

House Select Panel Recommends Criminal Charges Against Major University

The House Select Panel on Infant Lives has uncovered evidence that suggests the University of New Mexico (UNM) and the late-term abortion clinic Southwestern Women's Options (SWWO) have engaged in prolonged and repeated criminal activity.

In a 291-page letter to New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas Jr., U.S. Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), who chairs the panel, has referred both UNM and SWWO for criminal charges and further investigation. The letter includes documents that demonstrate "systematic violations of the law" related to the "transfers of value" of fetal remains for "research purposes." "Through its investigation, the panel has discovered that personnel within UNM's hospital and medical school have aggressively engaged in expanding abortion in New Mexico through the offices, personnel, and resources of UNM," the letter states.

"In particular, leadership personnel at UNM: expanded UNM's role in training new abortion doctors; expanded UNM's referral for abortion services to outside clinics, including [SWWO]; initiated the practice of sending UNM faculty and residents to an abortion clinic during its transition from one owner to another; expanded the faculty of UNM by providing 'volunteer faculty' status to two local abortionists; supplied residents and fellows to perform abortions for SWWO during the period that UNM was obtaining fetal tissue from that clinic; and leveraged their status to organize UNM employees and students for partisan political activities.

"UNM has stated that the fetal tissue transferred from SWWO is of great value to its research department."

Blackburn indicated that the Select Panel uncovered violations of New Mexico's *Jonathan Spradling Revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act*, which specifically prohibits fetal remains from being donated for research or other uses. UNM officials have, for years, insisted the law allows for the donation of aborted baby remains; the panel's attorneys say otherwise.

Operation Rescue responded to the news by calling for the immediate closure of SWWO's clinic in Albuquerque, N.M. The pro-life organization has worked extensively in New Mexico with activists Bud and Tara Shaver of ProtestABQ to expose and oppose SWWO, which is the largest late-term abortion facility in the U.S.

"This recommendation of criminal charges against UNM and Southwestern Women's Options is the fruit of years of research and hard work done by a tenacious community of pro-life activists," said Troy Newman, President of Operation Rescue. "Seeing the fruit of that labor makes this a great day for us. All that's left now is for law enforcement to read them their rights and take them away!"

Tara Shaver first uncovered SWWO's participation in supplying aborted baby tissue after she obtained an abortion consent form that buried brief tissue consent language near the bottom of a wordy form that required a patient signature before abortions could be performed. This raised questions about whether women actually understood that their aborted baby's remains would be used for "research."

Shaver filed a formal complaint with the Attorney General's office seeking a criminal investigation into violations of the Spradling Act and other crimes. Balderas' office has not yet responded to that complaint.

"We hope that this very heavily documented recommendation from the House Select Panel will persuade Attorney General Banderas to act to enforce New Mexico laws and stop the illegal

exploitation of aborted babies for 'valuable consideration,'" Newman added. "We also hope that he will put an end to UNM's practice of using taxpayer funds as well as UNM students to push their political agenda of abortion expansion upon an unwilling community." {eoa}