

I've always been fascinated with the claim that Planned Parenthood is nothing more than a big abortion clinic. Nothing could be further from the truth. But with elections coming up, the zealots out there are trying to outdo themselves in vilifying a well-respected organization and defund it at the federal level.

Despite the propaganda, Planned Parenthood does NOT focus on providing abortions. In 2013, the most recent year for which data are available, its services included nearly 500,000 breast examinations, 400,000 Pap tests, nearly 4.5 million tests for sexually transmitted illnesses and treatments. And, by the way, Planned Parenthood's contraceptive services are one of the major reasons we don't have more abortions in the United States.

A strong moral case can be made that any society that respects women must respect their right to control their own bodies. But since many of our elected officials don't, let's turn the tables on those men, and yes it is mainly men, and see what legislation has been proposed in state legislatures around this great country of ours.

In 2012 Ohio State Sen. Nina Turner wasn't happy with bills that seek to control women's access to contraception and abortion. Consequently, she introduced a bill that would require men seeking a prescription for erectile dysfunction drugs to see a sex therapist, receive a cardiac stress test and get a notarized affidavit signed by a sexual partner affirming impotency. Also, sex therapists would be required to present the option of celibacy as a viable lifestyle choice.

Quoting former State Senator Turner, "The men in our lives, including members of the General Assembly, generously devote time to fundamental female reproductive issues—the least we can do is return the favor." She went on to say "It is crucial that we take the appropriate steps to shelter vulnerable men from the potential side effects of these drugs. When a man makes a crucial decision about his health and his body, he should be fully aware of the alternative options and the lifetime repercussions of that decision."

Former Sen. Turner wasn't the only legislator to introduce a "Viagra bill" or amendments in response to what mostly male legislators have been proposing around the nation. In Illinois State Rep. Kelly Cassidy introduced an amendment to a bill requiring ultrasounds before a woman can get an abortion; it would require men to watch an explicit video about the side effects of erectile dysfunction drugs. And Missouri State Rep. Stacey Newman introduced a bill that would allow a man to obtain a vasectomy only when not doing so could cause him serious injury or death.

I'm hoping you find these legislative attempts humorous but the problem they spotlight, the war on women's reproductive rights and privacy, isn't funny at all.