

## **Planned Parenthood Efforts to Sway 2004 Election Revealed Endorsement = Cash and More for Kerry**

Though the Planned Parenthood Action Fund (PPAF) had been active in previous elections and Planned Parenthood's preference for pro-abortion candidates was no secret, 2004 marked the first year that Planned Parenthood through its PPAF officially endorsed a presidential candidate.

In the lead-up to the 2004 primaries, Planned Parenthood met with several of the leading Democratic presidential contenders, conducting on-camera interviews and clinic tours as the candidates came through New Hampshire.

After Massachusetts Senator John Kerry had secured enough delegates in the Democratic primaries to sew up the presidential nomination, Planned Parenthood announced its endorsement on April 23, 2004, at a noontime rally two days prior to the pro-abortion "March for Women's Lives" rally in Washington, D.C.

"We must stop the Bush administration's war on choice," Gloria Feldt, then head of Planned Parenthood and president of the PPAF, said at the time. "Sen. Kerry has been a consistent and passionate advocate for women's rights throughout his distinguished career in public office and we enthusiastically pledge to support his commitment to domestic and global women's health through this endorsement."

Over the next several months, Planned Parenthood's various associated political action committees poured funds into the Kerry campaign. There was \$2,273,639 from the Planned Parenthood Action Fund Inc., \$19,738 from the Planned Parenthood Action Fund Inc. PAC (Planned Parenthood Federal PAC), \$7,243 from the Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund (Boston, MA), \$63,394 from the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood, \$209,931 from Planned Parenthood Advocates Mar Monte (Sacramento, CA), \$23,960 from Planned Parenthood of Minnesota Action, \$56,362 from Planned Parenthood Los Angeles County, and \$18,700 from the Planned Parenthood Action Fund of Santa Barbara, CA (as reported at [www.campaignmoney.com](http://www.campaignmoney.com)).

As the PPAF's 2004 Election Report reveals, Planned Parenthood did much more than simply pass on the cash. In Oregon, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and other so-called "battleground states," Planned Parenthood workers and volunteers made a series of phone calls, knocked on doors, mailed out literature, and ran ads on cable TV in order to identify, register, and get voters to the polls. Efforts were specifically targeted at what Planned Parenthood called young, single "women on their own."

Planned Parenthood claims that vote returns showed that it turned out 20,221 new voters in Oregon alone. It claims that national exit polling shows that "single women turned out in greater numbers as a portion of the electorate nearly across the board in our target states, with huge gains being made in states where we invested heavily."

The result, says Planned Parenthood, is that "These additional votes helped John Kerry win six of the seven states in which we targeted single women through our national outreach." (Kerry

lost in Iowa, but won in Minnesota, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin.)

Planned Parenthood also provided support to local 501 (c) (4) electoral programs in Florida, Nevada, and Ohio, all won by Bush. President Bush added Iowa and New Mexico to the states he took in 2000, dropping back only in New Hampshire.

Ultimately, Planned Parenthood says, “security issues trumped choice and women’s rights among pro-choice suburban married women,” counteracting their efforts.

Planned Parenthood lays a great deal of blame on the candidate they endorsed. “Senator Kerry’s inability to articulate a clear position on abortion and family planning hurt him with swing voters,” the PPAF report argues. “While Senator Kerry was urged repeatedly by the Action Fund and other organizations to articulate a clear message in support of choice and family planning, he never gave voters who could potentially have been swayed on these issues the impetus they needed to vote in his favor” (PPAF, 2004 Election Report).

### **Aiming for a Pro-Abortion Congress—and Missing**

While the bulk of its cash and efforts went toward Kerry, Planned Parenthood was also a player in many of the most heavily contested Congressional and Senate Races. Planned Parenthood’s Federal PAC doled out more than \$600,000 to supported candidates (PPAF, 2004 Election Report).

Planned Parenthood claims that it won nine of the 15 Senate races where it made an endorsement and that 76% of the candidates the PAC endorsed in the 2003-04 election cycle won their races. Yet according to PPAF’s own tallies, it lost three Senate seats it counted as having “mixed” records to the “anti-choice” or pro-life side. It offered no similar breakdown of House seats, still in the hands of pro-life Republicans (PPAF, 2004 Election Report).

### **Looking at Future Elections**

The final paragraph of PPAF’s 2004 Election Report opens with the statement that “The Action Fund is prepared to build on our successes in 2004 and reevaluate areas in which we feel we can improve.”

More specifically, Planned Parenthood says that the techniques honed in Oregon and other states, described as a “multi-layered, synchronized suite of contact tools to build a relationship with targeted women and reinforce messaging” and the “clustering of communications by cable cluster and disciplined linkage of canvas, cable ads, direct mail, phone and Web presence,” would be “carefully analyzed, refined, and improved” and used to “develop an even more potent and cost-effective model for use in 2006.”

“The converged communications program,” says Planned Parenthood, “is readily scaleable and applicable to Senate and House races across the country and, given the lower turnout expected in 2006, likely to have an even greater impact on Election Day” (PPAF, 2004 Election Report).