

Pro-Life Waco
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August 25, 2017

Dear Mr. Meadors:

I begin with my conclusion. For the long-term benefit of the Waco Chamber of Commerce, Planned Parenthood should be excluded from membership.

The Planned Parenthood advertisement in the quarterly Chamber publication is the current controversy compromising the Waco Chamber of Commerce. There have been controversies in the past. Controversies will continue as long as Planned Parenthood is a member. Prior controversies were resolved discreetly, avoiding public protest or news coverage. That is my hope now. The potential for a Mount St. Helens eruption exists while Planned Parenthood is honored with Chamber membership.

Planned Parenthood collaborations with other organizations provide one-sided benefits. Planned Parenthood is desperate for relationships that appear to make it an accepted part of our nation and local communities. Girl Scouts and Komen Foundation are examples. For both, there have been national and local Waco controversies. Nationally, Girl Scouts and Komen Foundation have been hurt by entanglement with Planned Parenthood. Locally, the result has been the demise of local Girl Scout and Komen affiliates.

With the controversy over Chamber ads promoting Planned Parenthood, the time has come for the Waco Chamber of Commerce to move forward WITHOUT membership of the abortion center for dozens of Central Texas counties. Beginning in April of 2017, the Waco branch of Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas has become the only abortion facility within the triangle of Dallas, Houston, and Austin. With the Waco branch of PPGT resuming abortions in Waco, our city is now one just 8 Texas cities providing abortions. A large portion of the Waco community and Chamber member lament these facts. There is also a significant group of Central Texans activated to counter Planned Parenthood in every way possible. During the first era of abortion in Waco, 1994-2013, over 19,000 babies in the womb were abortion. We will work to prevent a repetition of this history.

One past Chamber/Planned Parenthood controversy involved a Chamber member discount program. Planned Parenthood offered a 10% discount on all services. One of the "services" provided at the time was abortion. Communications from respected members of the Waco business community to Chamber management quickly brought the removal of Planned Parenthood from the discount program.

The other controversy involved a social program in which Chamber members hosted receptions and tours at their facilities after hours. Planned Parenthood was scheduled to host one such event at its Ross Avenue facility, where abortion are now performed. This eruption more broadly engaged the Waco business community than the 10% discount. The reception did go forward as I recall. However, the conflict within the Chamber resulted in an indefinite (possibly permanent) suspension of this monthly opportunity for social interactions among chamber members.

The harm to the Chamber from Planned Parenthood membership continues in 2017 with the Chamber accepting ads promoting Planned Parenthood in a quarterly publication with circulation of 8000-9000 readers. The potential for a public controversy today is much greater now than in the past. I learned about the summer issue ad from an anonymous chamber member. I am disappointed to know now that Chamber promotion of Planned Parenthood goes all the way back to 2014. Possibly, Chamber decision-makers thought Planned Parenthood was "okay" since they were no longer committing abortions. Only this last ad was published after Planned Parenthood resumed the shedding of innocent blood in Waco.

Planned Parenthood launched its abortion business in 1994 and closed in August of 2013. Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas reopened its abortion facility in Waco in April of 2017. This has aroused intense opposition, which is led in the public square by Pro-Life Waco. Our billboards and yard signs around the city are just one part of this outreach. Your magazine ad specifically promotes Planned Parenthood at 1121 Ross Avenue—THE ADDRESS WHERE PLANNED PARENTHOOD WILL ABORT BABIES NEXT WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, AND FRIDAY!

With the support of the Board of Directors of Pro-life Waco at our monthly meeting last evening, I call on the Waco Chamber of Commerce to pursue its praiseworthy mission WITHOUT the encumbrance of Planned Parenthood membership. I believe a large portion of Waco and its business community are with Pro-Life Waco on this. Further, I believe that fair-minded pro-choice Chamber members should realize that affiliation with the Waco abortion provider conflicts with the historic Chamber mission. Simply stated, the Chamber can only lose with a collaborative relationship with Planned Parenthood.

In reality, Planned Parenthood may not have a valid membership today. Planned Parenthood became a member of the chamber many years ago under the nonprofit entity of Planned Parenthood of Central Texas. This may have made sense for the Chamber decades ago when Planned Parenthood was broadly respected and not the lightning rod of abortion controversy.

Planned Parenthood of Central Texas no longer exists as an IRS non-profit organization. On September 1, 2012, three Planned Parenthood affiliates headquartered in Austin, Waco, and Dallas merged to become Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas. Headquarters are in Austin. Ken Lambrecht is the CEO of PPGT. Notice that the website in your promotional ad is for PPGT. Prior to 2012, Planned Parenthood of Central Texas had its own board of directors, its independent local management, and its own publications, such as their biennial newsletter. In 2012, Waco all of this was displaced by Austin control.

Has Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas applied for membership to the Waco Chamber of Commerce? If yes, have you approved this application? If the answers to either question is “no”, then Planned Parenthood is not a member of the Chamber. One way or another, the Waco abortion facility should promptly be dropped from the Chamber membership roll.

As a former economics professor at Baylor, I learned to think about the self-interest of various participants in the economy. I believe that Planned Parenthood membership in the Waco Chamber of Commerce is NOT in the self-interest of vibrant, focused Chamber leadership in Waco. Handling controversies like this is not what should be on your agenda.

If I receive a written or email confirmation that Planned Parenthood is no longer a member of the Waco Chamber of Commerce, I will shelve Pro-Life Waco public square plan regarding this controversy. Would it be possible for the Chamber to decide on this, one way or another, by the end of this month? I attach several pages relevant to this letter.

I have expressed my perspective as strongly and openly as possible. If this cannot be resolved, I want to know that I did my part in communicating the seriousness of the matter. Perhaps I am missing something. I welcome the strong and open perspectives of you and others.

Hoping for a quick resolution of the difficulty,

Sincerely,

John Pisciotta
Director of Pro-Life Waco