

Congressional Democrats Want to Interrogate the Man Behind Planned Parenthood Videos

Congressional Democrats on Monday called for the chief of the U.S. anti-abortion group responsible for undercover videos slamming Planned Parenthood to testify alongside officials from the women's healthcare organization in a hearing next week.

The hearing, set for Sept. 29 in the House of Representatives, is expected to draw a lot of attention because it will happen a day before the end of the federal fiscal year, when the U.S. government may run out of money.

Conservative Republicans are threatening to shut down the government if Planned Parenthood's federal funding is not cut off, a demand they base on what they say are revelations from the videos made and released by the Center for Medical Progress.

David Daleiden, a 26-year-old anti-abortion activist who founded the center and produced the videos, should appear at the hearing, 18 Democratic representatives said in a letter to Republican House Oversight Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz.

If Republicans do not add Daleiden to the hearing testimony list, Democrats said in the letter that they will invite Daleiden to appear at a separate Democratic hearing on the same day.

"It is fundamentally unfair to hold a public hearing to essentially indict Planned Parenthood in the court of public opinion without hearing directly from their accuser, David Daleiden," the Democrats wrote in the letter.

They said Daleiden had “deceptively edited secretly recorded videos in an ultimately unsuccessful three-year crusade to entrap Planned Parenthood.”

A representative for the chairman’s office declined to comment on the letter. The Center for Medical Progress did not respond to phone calls requesting comment.

Planned Parenthood has come under fire since the release of the secretly recorded videos that critics say show officials for the women’s healthcare organization discussing the illegal sale of tissue from aborted fetuses. The issue has become a focus for both Republican and Democratic presidential candidates.

Planned Parenthood has said it has done nothing wrong. It has fought back by suing in several states to oppose funding cuts and commissioning an analysis that it says showed the videos were deceptively edited.

In the letter, Democrats said Planned Parenthood has tried to comply with the demands of the committee, which has been investigating the organization since August. Planned Parenthood has supplied more than 20,000 pages of documents on its funding, federal tax status and highest-paid employees, according to the letter.

Democrats requested a response to their letter by Wednesday.

(Editing by Kevin Drawbaugh; Editing by Jonathan Oatis)

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