

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

December 1, 2015

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

In the aftermath of the attack at a Planned Parenthood Clinic in Colorado Springs last Friday, we strongly urge you to disband the Select Investigative Panel of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

We opposed the creation of the Select Panel because we believe it is unnecessary, a circumvention of regular order, and a misuse of taxpayer dollars to investigate charges that have already been debunked. Sparked by the release of videos manufactured by an ideological organization committed to ending safe and legal abortion services, three standing committees – the House Energy and Commerce, Judiciary, and Oversight and Government Reform Committees – have already exhaustively investigated Planned Parenthood and found no evidence of wrongdoing.

Even Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz has admitted publicly that he has identified no evidence that Planned Parenthood has violated any laws:

Blitzer: “Is there any evidence in your opinion that Planned Parenthood has broken any law?”

Chaffetz: “No, I’m not suggesting that they broke the law.”¹

During a subsequent House Judiciary Committee hearing, the Chairman was even more emphatic, stating: “Did I look at the finances and have a hearing specifically as to the revenue portion and how they spend? Yes. Was there any wrongdoing? I didn’t find any.”²

Yet despite serious questions about the accuracy and legality of the videos, and the admitted failure to find any evidence of wrongdoing in their wake, Republican Members of Congress have continued to cite the videos as the basis for their inflammatory allegations and the purported rationale for the creation of the Benghazi-like Select Panel.

¹*Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer*, CNN (Sept. 30, 2015), <http://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2015/09/30/jason-chaffetz-entire-interview-tsr.cnn>

²*Hearing entitled “Planned Parenthood Exposed: Examining Abortion Procedures and Medical Ethics at the Nation’s Largest Abortion Provider,”* House Judiciary Committee (Oct. 8, 2015).

Announcing his appointment of Republican Members to the Select Panel, former Speaker Boehner explained that “recent videos exposing the abortion-for-baby-parts business have shocked the nation, and demanded action.”³

Following her appointment as Select Committee Chairwoman, Representative Marsha Blackburn cited more of those manufactured videos and asked: “Is this how babies should be treated? To be harvested for their heads?” She then went on to say “we now have a select panel that will examine the sale of baby body parts.”⁴

Since the release of the inflammatory, highly-edited videos, the FBI has reported a rise in attacks against Planned Parenthood and other facilities. The attack over the holiday weekend took three lives, injured nine others, and terrorized patients and their health care providers.

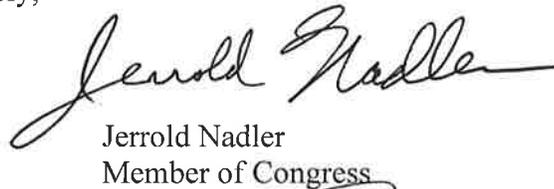
Enough is enough. No woman in this country should ever have to worry that a visit to her doctor will end in violence, and no health care provider should ever be targeted for ensuring access to health care services. Rather than demonizing a leading provider of vital health care services for women, Congress should be taking affirmative steps to support women and their families.

At this point, we urge you to disband the Select Panel, disavow these videos, and turn Congress’s attention to investigating extremist groups that are seeking to deprive women access to safe and legal abortion services by threats and violence.

Sincerely,



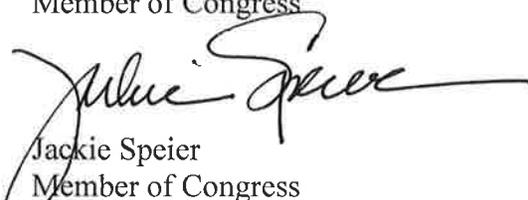
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

³Boehner Appoints GOP Members to New Select Investigative Panel, Oct. 23, 2015, <http://www.speaker.gov/press-release/boehner-appoints-gop-members-new-select-investigative-panel>.

⁴Blackburn Comments on Latest Planned Parenthood Video, Oct. 27, 2015, <http://energycommerce.house.gov/press-release/blackburn-comments-latest-planned-parenthood-video>.