

## **Planned Parenthood Action Fund Working to Elect Pro-Abortion Candidates in Fall Elections**

BY Randall K. O'Bannon, Ph.D.

Building on its aggressive efforts in the 2004 election cycle, the Planned Parenthood Action Fund is again busy trying to elect sympathetic House and Senate candidates in Ohio, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, and Michigan, according to federal election reports. If the group's report from the last election is any guide, money will only be the beginning.

In 2004, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and the political action committees of several of its affiliates spent over \$3 million to try to elect John Kerry and other pro-abortion candidates to office in 2004, recent reports from [www.campaignmoney.com](http://www.campaignmoney.com) reveal.

While expressing disappointment that it lost so many races, the group says that the 2004 effort was "only the beginning," promising that "In coming years the Action Fund will work with even greater determination to support and elect pro-choice candidates across the political spectrum and continue to play an important role in electoral politics throughout the United States" (Planned Parenthood Action Fund, 2004 Election Report).

The following discusses the impact of PPFA's new politically savvy president. The sidebar on this page tracks PPFA's aggressive political outreach, as revealed in particular by its Action Fund's 2004 Election Report.

### **The Vision of an Experienced Political Operative**

Planned Parenthood entered this new political season with a new president, one with a well-known political name and tons of political experience.

Cecile Richards, the daughter of the late Ann Richards, the former Texas governor defeated by George W. Bush on his way to the White House, learned politics around the kitchen table. Richards worked with various political organizations, was the deputy chief of staff for House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Ca.), but made a name for herself serving as the president of America Votes, a coalition of groups such as NARAL Pro-Choice America, the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, the AFL-CIO, EMILY's List, and MoveOn.org PAC, that spent more than \$350 million on political activities in the 2004 election.

Planned Parenthood worked closely with Richards in the 2004 election through America Votes, and then named her its new president in January 2006. It didn't take long for Richards to lay out her aggressive political vision for the organization.

Speaking June 13, 2006, at the Campaign for America's Future "Take Back America" conference, a gathering of the nation's activist left, Richards wowed the crowd with red meat rhetoric.

Noting how that with 860 health centers in 50 states, Planned Parenthood had more members, employees, and staff than the 50 state Democratic parties combined, Richards said, "We have the potential to swing the vote in 2006, 2008, and 2010, and that's a lot of power. ... What are we going to do with it? We're going to use it" (Cybercast News Service, 7/14/06).

Illustrating just how far Planned Parenthood may go with its advocacy, Richards continued, "We're going to marry our current reality as the largest reproductive health care provider in this country with our opportunity to be the largest kick\*\*s advocacy organization in the country."

Speaking to pro-lifers everywhere, Richards vowed, "We're taking on the opponents of choice in the states and the districts where they live. ... Planned Parenthood has got to become more political so that health care can become less politicized."