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National women's group targets Pence for defeat



Gov. Mike Pence

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INDIANAPOLIS | Gov. Mike Pence's "religious freedom" headache may become a migraine after a key national interest group declared Tuesday it is the top reason the organization will work to deny the Republican re-election.

EMILY's List, a political action committee that supports Democratic women candidates, is targeting Pence for

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defeat in 2016 due in part to his March enactment of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which the group claims licensed discrimination against homosexuals.

"The EMILY's List community — more than 3 million members strong — is committed to holding elected officials accountable who are more focused on driving their extreme ideological agendas than growing the economy and giving more women and families a fair shot," said Stephanie Schriock, EMILY's List president.

The organization also condemned Pence for opposing laws requiring equal pay for women and for stripping state funding from Planned Parenthood clinics in Scott County and elsewhere that provided health services other than abortion, contributing to a massive southern Indiana HIV outbreak.

"Gov. Pence has a long record of prioritizing policies that are dangerous to women and families and damaging to the Indiana economy, Schriock said.

EMILY's List, whose name stands for Early Money Is Like Yeast (because it helps raise the dough), did not indicate whether it will be financially supporting state Sen. Karen Tallian, D-Ogden Dunes, or Glenda Ritz, the state superintendent of public instruction, in the Democratic gubernatorial contest.

But the participation of national interest groups in the governor's race — 11 months before Hoosiers vote in the primary and 17 months before the next governor is elected — suggests Indiana may see one of the biggest state-level election battles in the country.

Pence, who is set to formalize his re-election bid June 18, also is likely to attract national support from the Republican Governors Association and similar conservative groups.

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