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Relay for Life: to fund or not to fund?

Student Fed reps defend the decision to reject request

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If misunderstandings about Student Federation were frogs, Hillsdale would look like Egypt during the seven plagues.

What national organizations individual students support is not the business of Student Federation. But our budget is our business, which is why even though we knew our decision would not be popular, we voted with heavy hearts but near-unanimity against Relay for Life's funding request.

We are constitutionally obligated to align our budget with Hillsdale's mission statement. Not one penny of our money can go toward anything that does not fully advance the college's educational mission of "moral and social instruction."

We were elected to decide what matches the mission statement. No organization or activity, no matter how large, is entitled to funding.

Those who organize Relay for Life are caring people with a sincere desire to support cancer survivors, but the American Cancer Society (ACS) does not currently fit Hillsdale's principles.

In 2009, when ObamaCare was before Congress with a "public option" for socialized medicine and a mandate for abortion funding, ACS sent its lobbyist wing, ACS-CAN, to pressure the bill into law.

In 2007, the CATO Institute's Michael D. Tanner illuminated how ACS spends its money: "The American Cancer Society announced recently that it will spend its entire advertising budget next year not on urging Americans to stop smoking or get mammograms, but on campaigning for a government takeover of the U.S. healthcare system."

In 2006, ACS donated \$3,000 to Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood is an organization that deceives women into ending unborn life. It pays for and performs in-house abortions. Its very name references Margarete Sanger's evil ideology of Eugenics. Any organization with any monetary association with Planned Parenthood is contrary to our Mission Statement.

In a letter to students, ACS said its grant to Planned Parenthood was not for abortions, but only to educate women about the dangers of smoking while pregnant. Seriously? Saying

“educate women” and “Planned Parenthood” in the same sentence is like saying “marital fidelity” and “Bill Clinton” together.

This comes to the largest misunderstanding: Money is fungible. That means \$3,000 from ACS for “education” frees up money for Planned Parenthood to spend advancing its pro-abortion agenda.

Money from Relay for Life for “research” frees ACS to spend money promoting the politics of socialized medicine.

And money from Student Federation for “decorations” frees up more money for Relay for Life to give to ACS.

In other words, if we give an organization money, we unfortunately advance all of its goals — the good and the bad — no matter what.

We know many of those with Relay for Life have personally seen the devastating effects of cancer. We in no way diminish their passion for finding a cure. We admire each one of them for investing themselves in the heroic fight against this horrific disease.

But the bottom line is this: The American Cancer Society is not a neutral, apolitical organization. It is a well-funded top-down bureaucracy motivated by progressive political ideology. At best, it’s a controversial political organization.

Students should decide for themselves if they want to support its politics through Relay for Life this weekend. But it is the Student Federation's constitutional obligation to budget our money on behalf of the whole student body and the moral and educational ends of Hillsdale College.

Sadly, the American Cancer Society falls short of these ends.

The opinions in this article are those of the authors and are not an official statement of The Student Federation.