage and interviews show that fetuses are sometimes delivered “intact and alive” before their organs are harvested.

The federal Born-Alive Infants Protection Act of 2002 says that when a child is born alive, including having a beating heart, he or she is a legal person and has a right to lifesaving medical care.

California law also prohibits any kind of experimentation on a fetus with a discernible heartbeat, said the Center for Medical Progress, which is calling for the federal government to cease its \$500 million a year support to Planned Parenthood and for it to be investigated.

“Today’s video is especially gruesome, and it shows, once again, the barbarity of what takes place at Planned Parenthood clinics across the country,” said Rep. Joseph R. Pitts, Pennsylvania Republican and chairman of the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee on health, one of several congressional panels investigating Planned Parenthood.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz, Utah Republican and chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, said Wednesday that all the videos are “disturbing,” and his committee’s investigation will look into whether “any federal funding supported transactions involving fetal tissue.”

“Top-level employees of Planned Parenthood admit to changing their procedures to harvest intact bodies of unborn children for body-part trafficking,” said Rep. Trent Franks, Arizona Republican and chairman of the House Judiciary subcommittee on the Constitution and civil justice.

Mr. Franks and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte, Virginia Republican, also said Wednesday that they have written to 58 Planned Parenthood affiliates. They are seeking 10 years of data about all abortions, late-term abortions, “born-alive” infants, fetal tissue collections and any modifications of abortion techniques to “increase the odds of preserving intact fetal tissue and organs.”

Five states — Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Utah and New Hampshire — already have defunded Planned Parenthood.

A request for comment from Planned Parenthood Federation of America about the new video was not immediately available, but the nonprofit organization has denounced earlier undercover videos as fraudulent and misleading.

“These extremists show a total lack of compassion and dignity for women’s most personal medical decisions,” Dawn Laguens, executive vice president of Planned Parenthood, said earlier this month after a video release.

Meanwhile, pro-life groups are using the videos to step up their calls for investigations and defunding of Planned Parenthood.

Rallies and protests at nearly 300 Planned Parenthood clinics are planned for Saturday.

### **Mixed poll results**

On Wednesday, Reuters/Ipsos released a rolling poll of hundreds of people that found stable support for federal funding of Planned Parenthood. Between Aug. 13 and Aug. 18, about 54 percent of Americans consistently said they support taxpayer funding for the reproductive health and abortion group. Federal funds are not permitted to be used for abortions except in cases of rape, incest or endangerment of the life of the mother.

But when pollsters changed their question and asked a smaller sample of people for their views on “current efforts” to defund Planned Parenthood, the rolling poll showed a shift: Those who agreed that Planned Parenthood should be defunded grew to 39 percent, while those opposing defunding shrank to 34 percent; another 27 percent said they didn’t know.

The Reuters/Ipsos poll further asked people if the undercover videos had affected their views on Planned Parenthood or abortion. The rolling poll found that 45 percent of people said the videos made them “more negative” about Planned Parenthood, while 33 percent said it hadn’t changed their views, 19 percent said it made them “more positive,” and 3 percent said they didn’t know.

As for abortion in general, 51 percent said the videos had not changed their views, while 31 percent said it made them “more negative” about abortion, 16 percent said it made them “more positive” about abortion, and 3 percent said they didn’t know.

In June, the Senate voted to defund Planned Parenthood and send the money to community health clinics, but it failed by seven votes.

Separately, Stem Express was in a California court Wednesday in its effort to block the release of a Center for Medical Progress video featuring a recorded conversation with three employees.

The biotech firm, based in Placerville, California, recently ended its relationship with two California Planned Parenthood affiliates to purchase their aborted fetus parts and resell them for scientific experimentation.

Los Angeles Times columnist Michael Hiltzik lamented Stem Express' decision to "bail" on Planned Parenthood, and condemned the undercover videos as "pure harassment by antiabortion activists, conniving with opportunistic politicians."

In Wednesday's video — the seventh released this summer — the Center for Medical Progress said state and federal laws require that the same treatment be given to an infant born alive after an abortion as to a normally delivered baby.

Ms. O'Donnell said she observed a "beating heart" in a nearly intact, late-term male fetus at the Planned Parenthood Mar Monte's Alameda clinic in San Jose.

A Stem Express supervisor asked to show her something "kind of cool" and tapped the heart of the aborted fetus, "and it starts beating," Ms. O'Donnell said.

"And I'm sitting here, and I'm looking at this fetus, and its heart is beating, and I don't know what to think," she said.

Then Ms. O'Donnell was asked to harvest the aborted child's brain, which meant slicing open his face to get at the organ.

"Oh my God, this ... just what am I doing?" she recalled thinking to herself after she had complied. "That was the moment when I knew I couldn't work for the company anymore."

The seventh video includes an interview with an official with another biotech company who says, "So, you know, there are times when after the [abortion] procedure is done that the heart actually is still beating."

It also contains a brief interview with another biotech official who says that

feticides, like digoxin, are not used when an aborted fetus is going to be dissected for parts because feticides taint the tissues.

Mr. Daleiden, the video project leader, said that not using drugs to kill the fetus before the abortion raises the risks that a child will be born alive.

- *David Sherfinski contributed to this report.*

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