

LOCAL NEWS

Baldwin Park's Planned Parenthood clinic opens to fanfare and protest



Congresswoman Grace Napolitano joins PPPSGV leadership and staff for the opening of Planned Parenthood Baldwin Park on Wednesday, January 22, 2020, the 47th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. "I'm Catholic but I believe a woman has a right to choose," she said during her remarks. (Photo by Sarah Reingewirtz, Pasadena Star-News/SCNG)

By **CONTRIBUTING WRITER** | |

PUBLISHED: January 22, 2020 at 4:29 p.m. | UPDATED: January 22, 2020 at 5:59 p.m.

By **Jamie Roebuck-Joseph**

Contributor

A long-anticipated Planned Parenthood clinic opened Wednesday in Baldwin Park, attracting a protest from opponents of legal abortions who had tried to stop it.

The opening fell on the 47th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case which ruled abortion a constitutional right in 1973.

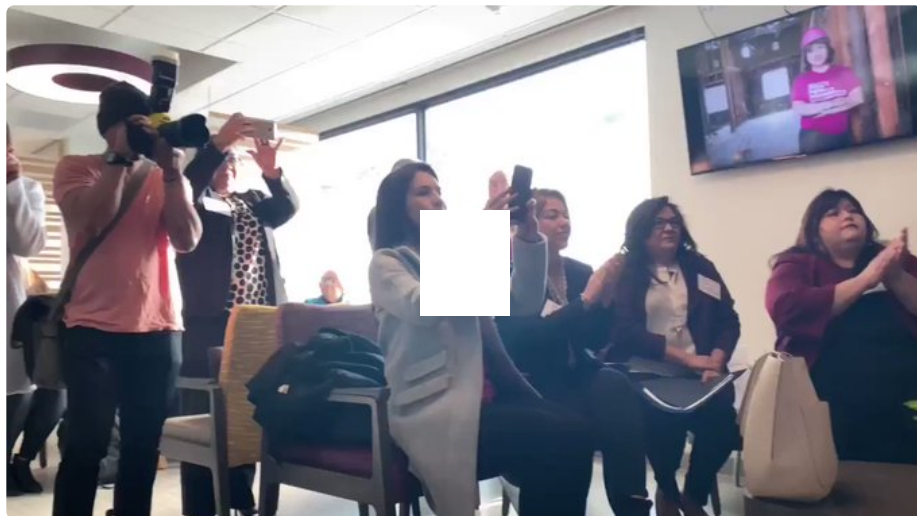
In addition to its traditional services – abortions, STI/STD testing, PAP smears, birth control and emergency contraceptives – this location will offer mental health and transgender services, such as hormone and gender transition treatment.

The welcome ceremony included a facility tour and remarks from Planned Parenthood staff members and U.S. Rep. Grace Napolitano, D-Norwalk.



Jamie
@jamiewritess

Congresswoman Grace Napolitano CA-32 opening remarks at the [#PlannedParenthood](#) opening ceremony in Baldwin Park this morning [@SGVTribune](#)



30 12:42 PM - Jan 22, 2020 · Baldwin Park, CA

[See Jamie's other Tweets](#)

“I know that the community welcomes it, and the people who don't want you here, maybe you can talk to them,” Napolitano said. “Have them come visit and talk to the families that come here and understand that it provides services that are not available to them otherwise, and that the community might be at risk.”

The new clinic, adjacent to Baldwin Park United Methodist Church, is not welcomed in the community, protesters said. The congregants from other churches held signs that said, “Babies Lives Matter” and “Planned Parenthood Not Welcome in Baldwin Park.”

The demonstrators had been speaking out against the facility's opening, [attending Baldwin Park City Council meetings to voice their concerns](#), since 2017.

“They chose the wrong place to be,” said St. John the Baptist Church's Pro-Life Justice and Peace leader Patricia Varela, who organized Wednesday's protest.

“It's difficult to accept something that kills human life, and 90% of their business is abortion, killing future people, family members, legacies – no, we will not accept that in here,” Varela said.

The congresswoman is a Catholic, but she believes in a woman's right to choose, Napolitano said.

“Planned Parenthood does a lot more than abortion: It helps people who may not be able to afford to go to a regular doctor or a hospital, they provide services for a lot of people, and we need services like that,” Napolitano said.

She added she will continue fighting in Congress to obtain federal funding for Planned Parenthood. In 2018, the Trump Administration issued new regulations for the types of health care providers eligible for funding. [Under Title X, family planning providers that offer abortion services](#) would not qualify. Instead, funds are directed to faith-based providers.

According to Planned Parenthood Pasadena & San Gabriel Valley Medical Director Noah Nattel, there is a need in Baldwin Park for health care services, especially for reproductive health.

“After doing multiple community assessment and focus groups, we really lucked out to purchase and open a health center that will be able to provide full-scope reproductive and sexual health needs for the community,” Nattel said.

In a [blog post last year](#), Planned Parenthood found more than 20% of Baldwin Park residents are single mothers, and 17% don't have health insurance. According to Planned Parenthood Pasadena & San Gabriel Valley President and CEO, Sheri Bonner, 77% of residents polled said they would “love to have a Planned Parenthood in this community.”

“I think we are part of the community, just like churches are part of the community and we’re really proud to be here,” Nattel said.

The protesters outside disagreed.



Jamie

@jamiewriter

On the 47th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, a new Planned Parenthood is opening in Baldwin Park across from a Methodist church, drawing criticism from community members here. Pro-life protesters are reciting prayers in Spanish, reporting for [@SGVTribune #PlannedParenthood](#)



47 12:32 PM - Jan 22, 2020 · Baldwin Park, CA

[31 people are talking about this](#)

“I think that’s totally incorrect,” St. John the Baptist Ministry churchgoer Olivia Ortiz said. “There’s no way. We have so many people supporting us, so 77%? I don’t see that being accurate.”

Rose Calzada, a protester from St. John the Baptist Church, said Planned Parenthood “did not ask the community.”

“That really upset me, because we find out second- and third-hand what’s going on in our own community. Everybody stayed really tight-lipped, and I can see why because they probably didn’t want us to know,” Calzada said. “If they really put out a survey, I think they would’ve known we don’t want them here.”

Varela said they will accept other businesses, but not ones that will “kill human life and bring tragedy and crime to the city.”

An online petition against the Planned Parenthood clinic accumulated more than 1,200 signatures, Varela said, and the group also gained support from Mayor Manuel Lozano last year.

Wednesday's protest will not be the last, she added.

"We're going to be here until they're out of our beautiful city," Varela said. "The community leaders ignored us, they're not protecting our city."

[Newsroom Guidelines](#)

[News Tips](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Report an Error](#)

 **The Trust Project**

Tags: [abortion](#), [development](#), [healthcare](#),
[Top Stories SGVT](#)



Contributing Writer

[VIEW COMMENTS](#)

Join the Conversation

We invite you to use our commenting platform to engage in insightful conversations about issues in our community. Although we do not pre-screen comments, we reserve the right at all times to remove any information or materials that are unlawful, threatening, abusive, libelous, defamatory, obscene, vulgar, pornographic, profane, indecent or otherwise objectionable to us, and to disclose any information necessary to satisfy the law, regulation, or government request. We might permanently block any user who abuses these conditions.

If you see comments that you find offensive, please use the “Flag as Inappropriate” feature by hovering over the right side of the post, and pulling down on the arrow that appears. Or, contact our editors by emailing moderator@scng.com.