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# Opinion

## How We Fight for Black Reproductive Freedom

As the nation's leading reproductive health-care provider, Planned Parenthood has a deep history of serving the black community to increase access to health care for greater opportunities to live a healthy, fulfilled life. Black History Month is an opportunity to recognize that access to quality health care is a fundamental right for all people to reach their fullest potential — regardless of gender, race or sexual orientation. Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette is committed to working with the next generation of black leaders in the fight for equity and justice, harnessing our collective power to create the world we want to live in.

Political and civil rights leaders like W.E.B. DuBois and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as well as black medical leaders such as Dr. Thelma Patten Law, believed that all people need access to health care to complete their education, plan their lives and protect their families. As our nation celebrates Black History Month, we're honoring that commitment and are grateful for their leadership in helping expand access to health care. This commitment and leadership inspires what we

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— as a community — do today.

Far too many African Americans continue to face unequal access to proper healthcare and education services. As a result, African American women are dying at higher rates than their white counterparts due to

“Far too many African Americans continue to face unequal access to proper healthcare and education services

breast cancer, cervical cancer, HIV and other illnesses that can be detected early. And as long as there are barriers to economic and educational opportunities, as well as social and political equity, obstacles will also remain in the way of full health care. Ever resilient even in the face of systemic oppression, black women have fought and continue to fight for reproductive justice and body autonomy. Planned Parenthood is also committed to increasing access to health

care and opportunity.

Many African Americans have laid the groundwork for the great strides we've made in improving health-care outcomes for our community. These leaders of the past inspire our present and make way for the future. And that's why during Black History Month, Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette is honoring leaders of the past, present and future as Dream Keepers.

We're honoring activists like #BlackLivesMatter founders Alicia Garza, Pa-

trisse Cullors and Opal Tomet, who created a hashtag that turned into a nationwide movement to embrace the resilience and importance of black lives.

We're honoring storytellers like Melissa Harris-Perry, who uses her MSNBC show to elevate stories of marginalized communities often overlooked by mainstream media. She gives a visible platform to those working for social justice.

We're honoring trailblaz-

ers like Laverne Cox, a transgender advocate and Emmy-nominated actress on the Netflix series "Orange Is the New Black." She is a leader in talking about the intersection of different identities and their importance to understanding transgender issues.

There's a saying that you can't know where you're going without understanding where you've been — and this rings true for reproductive freedom for the black community. The history of the reproductive rights movement and the black community is as complicated as the nation's, but throughout our history, we have worked together to break down barriers to healthcare access posed by poverty, racism and politics.

For nearly a century, Planned Parenthood has worked to address racial and economic bias in access to health care. We take this opportunity during Black History Month to remind ourselves that this work is only successful if we continue to develop partnerships with the communities we serve. This united work will not only improve healthcare outcomes for all, but create fair opportunities to succeed in all areas of life.

## My Head Says Hilary, My Heart Says Bernie

I am looking forward to November 8, 2016, and to voting for Hilary Rodham Clinton to lead these United States. I am so extremely excited that a woman of character, experience, and discernment can lead our nation. Even as I look forward to the November vote, I am fully enjoying the path to November. Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders has provided tone and texture to this race. He has forced Senator Clinton to hone her positions on health care, Wall Street and income inequality. He came so amazingly close to toppling her in Iowa that it gave me Post Dramatic Stress Syndrome. She didn't make my drama hers, though. She has managed, with stoic dignity, to stake her claim for this presidency.

My head is with Secretary Hilary Clinton, but my heart is with Senator Bernie Sanders. I realize that he has promised everything and hasn't shared how he might pay for much of it — free tuition, universal health care, or Wall Street reform. Still, his energetic bluster has been a galvanizing factor in a race that might otherwise have been seen as a cakewalk or a coronation. Hilary needs to be pushed as hard as Senator Sanders can push her. And even though

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MalveauxNNPA  
Columnist

Sanders says he does not care about her "damn e-mails," the e-mail conversation has to remind Senator Clinton that she has to figure out ways to restore trust among those

“Hilary needs to be pushed as hard as Senator Sanders can push her

who support her positions but look askance at the ways she has been too frequently presented.

There is an element of sexism to this.

Were she a man, would she be judged as harshly because some find her "unlikeable"? Would her every facial expression be parsed? Would opponents feel free to comment on her marital business?

I cringe whenever she says, "I am woman," or "the only woman," or some reference to her clear self-evident gender. But I also cringe when the gender-bashers seem incapable of interpreting her words

and her work fairly.

That's not why I'll vote for Hilary, though. I'll vote for her because she is a center-left moderate.

She isn't perfect and may, indeed, be fundamentally flawed (as most politicians are), but she has been a consistent advocate for the least and the left out — for children and for elders. Is she weak on Wall Street reform? Absolutely. But as Bernie Sanders pushes her, she gets stronger.

A year ago, many predicted this race as a dynastic smack down, with Jeb Bush and Hilary Clinton winning primaries toe-to-toe. Who would have thought that an unhinged demagogue, Donald Trump, would suck much of the air out of the Republican space, leaving babbling bumbler to confuse ad hominem ignorance with issues?

The collective performance of the Republican team could not equal that of either Sanders or Clinton, but those R's keep slogging on. To what end?

Do we really want a President who will trash talk Putin, Mexico and the United

Nations? Do we want sons of immigrants who so vilely disrespect their ancestors that they'd offer punitive possibilities for citizenship?

I'm not really torn between my head and my heart.

I'm simply enjoying the excitement of Bernie Sanders, and the way he has galvanized young people, especially, to become politically engaged. I am hoping that his commitment to the process is such that he will encourage his supporters to remain involved, even after Hilary wins the Democratic nomination. And I'm sad that a woman who might knock it out of the park can also be kicked to the curb if this campaign becomes corrosive.

Congressman Stephanie Tubbs Jones stuck by Hilary Clinton in 2008 even after then-Senator Barack Obama entered the Presidential race and earned the endorsement and support of many "mainstream" African Americans. Stephanie and Hilary had "heart" with each other.

As a woman, Hilary can't out shout Bernie without appearing shrill. She can't out-snide him without appearing cruel.

But she can out heart him if she channels Stephanie's energy. Stephanie Tubbs Jones was in it to win it.