



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Indian River County Young Democrats Voice Support for Health and Education Services

Highly Successful Support Rally Confronts Hypocrisy of Protesters

Vero Beach, FL - Friday, June 15th, 2007: On Friday, June 15th, the Indian River County Young Democrats held a support rally for the local Planned Parenthood office. The support rally was held from 3 PM to 5 PM on 20th Street (State Road 60, or SR60) Street in Vero Beach, near the Indian River County Health Center of Planned Parenthood.

About 20 local Young Democrats and supporters from both Brevard and St. Lucie counties, showed publicly their support and thanks for the health and education services provided by the local Planned Parenthood office in Indian River County. Participants included members and supporters from age 16 to over 80, including registered Democrats and Republicans, throughout the rally.

Signs varied in the slogans, including “Honk for Planned Parenthood”, “Thank You Planned Parenthood”, “Planned Parenthood = Education”, and “Health Services for All”, among others. The message was clear though to passing motorists, the support of the health and education services provided by the local Planned Parenthood clinic. The Indian River County Health Center of Planned Parenthood has provided high-quality sexual and reproductive health care, including family planning, gynecological care, STI/STD testing and treatment, and pregnancy testing in Indian River County for more than a decade.

“Clarifying the support the local Planned Parenthood office has from residents of this community could not have been more clear during the support rally,” stated Amber Manera, President of the Indian River County Young Democrats. “Merely showing a presence and making our voices heard garnered considerable positive reactions from those traversing the SR60 corridor during Friday afternoon, more so than any other events that have been held in this location by other groups in the past. It was clearly a refreshing change for residents of our beautiful corner of Florida to see such a positive message being publicly voiced.”

The local Young Democrats expressed their support solely through sign waving for passing motorists to see, providing positive visibility for the vital health and education services provided by the local Planned Parenthood clinic. Through their peaceful and highly visible efforts, the local Young Democrats raised awareness to the need Indian River County residents have for such an organization and the services they provide. Sign waivers on both the westbound and eastbound portions of SR60 garnered praise from passing motorists.

Protesters Silenced by Peaceful Actions of Young Democrats

About 20 protesters of the local Planned Parenthood clinic also showed up during the beginning of the support rally. These protesters engaged in sign waving, yelling at passing motorists, demonstrating to citizens entering and leaving the clinic, and engaged in abusive language towards the Young Democrats and supporters. Often, protesters were visibly engaged in physical intimidation to the support rally participants by crowding individuals unnecessarily and voicing crude, offensive, and demeaning remarks.

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The Young Democrats and their supporters remained quiet throughout the abusive behavior, waved their signs of support and smiling to passing motorists.

A strong and visible law enforcement presence, including local City of Vero Beach police officers, Indian River County Sheriff Deputies, and Florida Highway Patrol officers helped keep the protestors from going any further in their actions.

Despite the local Young Democrats being fully permitted by the City of Vero Beach to hold the support rally, law enforcement officials provided no support to remove protesters signs that clearly obstructed the right-of-way of traffic on SR60, protesters infringing on the pedestrian travel of citizens, or even citing protesters for abusive language and threatening actions.

After the first hour of the support rally, most of the protesters had dispersed from the scene. "It was clear the protesters were in an environment that was not supportive of their message," said Steven G. Willis, State Liaison of the local Young Democrats. "There was much talk amongst the protesters as to why there was so much honking of car horns from people driving by, something which clearly was a result of our signs of support that included 'Honk for Planned Parenthood. It was a spontaneous action by the citizens that protesters had not seen before during their efforts."

By the second hour of the support rally, protester numbers had dwindled to only 2 individuals that relegated themselves more than a block away from the main body of the support rally. And, even the last 2 protesters had left with more than 30 minutes remaining in the support rally.

Honks of support from passing motorists remained consistently high throughout the 2 hour support rally. Many motorists returned to the support rally throughout the event and personally voiced their thanks to the local Young Democrats for their efforts.

About Indian River County Young Democrats

Based in Indian River County, Florida, the Indian River County Young Democrats is a fresh and exciting organization that provides an active political voice to the youth of the county. Founded in 2005, the IRC Young Democrats takes the role of providing leadership, training, and support for Democratic values and Democrat candidates running for elected office at all levels of government. The IRC Young Democrats are fully chartered under the Florida Young Democrats and have become a much needed and well received progressive voice in Indian River County.

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