American Life League’s Research Report

Planned Parenthood’s Racism … In Their Own Words

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The report is available online at STOPP.org/Planned-Parenthood-Racism-in-their-own-words.
Executive Summary

Planned Parenthood is racist.

Pro-lifers have spoken those words about Planned Parenthood for decades. The claim is usually followed by describing actions or by quoting statements from Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood. The effort has been to show the racist roots of the organization and then to demonstrate how Planned Parenthood still exudes those racist qualities today.

With all of the admissions of racism by Planned Parenthood itself, and documented in this report, it is no longer pro-lifers accusing Planned Parenthood of racism. It is Planned Parenthood affiliates themselves admitting they are racist. With these admissions, it is clear that any individual, corporation, or organization that supports Planned Parenthood is also racist. Let us not be afraid to say so.

All too frequently those claims have been dismissed out-of-hand by Planned Parenthood supporters. In addition, Planned Parenthood Federation of America has gone to great lengths to produce reports that simply deny Sanger’s racism or dismiss it as just a product of the age in which she lived.

Planned Parenthood of Greater New York

All of that changed when, in June 2020, employees of Planned Parenthood of Greater New York made public an open letter (See Appendix II) to their board of directors documenting the internal racism of their Planned Parenthood affiliate and their president/CEO, Laura McQuade.

This was followed by a supporting statement (See Appendix III) from employees of Planned Parenthood Great Plains documenting similar internal racism in their own affiliate under the same president/CEO. It was noted in the PPGP document that employees complained specifically about McQuade. She was subsequently removed from their affiliate and given the same job at PPGNY—the largest PP affiliate in the country.

Federal Form 990s show McQuade’s compensation went from $104,241 with PPGP in 2014, to an income (again with PPGP) of $226,499 in 2017, to an income of $428,321 with PPGNY in 2018 (the last year that data has been released).

Nineteen separate Planned Parenthood affiliates with operations in 33 states across the country have issued statements admitting PP’s racism. In making these statements, the affiliates referred to their organizations as being guilty of white supremacy, structural racism, implicit bias, and systemic racism.
Following the upheaval at PPGNY, the board of directors granted two of the employees’ demands: They removed the CEO and removed Margaret Sanger’s name from their flagship clinic. The Planned Parenthood national office simply stated it agreed with the name removal.

**National Impact**

Although the happenings at PPGNY seemed originally to be a local matter, it suddenly exploded into a nationwide admission by Planned Parenthood affiliates of being racist organizations.

So far, 19 Planned Parenthood affiliates have issued public statements (See pages 7-9) not only recognizing the racism of Sanger, but admitting to being racist today. In making these statements, the affiliates referred to their organizations as being guilty of “white supremacy” (12 times), “structural racism” (10 times), “implicit bias” (6 times), and “systemic racism” (5 times).

The 19 affiliates operate in all or part of 33 different states, including seven of the 10 most populated states. Every one of the affiliates commits surgical or medical abortions. The 19 affiliates include the largest in the Planned Parenthood empire: Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, Planned Parenthood of Greater New York, and Planned Parenthood of the Greater Northwest and Hawaiian Islands—which also manages Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky.

With all of these documented admissions of racism by Planned Parenthood itself, it is no longer just pro-lifers accusing Planned Parenthood of racism. It is Planned Parenthood, itself, admitting it is racist. With that admission, it is clear that any individual, corporation, or organization that supports Planned Parenthood is also racist. Let us not be afraid to say so.

An internal investigation at Planned Parenthood Federation of America national headquarters revealed the “childification” of Black and brown employees. Childification means the “persistent treatment of Black people as children or adolescents who are unable to accomplish work independently, and viewed uniformly, such that they cannot be differentiated from one another.” Illustrations in the report cited white employees confusing their Black colleagues’ names or having their appearance commented on and their hair touched without consent, “as though they are an object to be viewed and commented on, as though they are not there.” — from BuzzFeed article

Because of the self-proclaimed racism of PP, it holds factually true that any person, company, or government entity that provides donations or funds to Planned Parenthood is knowingly supporting racism and is therefore—by definition—racist as well!

Finally, Planned Parenthood Federation of America conducted a study of racism within the national office. The results (See Appendix I) were predictable, but sad. The national office (which does not operate any medical centers) is filled with internal racism. The organization is filled with racism and white supremacy from top to bottom. Yet, it claims to be friends of the minority communities.
Despite Executive Promises, Planned Parenthood Employees Don’t Think Anything Will Change

The Planned Parenthood national office and many affiliates responded to all of this with promises of change. Yet, its employees are not buying it. Below are some relevant quotes (emphasis added):

From BuzzFeed article (Appendix I): “This assessment was great but, what’s next? This assessment took three years to do. Are we gonna have to wait another three years before they implement any policies?” one of the employees asked. “I don’t trust them to make these changes, because Planned Parenthood is filled with people who, because they do work in reproductive rights, think they can't be racist or prejudice [sic], but keep saying and doing racist things, and nothing is being done about it.”

Employees of Planned Parenthood of Greater New York told their board of directors: “After years of complaints from staff about issues of systemic racism, pay inequity, and lack of upward mobility for Black staff, highly paid consultants were brought in three separate times to assess the situation. Each time, employees of color were brutally honest about their experiences, but nothing changed.”

The letter from Planned Parenthood Great Plains (Appendix III) documents the problems at the affiliate due to management that apparently caused the affiliate to be placed on probation by PPFA. Yet, the CEO—who the letter says was responsible for the upheaval—was moved to a larger affiliate with a significant pay raise despite warnings from PPGP employees.

Our Observation

In the end, everything is clear. Satan is the king of lies. And his organization, Planned Parenthood, targets minority communities in an effort to depopulate them by killing their babies—a continuation of its 104 years of racist eugenics.

Jesus spoke to those who run organizations like Planned Parenthood, saying: “You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).
33 States in Which Admittedly Racist Planned Parenthood Affiliates Operate

States in which one or more of the 19 admittedly racist Planned Parenthood affiliates operate at least one medical center (shown in yellow above)

- Alaska
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia
Statements of 19 Racist Planned Parenthood Affiliates

Nineteen of the 49 separate Planned Parenthood affiliates have issued statements on PP racism. These 19 affiliates have operations in 33 states across the country. Most noted that PP was involved with historical racism AND that racism still permeates the organization today. Below are excerpts (emphasis added) from the 19 statements (along with links to each of the full statements). Many statements came from the organization, not from one particular spokesperson.

Planned Parenthood of Greater New York
“The removal of Margaret Sanger's name from our building is both a necessary and overdue step to reckon with our legacy and acknowledge Planned Parenthood’s contributions to historical reproductive harm within communities of color,” said a board chair at PPGNY. Dr. Lynn Roberts, a member of a PPGNY internal initiative to address racism, said: “I am heartened by the decision by PPGNY to rename its Manhattan Health Center. . . . I am even more encouraged that this symbolic gesture is also accompanied by a deeper commitment to take even bolder steps toward institutional transformation. . . . May this organization's realization of these mandates serve as a guide to other organizations embarking on becoming anti-racist organizations not only in name, but in practice.”

Planned Parenthood of Pacific Southwest
“We must confront how white supremacy of the past and present continue in the institutions we are a part of today—including our own organization.”
“We acknowledge how the faults in our history have manifested today, including the implicit bias within our own organization, and recognize that this is part of the problem.”

Planned Parenthood of the North Central States
“We are owning our organization's history and are committed to addressing the implicit bias and structural racism within our organization and communities. . . . Sanger's promotion of eugenics was egregious and wrong.”

Planned Parenthood of California Central Coast
“Planned Parenthood . . . is reckoning with racism in our history, and looking inward to address our historical inequities. . . . Margaret Sanger was a part of a eugenics movement that was rooted in ablest and racist ideals. . . . We cannot condone that behavior. And we cannot ignore how her behavior and associations have shaped Planned Parenthood today. . . . Planned Parenthood is committed to racial justice. We also recognize that we cannot address structural racism or white supremacy in this country and communities without addressing our own.”

Virginia League for Planned Parenthood
“We also acknowledge our past and our present participation in white supremacy and are committed to stopping, learning, growing and living our values through the hard and uncomfortable work of progress. As we mourn, we are also forced to take a look at ourselves and to reckon with change.”
**Planned Parenthood Keystone**

“Planned Parenthood Keystone is a proud affiliate of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. We acknowledge that our organization . . . is not exempt from structural racism and white supremacy. We have also denounced Margaret Sanger’s racist and ablest statements. We commit to dismantling institutional and structural racism and the very real ways racism affects the health of Black women.”

**Planned Parenthood Mar Monte**

“Racism pervades every aspect of our lives. It goes beyond the individual and individual actions. Racism exists in our public institutions, work spaces, schools, online, and within health care. Planned Parenthood is not exempt from that. It is important to look inward into how white systems of oppression continue to show up in the spaces we fill. We are being called to stand with the Black community against racism, oppression, and inequity. We urge our supporters to join us in the effort to dismantle the culture of white supremacy. We acknowledge our history, and will continue to learn and work towards being a more inclusive organization. Planned Parenthood Mar Monte stands with the Black community.”

**Planned Parenthood Great Northwest and Hawaiian Islands AND Planned Parenthood Indiana and Kentucky (BOTH AFFILIATES HAVE THE SAME CEO)**

“The onus to protect Black lives, Black women, Black transgender people, and Black families is on all of us. Planned Parenthood has a responsibility to respond to this moment by naming the racism of our organization’s past, in order to change the trajectory of the future. Our task now is to untangle the racial bias implicitly woven into our organization today.”

**Planned Parenthood Illinois**

“We recognize that Planned Parenthood has been complicit in upholding systemic racism. Moving forward, PPIL is deeply committed to being anti-racist and ensuring that our work is not performative—that there is no divide between our words and actions. As part of this work, we’ve created spaces for honest conversations about race and are providing multiple channels through which staff have opportunities to share their lived experiences with leadership. PPIL is actively listening and addressing issues so that, together, we can end implicit bias and structural racism within our organization at all levels.”

**Planned Parenthood Rocky Mountains**

“Now is not just the time to call out violent racism gone viral; it is also a time to look inward. That is why last week, PPRM took action [to] rename our flagship health center in Northeast Denver to the ‘Park Hill Health Center.’ We know for certain that words matter, and this is a small step in a much longer journey towards racial justice. It is one piece of our on-going work of dismantling racism.”

“We are committed to addressing and correcting implicit bias and structural racism within our organization so that we can continue to improve our delivery of health care and education to the people and communities we serve.”

**Planned Parenthood South Atlantic**

“Planned Parenthood South Atlantic is reckoning with our own complicity in white supremacy and systemic racism. As we continue to deliver the high-quality care our patients expect from us, we know that progress can be difficult, but our patients, students, advocates, partners, and staff deserve no less.”
Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette

“White supremacy and systemic racism permeate every structure in our society. . . . We must look inward into how white supremacy continues to show up in the institutions we are part of, including Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood is steeped with our own structural racism and white supremacy. . . . We are committed to addressing and correcting implicit bias and structural racism within our organization.”

Planned Parenthood League Massachusetts

“Over the past few weeks, our country has begun a long overdue reckoning with racial inequalities and systemic racism that Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) face. We are optimistic that this will bring real, substantial changes and reforms to the health care system and all public institutions. We know that this cannot become a reality without an introspective assessment on areas where PPLM can advance our efforts to achieve racial equity. . . . We remain dedicated to rooting out and dismantling structural racism and white supremacy wherever it exists in our organization.”

Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast

“However, it isn't enough to mourn the individuals whose lives were cut short by racists. We must do more to fight the systemic racism that permeates every American institution—including Planned Parenthood. . . . PPGC pledges to lift our voices and to work alongside our partner organizations to demand justice for the victims and their families, and to fight racism.”

Planned Parenthood Northern New England

“PPNNE believes that racism is a public health crisis. In order to address this crisis, we are committed to examining our institutional systems and policies to identify and eradicate systems of oppression. . . . PPNNE has promoted a staff person to the newly formed position of Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Organizational Culture. This person partners with the President & CEO in leading organizational transformation rooted in dismantling white supremacy culture.”

Planned Parenthood Greater Ohio

“No institution in America, including we at Planned Parenthood, has avoided tangling with the vestiges of racism. Dismantling it begins with acknowledging its existence, and then taking actions to eliminate it, and the impact on the people it targets. . . . We cannot stop at calling out violent racism that has gone viral—we need to take the risks that include changing power structures in our own organizations, and in the public and private systems that discriminate against Black people.”

Planned Parenthood Great Plains

“Through education, introspection, and community engagement, we will work to identify and examine our biases, as well as establish measurable targets to hold ourselves accountable for eradicating racism and promoting racial equity within our own organization and our communities.”

Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri

“Racism permeates every structure in our society. We must also look inward into how white supremacy continues to show up in the institutions we are part of, and that includes Planned Parenthood. It is only when we acknowledge our own past and our own present that we may begin the hard work of progress.”
APPENDIX I
Planned Parenthood National Office

Below are excerpts from a leaked internal audit of Planned Parenthood Federation of America’s national office. The full article is printed by BuzzFeed.

Planned Parenthood admits racism in its national office, with the “childification” of Black and brown employees. Childification means the “persistent treatment of Black people as children or adolescents who are unable to accomplish work independently, and viewed uniformly, such that they cannot be differentiated from one another.” It also consists of “white employees confusing their Black colleagues’ names, or having their appearance commented on and their hair touched without consent, ‘as though they are an object to be viewed and commented on, as though they are not there.’”

“There’s so few Black employees at Planned Parenthood . . . (Black staff make up about 18% of PPFA’s 556 employees).”

“That ‘disconnect’ between Planned Parenthood’s work and its internal treatment of Black employees ‘is becoming harder for folks to manage.’”

“The Planned Parenthood employees who spoke to BuzzFeed News said they admire their organization for conducting such a thorough and honest analysis, but they don’t trust [Planned Parenthood] at large to actually make significant change unless it is held publicly accountable.”

An employee stated: “This assessment was great but, what’s next? This assessment took three years to do. Are we gonna have to wait another three years before they implement any policies? . . . I don’t trust them to make these changes, because Planned Parenthood is filled with [white] people who, because they do work in reproductive rights, think they can’t be racist or prejudice, but keep saying and doing racist things, and nothing is being done about it.”

“Just because you change the racial makeup of your leadership doesn’t mean that staff of color aren’t still experiencing the same problems.”
Employees of Planned Parenthood of Greater New York issued the following:

We write this—as a group of both current and former BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) employees of Planned Parenthood of Greater New York—to expand on the issues of racism and anti-Blackness in our workplace mentioned in our general open letter to the PPGNY Board. Planned Parenthood of New York City once released a shirt that said “Defy, Disrupt, Dismantle.” We write this letter in that spirit.

PPGNY, under the leadership of CEO Laura McQuade, has effectively gaslit and silenced their marginalized staff thus creating a toxic work environment. While we stand together as people of color, we also stand firm in our commitment to acknowledge that anti-Blackness is a critical and specific fulcrum of white supremacy.

The PPGNY Senior Leadership team, despite the visual appearance of diversity, has repeatedly weaponized the language of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Rather than using their true definitions, senior leaders and upper management have used these terms to manipulate and silence those with differing opinions and perspectives. They have leveraged identity politics by putting Black and other people of color in positions of leadership who actively participate in harming Black staff and other staff members of color below them.

At this point, PPGNY’s attempts to present itself as a diverse workplace have been carefully orchestrated and superficial at best. PPGNY repeatedly tokenizes their Chief Equity and Learning Officer, a Woman of Color who is not of African descent, as the “voice” for BIPOC staff. The decision to hire a non-Black person in this role exemplifies the ways in which white-led organizations use non-Black people as a buffer to actually confront and uproot anti-Blackness within organizations. We also question the ethics behind a member of the senior leadership team who operates a consulting firm bringing on her co-founder into another role on senior leadership.

We know that Black people in positions of leadership or BIPOC leadership does not in itself ensure an environment either free of or working towards the abolition of white supremacy.

To quote Professor Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor:

This doesn’t mean that representation no longer matters. It does. But we can no longer assume that shared identity means a shared commitment to the strategies
necessary to improve the lives of a vast majority of black people. Class tensions among African-Americans have produced new fault lines that the romance of racial solidarity simply cannot overcome.

The class tensions are made clearer when the BIPOC leadership were also complicit in the decisions to furlough/terminate 28% of staff. This included the closing of health centers in the Bronx and Queens, as those areas were being devastated by COVID-19. Additionally furloughed staff, many of which are BIPOC women, remain unclear when they will be called back to work and left with no official information regarding when their health insurance will be terminated.

With multiple attempts by the BIPOC staff to bring these concerns to our supervisors, we continue to be invalidated and marginalized. White and non-Black employees are still given more pay and more advancement opportunities than their Black colleagues. Blanket statements are used to overshadow our grievances, while only exacerbating the problem. Black staff are further disheartened when our white and non-Black colleagues use their privilege to amplify our concerns, and find they, too, are challenged and manipulated into silence.

We will no longer be pacified with performative allyship. We are the authorities on our experiences and have organized in defense of ourselves to highlight the multitude of structural issues facing BIPOC staff. We lift up the demands in the aforementioned letter; to eliminate the toxicity at its core we demand senior leadership and their policies be deconstructed and replaced with policies and safeguards and a reimagining of what is possible at PPGNY. We refuse to be complacent and to let this continue further. We ask our white colleagues and supporters to stand with us.

We are in a moment of collective rage but also hope and social transformation. We are seeing the impossible happen everyday because of organizing and people refusing to be silent. We write this letter as a testament to our experiences but also as a call of action to the entire reproductive rights movement.

Thank you.
APPENDIX III

Planned Parenthood Great Plains

NOTE: The statement below documents the racial problems Planned Parenthood staff had with a specific president and CEO of their affiliate–Planned Parenthood Great Plains. One major result of this was that the person was moved from PPGP to Planned Parenthood of Greater New York, which became one of the largest affiliates of the Planned Parenthood empire. (This is referred to in this document as “failing up.”)

Statement of Employees of Planned Parenthood Great Plains:

CURRENT AND FORMER PLANNED PARENTHOOD GREAT PLAINS STAFF STATEMENT ON LAURA MCQUADE. SIGNATURES ARE STILL BEING COLLECTED, AND THE LIST OF SIGNERS WILL BE UPDATED PERIODICALLY.

June 19, 2020

We are current and former Planned Parenthood Great Plains (PPGP) Public Affairs, Development, Health Services, and Education and Outreach staff who stand in solidarity with the calls of 90 current and former staff from Planned Parenthood of Greater New York (PPGNY) for the removal of its President and CEO, Laura McQuade. The horrific behavior that PPGNY staff described in their open letter—yelling, berating, slamming fists, verbally abusing staff, bullying employees, and mass layoffs—is consistent with our own painful experiences under McQuade’s leadership at PPGP (formerly known as Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri) between 2014 and 2017. Like the New York affiliates, we also experienced a haphazard merger under McQuade’s leadership that left employees unprepared and overwhelmed, leaving many no choice but to resign, some after decades of service to their communities. The turnover rate at PPGP was very high for much of McQuade’s tenure, and surveys showed PPGP employee satisfaction was the lowest of all Planned Parenthood affiliates in the nation. PPGP was placed on probation by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) auditing organization due to a multitude of management failures traceable to McQuade’s directives. PPGP staff reached out to PPFA more than a year ago to warn of McQuade’s behavior and management failures, but our warning went unheeded, as did the warnings of PPGNY staff. Failing up is a luxury not afforded to people of color, and disappointingy all too common for the white women within the organization.

The PPGP executive team under McQuade, as well as the board of directors who were charged with supervising her, are all culpable for witnessing and not responding appropriately to her abusive behavior. In fact, some board members added to the
trauma and burden staff of color carried under McQuade’s tenure. Fighting for our reproductive rights in states that are known to be hostile to our mission is no excuse for the mistreatment that staff repeatedly faced under McQuade’s leadership and beyond. Politicians burdened us all with enough problems without having to fight our own.

A reckoning within the Planned Parenthood organization—across affiliates and the national office at PPFA—is long past due. It’s not enough to just say “Black Lives Matter” or “Defund the Police” if our own systems continue to oppress Black and non-Black people of color. Standing for the Planned Parenthood mission means fighting to dismantle these systems of oppression and white supremacy both in our communities and within our own organizations. Our fight to ensure all people have reproductive freedom will fail unless and until we fight for racial justice and workers’ rights with as much energy as we fight for gender equity. We stand with our friends at PPGNY and across the Federation who are demanding full accountability and real change from the leaders at all levels of our movement.
APPENDIX IV
Planned Parenthood’s 11/7/20 E-Mail

On November 7, 2020, the Associated Press and other news media in the United States reported that candidate Joe Biden had won the presidential election and would be the next president of the United States. That same day, Planned Parenthood issued the e-mail on the next page to its supporters (image included). When you read the e-mail, I call your attention to the third sentence of the third paragraph.

Despite all the admissions of Planned Parenthood’s racist and white supremacist operations across the country in the last five months, the Black president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America had the temerity to write her supporters and bemoan that:

“Racism plagues our country in ways that keep Black and Latino communities from living full, healthy lives.”

Maybe, if Planned Parenthood—with its slick public relations slogans—would cease operations, the Black and Latino communities would finally have a chance to get good, quality healthcare from unbiased providers.

In that same paragraph, Planned Parenthood enumerates the three services that it believes the Black and Latino communities need the most:

- Abortion
- Sexuality education
- Birth control

Abortion takes the life of a preborn person of color, thus reducing the size and influence of the minority populations.

Sexuality education, Planned Parenthood-style, is an attack on the religious heritage of minorities, thus leading children of color into lives where sexual intimacy is viewed as a means of pleasure rather than the God-given means of creating families and generations. Just about every church denomination in America condemns sexual activity between unmarried minors. Yet, Planned Parenthood touts it as healthcare.

Birth control promotion gets impressionable high school and college students, including minorities, to put dangerous chemicals into their bodies that will cause sickness and death. The birth control pill is the top-selling product at Planned Parenthood. Yet, the World Health Organization classifies combined oral contraceptives as Group 1 carcinogens, causing breast cancer, cervical cancer, and liver cancer in women—including minorities.
Planned Parenthood claims that it is a supporter of people of color. Yet, its own organizations admit to racism and white supremacy. Further, its own fundraising e-mail to donors decries racism while, at the same time, asking for funds to bring its admittedly racist philosophies to more communities of color.

PHEW.

It's an incredible feeling, to realize you've been holding your breath for years and suddenly can exhale a sigh of relief.

Even in the darkest times — and there have been many — you've kept our focus on our North Star: a world where your body is your own. Where every person, regardless of who they are or where they come from, has control over their life, their health, and their future. And we won't stop until that's a reality for everyone.

I'm not saying we're there. We have deep inequities in our health system that keep the most vulnerable from getting the care they need. Racism plagues our country in ways that keep Black and Latino communities from living full, healthy lives. There are states in this country where abortion still isn't accessible — except in theory, and towns where young people have no sexual education curriculum or means of obtaining birth control. But with your help and generosity, the path forward is shining a little brighter today and it feels good!

Now, let's reimagine what's possible. Please, take it all in and breathe that sigh of relief with me. And then, there's no time to waste: Let's build a new, healthy future together. We can't do it without you.

Thank you, for standing with us in the dark times and the light. We are strong because of you.

In Solidarity,

Alexis McGill Johnson, President & CEO
Planned Parenthood Federation of America

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