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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Senate Committee Meets to Investigate Fetal Tissue
Donation in Texas, Planned Parenthood Refuses to Testify**

Despite numerous invitations from the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, Planned Parenthood is a no-show at Wednesday's hearing to investigate the issues surrounding fetal tissue donation in Texas.

AUSTIN, TX -- This morning, the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services met to investigate the alleged collection and sale of aborted fetal remains by Planned Parenthood affiliates in Texas. Chairman Charles Schwertner, MD (R-Georgetown) convened the hearing following the release of several videos showing senior Planned Parenthood officials conversing about the organization's sale of organs and other aborted fetal tissue.

"Members, I am sure all of you have seen the recent disturbing videos showing top Planned Parenthood executives casually discussing the donation, and potentially the sale, of fetal tissues and organs," said Chairman Schwertner as he called the meeting to order. "The cavalier attitude portrayed in these videos is clearly alarming and disturbing to a great number of people here in Texas."

The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services received testimony from Attorney General Ken Paxton regarding his office's ongoing investigation into the business practices of Planned Parenthood, as well as testimony from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and the Department of State Health Services regarding the regulatory framework governing the operation of abortion facilities in Texas. The committee also heard testimony from several statewide advocacy groups opposed to abortion.

Despite numerous invitations, Planned Parenthood elected not to appear before the Senate Committee to answer questions regarding the sale of fetal remains, choosing instead to host a political rally on the south lawn of the State Capitol.

"The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services made numerous attempts to invite Planned Parenthood to testify at today's hearing and clarify their position on the sale of fetal tissue -- attempts that went completely unanswered for more than a week," said Schwertner.

(over)

"Only minutes before the start of today's hearing, my office received a letter from Planned Parenthood indicating their refusal to appear before this committee to answer questions regarding their position on the collection and sale of aborted fetal remains. It's obviously very disappointing, but I believe their absence from today's hearing speaks volumes."

During the hearing, the Senate Committee also received troubling testimony regarding the potential alteration of the accepted medical procedure for conducting a surgical abortion in order to better preserve fetal organs for donation -- something that, if true, could potentially expose the woman undergoing an abortion to a heightened risk of medical complications.

"Several of the videos that have already been made public seem to clearly show Planned Parenthood officials discussing ways of altering a standard abortion procedure for the purpose of more effectively harvesting fetal organs," continued Schwertner. "This alone would violate the accepted medical standard of care, as well as federal law, and should be highly troubling for anyone that claims to be concerned with protecting women's health."

A medical doctor by training, Dr. Schwertner currently serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. Schwertner is currently serving his second term as the senator for Senate District 5, a ten-county region of central and east Texas.

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