



Planned Parenthood Just Launched Its Biggest Campaign Blitz, EVER

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Blitz

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD ACTION FUND.

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Campaigners go door-to-door in Pittsburgh.

Planned Parenthood is bringing out the big guns for the 2016 election.

Last week, the organization's political advocacy branch officially launched a new multi-million-dollar campaign in key battleground states to engage and educate voters on women's issues and promote a possible first female president.

“Access to safe and legal abortion is on the ballot this year, like never before. And it could actually be taken away,” Deirdre Schifeling, the executive director of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, told Refinery29 in an interview. “That is a real possibility.”

The Planned Parenthood Action Fund (PPAF) is devoting \$30 million dollars to shift voters and influence races in six states across the country. In Wisconsin, Ohio, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire, volunteers and organizers are going door-to-door to talk to voters about the importance of reproductive rights in the 2016 election.

PPAF, which endorsed Democrat Hillary Clinton in January of this year, is highlighting what it says is a twofold threat to reproductive rights in the presidential campaign. Republican

candidate Donald Trump has voiced opposition to abortion on numerous occasions, promising to defund Planned Parenthood. He's also stated that he would only appoint anti-abortion Supreme Court justices. And in July, Trump's running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, said that he wants to see landmark abortion rights case Roe v. Wade "consigned to the ash heap of history where it belongs." PPAF's campaigners are working to highlight policies like those as concrete examples of what women have to lose in this election.

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The campaign is an amped-up version of the enormously successful campaign that PPAF ran during the 2012 election, when it spent about \$12 million. That campaign saw returns of close to 100%, according to nonprofit group Sunlight Foundation — PPAF backed the winning candidate in almost every race. With that success under its belt, PPAF is more than doubling its spending for 2016.

“The centerpiece of our program is door-to-door, person-to-person canvas,” Schifeling said. “We know the most effective way to reach voters is face-to-face.” She says that the campaign has close to 3,500 volunteers, plus about 800 paid organizers and staff who have knocked on about 800,000 doors so far. The goal is to reach 2 million voters this way, plus another million by phone.

Kate DiStefano, 32, is one of those volunteers going door-to-door engaging with voters. She told Refinery29 that, even though she sometimes talks to 100 people in a day, she has far more positive reactions than negative ones. In her experience, it's the older voters, particularly women, who are the most enthusiastic when they hear she's there representing the Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

"I've found that retirees and people who have experienced the world before reproductive freedoms issued through things like Roe v. Wade were reality, are actually incredibly positive about women's health care and Planned Parenthood," DiStefano said. "Because they've seen what it's like before."

Though the presidential race is important, it's not all the campaign is focusing on. It's trying to draw voter attention to down-ballot senatorial and gubernatorial races, as well. "Our number-one priority, of course, is helping Hillary Clinton to be elected as president, but a close second after that is helping to flip the Senate to be controlled by pro-women's health candidates," Schifeling said. "And the work that we're doing can really be the margin of victory in many of those places."

For DiStefano, that work has become a calling. She says that she will be out knocking on doors rain or shine, educating voters about the need to consider reproductive rights when they cast their vote next month. "The thing about women's health care, and all the issues that go in hand with it, is that they don't just affect women," she said. "If you really want to improve this world, then you really have to focus on women's health care because it's the root of a lot of issues."

"People should just remember that every one of us has a voice," she advised. "And it doesn't cost anything to make that voice heard."

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New Registrant

Select Language ▼

- **Email Address***



- **ZIP Code***



- **Date of Birth***



-

- **I am a U.S. citizen.**

-

- **I have a driver's license or state ID card.**

-

- **I will be 18 or older by the next election.**

-

- **I am registering to vote for the first time.**

Note: Some states offer online voter registration. [Learn more.](#) If you are an American citizen living abroad or a uniformed military voter, [click here](#) to register to vote.

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