

RALLY

Ralliers gather in support of Planned Parenthood

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in a pink bus, stopping at cities to raise awareness about these attacks on women's healthcare.

According to their web page, the purpose of the Truth Tour is to reverse false propaganda spread by Republican politicians about Planned Parenthood practices, and to demonstrate the support found in communities and online.

The bus came to Greensboro on April 4, bringing an explosion of pink to the Planned Parenthood parking lot on Battleground Ave. The estimated 70 people in attendance were handed bright shirts and signs boasting the "I Stand with Planned Parenthood" slogan.

Gathering in front of the bus, the group listened to speakers including Director of Public Policy at Planned Parenthood Systems Jessica Bearden and Guilford County Senator Gladys Robinson.

Current patient Robin Heyer spoke on how she does not attend the clinic for contraceptive purposes, as she is unable to conceive children. Instead, she

relies on their healthcare services such as cancer screenings.

"Women could die if we lose Planned Parenthood," said Heyer. "This shouldn't happen because of misinformation."

This problem of misinformation was addressed at the panel in Bryan Jr. Auditorium.

Speakers included Community Health Educator at Planned Parenthood Mary Connor, Assistant Professor of Political Science Maria Rosales and senior Grayson Schmidt, who is a double major in sociology/anthropology and women's studies and was trained as an abortion doula, while Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology Julie Winterich moderated.

Connor stressed that there is an inaccurate stigma attached to Planned Parenthood and emphasized that in the entire Planned Parenthood Federation of 112 affiliates, only 10 percent deal with abortion.

While many healthcare programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act could possibly lose

funding, the majority of the panel focused on the proposal to cut all funding from Title X, or the Family Planning program.

At the rally on April 4, Senator Robinson and longtime friends

"Women could die if we lose Planned Parenthood. This shouldn't happen because of misinformation."

Robin Heyer, Planned Parenthood patient

Sally S. Cone and Leigh Seager explained their concern for young women today.

"All our life, we have been fighting for equality, especially in

healthcare," said Seager. "It was horrible then, and I am afraid that today's generation will take advantage of what has been given to them and not come out to fight against this."

An estimated 30 Guilford students attended the rally.

"I see this as a war against women," said senior Cordelia McKusick. "So currently, it should be the most legitimate concern for students."

While the group was enthusiastic, as they lined the road to get the public's attention, some showed disappointment at the turnout.

"More people should have been here," said junior Devinne Melecki.

Despite the Truth Tour's invitations to all Greensboro media outlets, UNCG's The Carolinian and The Guilfordian were the only newspapers to cover the rally.

At this time, there are several Planned Parenthood locations that provide services such as STI testing, pap smears, contraception and pregnancy testing for free. Other sites offer these services at a reduced, affordable price,

according to Connor.

Defunding would affect all of the establishments. According to Connor, birth control prices could go from \$20 to \$70 a month.

The temporary federal budget was set to expire on Friday, April 8 and the Republicans and Democrats in Congress could not reach an agreement for the rest of the fiscal year. This funding cut was one of the last policies to be decided, and in their final compromise, the bill was not passed.

The eleventh-hour budget decision did not include any of the policies against Planned Parenthood, according to NPR. The debate for the funding, however, is not over as the government plans for the 2012 budget.

"This is just a start," said Connor. "Hands off my body. Don't tell me how to spend my money. The next attack will be on Plan B (the emergency contraceptive) and birth control."

Connor predicts that Planned Parenthood funding will be safe this year, but thinks there will be some serious changes within the next five years.



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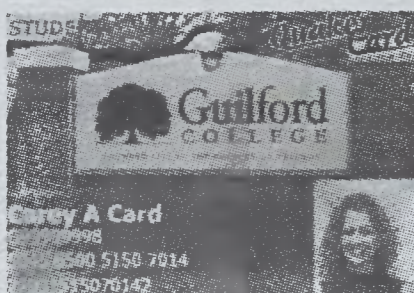
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