

Grand Jury Indicts Pro-Lifers Who Exposed Planned Parenthood's Wicked Moves to Sell Fetal Tissue

Two anti-abortion activists behind the filming of videos on fetal tissue procurement by Planned Parenthood were indicted by a Texas grand jury on Monday, while clearing the women's health group of any wrong-doing.

The videos released last summer led Texas and other Republican-controlled states to try to halt funding for local Planned Parenthood operations, with Republicans in the U.S. Congress also pushing for a funding cut.

The grand jury reviewed the case for more than two months and its decision was a result of a probe launched last year under Texas Governor Greg Abbott, a Republican, who accused Planned Parenthood of the "gruesome harvesting of baby body parts."

"After a lengthy and thorough investigation by the Harris County District Attorney's Office, the Texas Rangers, and the Houston Police Department, a Harris County grand jury took no action Monday against Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast," the Harris County District Attorney's office said in a statement.

Planned Parenthood has denied the accusation and called the probe politically motivated.

David Daleiden and Sandra Merritt were indicted by the grand jury for tampering with a governmental record, said prosecutors for the county in which Houston is located. The felony charge is punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

The two were involved in covert videos last year in which a

Planned Parenthood official discussed the procurement of fetal tissue.

Daleiden, leader of the Center for Medical Progress that released the videos, was also charged with violating a prohibition on the purchase and sale of human organs, a misdemeanor, the Harris County District Attorney said.

There were no details released on the allegations against them.

"I respect their decision on this difficult case," Harris County District Attorney Devon Anderson said of the grand jury.

The videos purported to show Planned Parenthood officials trying to negotiate prices for aborted fetal tissue. Under federal law, donated human fetal tissue may be used for research, but profiting from its sale is prohibited.

"These people broke the law to spread malicious lies about Planned Parenthood in order to advance their extreme anti-abortion political agenda," said Eric Ferrero, vice president of Communications for Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

It is unclear what triggered the surprise indictments during the grand jury's closed-door proceedings, said David Sklansky, faculty co-director of the Stanford Criminal Justice Center and a professor at Stanford Law School.

"It would be quite unusual for the grand jury to change direction without the cooperation and approval of the prosecutor," Sklansky said. "But pretty much everything associated with this case seems unusual."

Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee weighed in, saying in a statement: "It's a sick day in America when our government punishes those who expose evil with a smartphone –

while accommodating those who perform it with a scalpel.”

Texas leaders said they would not back down on their probe.

Arkansas and Louisiana, two neighboring states that have launched similar moves to cut state Medicaid funding after the videos, have been on the losing end of federal lawsuits, with judges blocking their attempts to halt funds. {eo}

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