

How the 3 Congressional Investigations of Planned Parenthood Will Work

A Planned Parenthood-commissioned report on the string of undercover Planned Parenthood videos does not appear to have any impact on Congress's ongoing investigations into the group's alleged wrongdoings, *The Daily Signal* has learned.

Congressional aides from all three committees investigating Planned Parenthood's abortion and tissue donation practices confirmed that while they are aware of the report, their investigations are moving forward.

"The manipulation of the videos does mean they have no evidentiary value in a legal context and cannot be relied upon for any official inquiries unless supplemented by [Center for Medical Progress's] original material and forensic authentication that this material is supplied in unaltered form," stated the report, which was written by Fusion GPS, an intelligence company with ties to the Democratic Party.

The Fusion GPS report also noted that their "analysis did not reveal widespread evidence of substantive video manipulation." The Center for Medical Progress dismissed the report: "Planned Parenthood's desperate, 11th-hour attempt to pay their hand-picked 'experts' to distract from the crimes documented on video is a complete failure," said the Center's David Daleiden.

A GOP aide for the Energy and Commerce Committee said while they welcome Planned Parenthood's input, the organization's own internal investigation into the videos does not supplement their own.

Planned Parenthood came under fire this summer after a string

of undercover videos, produced by the Center for Medical Progress, showed top officials discussing the alleged sale of organs from aborted babies and the alteration of abortion procedures.

Both practices are illegal under federal provisions, and Planned Parenthood has denied doing anything illegal.

Congressional investigators say the report has little impact because the committees are not looking into the videos themselves, but rather investigating questions that arose as a result of the videos.

To better understand the different investigations and the questions they're asking, The Daily Signal spoke with aides on each committee and gathered their reactions to Planned Parenthood's most recent report.

House Energy and Commerce Committee

Overview:

The House Energy and Commerce Committee began its investigations to probe Planned Parenthood and its 58 affiliates' practices surrounding abortion and the harvesting of tissue from aborted babies.

In August, the committee expanded its investigation to include different organ brokers, such as StemExpress, to investigate how these companies go about collecting tissue.

Key Questions:

- Are abortion providers profiting from the sale of fetal tissue?
- Are abortion providers changing procedures in order to maximize the harvesting of fetal tissue?
- Are patients giving sufficient informed consent when fetal tissue is donated?
- What procedures are companies such as StemExpress

following to assure that the collection, sale, and/or donation of fetal tissue is in compliance with legal requirements and ethical guidelines?

- What prices or fees do companies such as StemExpress set for each type of tissue provided to researchers?

Reaction to Fusion GPS report: A GOP aide for the committee told The Daily Signal that while their investigation launched as a result of questions raised by the undercover videos, their investigation has never been about the videos themselves. Therefore, the Fusion GPS report has no substantial impact on the committee's investigation.

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee

Overview:

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee is investigating how Planned Parenthood is using federal dollars and whether any of that money has been used for illegal purposes. The committee sent letters to Planned Parenthood CEO Cecile Richards and Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell demanding a breakdown of the group's funding.

Key Questions:

- Did Planned Parenthood use federal funding in any exchange of fetal tissue?
- In 2014, \$528.4 million of Planned Parenthood's approximate \$1.3 billion in total revenue is attributed to "government health services grants and reimbursements." What activities were financed using these federal funds?
- How much funding does Planned Parenthood receive from Medicaid state programs?
- Who are the 50 highest-paid Planned Parenthood employees, and what are their annual salaries, including bonuses?

Reaction to Fusion GPS report: A GOP committee spokesperson told The Daily Signal the report has no impact on their investigation.

House Judiciary Committee

Overview:

The House Judiciary Committee is looking into how the Justice Department has investigated similar issues in the past, and how the agency is handling the recent allegations that Planned Parenthood and its affiliates broke as many as three federal laws.

The Judiciary Committee hopes to hold the Justice Department accountable for enforcing the laws related to these issues on the books.

Key Questions:

- Is Planned Parenthood violating the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban, altering the abortion procedure solely for the purposes of obtaining tissue, or violating any laws affecting interstate commerce?
- In what capacity has the Justice Department investigated issues of abortion and/or tissue collection from aborted babies in the past, and what transpired from those investigations?
- How is the Justice Department is handling investigations into whether Planned Parenthood has broken any federal laws?

Reaction to Fusion GPS report: A House Judiciary Committee aide told The Daily Signal they had received a copy of the report Planned Parenthood commissioned and respect their views, but the committee intends to move forward with its investigations as long as they're getting answers.

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