

**Senator Jeanne Shaheen**  
**House Select Investigative Committee**  
**April 20, 2016**  
**Testimony**

Chairwoman Blackburn and Ranking Member Schakowsky, it is with great concern that I appear before you today.

I respect my colleague from Nebraska's deeply held personal beliefs.

But if we ever want to have a civil discussion on this issue, we should begin with the facts. Already, news articles today have called into question the validity of the exhibits that will be presented to the panel.

This panel's very existence was founded on the basis of highly deceptive, edited videos. These videos have since been proven to be misleading and false by multiple independent investigations across the country.

In January, after thorough investigations into the videos, a Texas grand jury cleared Planned Parenthood of any wrongdoing and indicted the individuals responsible for their creation. In fact, twelve other states have also cleared Planned Parenthood of any wrongdoing, and eight additional states have declined to investigate, citing a lack of evidence.

It is now time for the special investigations to end.

I'd like to make clear that fetal tissue research has long had bipartisan support. In 1993, Congress passed the National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act, which permits fetal tissue research. That bill passed with overwhelming support: 94-4 in the Senate and 290-130 in the House. And, it is important to note, that that bill was based on recommendations of a blue-ribbon panel convened under President Reagan which was tasked with studying the ethics of fetal tissue research.

Millions of people have benefitted from fetal tissue research. Vaccines for polio and rubella were developed as a result of research done on fetal tissue. And research on health issues that touch so many of us--- Parkinson's disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, eye disorders and spinal cord injury have also benefitted from the 1993 law.

If it the panel's desire to change the law, you as legislators are able to do that. But I think it would be a grave error.

Sadly, it is my belief that this panel was formed with political motivations. There is little real interest in an unbiased investigation to uncover facts related to women's health or research.

Instead, I believe that this panel serves as an opportunity for some to once again attack the health care providers whom millions of women and families depend on.

In February, I joined with colleagues in both chambers to ask House and Senate leadership to disband this panel and all other Congressional investigations that would undermine women's access to health care.

Not only do I believe that this panel is an inappropriate and wasteful misuse of federal resources, but I am gravely concerned that it also puts researchers, providers and patients across this country at risk.

Unfortunately, as a result of the political rhetoric surrounding this issue, we are seeing violent acts and threats against women's health providers and researchers across the country.

I am saddened to report that this fall – the same month that this panel was formed—a women's health clinic in Claremont, New Hampshire, was vandalized not once, but twice. The second attack caused so much damage that the clinic was forced to close for nearly six weeks. This is a disservice to the women, men and families who rely on the full range of services that the clinic provides.

And New Hampshire is not alone. After the release of the deceptive, highly-edited videos, incidents of harassment against some health centers increased nine fold in just one month.

Today's hearing is not a fact-based objective investigation, but rather a taxpayer funded political attack based on manipulated and discredited evidence. It is time to move on.