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AMERICA

Undercover Video Targets Planned Parenthood

JULY 15, 2015 · 1:45 PM ET



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Updated at 9:03 p.m. ET

An undercover video shot by an activist group that was released Tuesday apparently shows a Planned Parenthood official discussing how her group provides researchers with parts from aborted fetuses.

The activist group says the video is evidence that Planned Parenthood is selling fetal tissue, which is illegal.



YouTube

The video was made a year ago by the activist group Center for Medical Progress and released in coordination with several anti-abortion groups that called for a congressional investigation. It's not clear whether the nearly three-hour-long video has been edited.

The video shows Dr. Deborah Nucatola, Planned Parenthood's senior director of medical services, eating lunch at a California restaurant as she talks with two unnamed activists posing as potential buyers for a human biologics company. Between sips of wine, she discusses the various body parts that are in demand, and ways to remove them during an abortion without damaging them. "I'd say a lot of people want liver," she says. "And for that reason most providers will do this case under ultrasound guidance so they'll know where they're putting their forceps."

Nucatola says Planned Parenthood is sometimes compensated for the cost of making the donations — when asked how much, she estimates \$30 to \$100 per specimen — but insists that the organization does not profit from the practice. "This is not something with any revenue stream that affiliates are looking at. This is a way to offer patients the services they want and do good for the medical community."

Sponsor Message

The Center for Medical Progress, which describes itself on its website as "a group of citizen journalists dedicated to monitoring and reporting on medical ethics and

advances," accuses Planned Parenthood of using "partial-birth abortions to supply intact body parts."

But Planned Parenthood spokesman Eric Ferrero says in a statement that tissue is donated for medical research:

"At several of our health centers, we help patients who want to donate tissue for scientific research, and we do this just like every other high-quality health care provider does — with full, appropriate consent from patients and under the highest ethical and legal standards. There is no financial benefit for tissue donation for either the patient or for Planned Parenthood. In some instances, actual costs, such as the cost to transport tissue to leading research centers, are reimbursed, which is standard across the medical field."

Planned Parenthood accuses the activists of deceptive editing. It points out that David Daleiden, who founded the Center for Medical Research, used to be with Live Action, a group that has produced a string of sting videos at Planned Parenthood clinics, a number of which have been found to have used misleading editing.

Federal law bans the commercial sale of human fetal tissue, but donation is allowed if the woman undergoing the abortion consents.

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The video released Tuesday has been widely shared online and provoked outrage and disgust. It appears to be part of a broader strategy among opponents of abortion to highlight gruesome details of the procedure, especially those performed later in a pregnancy. Opponents have been pushing for a federal ban on abortion after 20 weeks of gestation. The Center for Medical Progress alleges that the process described in the video amounts to "partial-birth abortion," which was banned in 2003.

Accusations that Planned Parenthood has illegally sold fetal parts are not new. Another undercover operation by an anti-abortion group made big news in 2000, and there was political debate over the practice a decade before that.

A number of Republican presidential candidates have expressed outrage over the video.

Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal says he has ordered the state's health department to investigate "this alleged evil and illegal activity." On Twitter, Jeb Bush called the video "a shocking and horrific reminder that we must do so much more to foster a culture of life in America." And former Texas Gov. Rick Perry called it "a disturbing reminder of the organization's penchant for profiting off the tragedy of a destroyed human life."

The House Energy and Commerce Committee and the House and Senate Judiciary Committees say they plan to investigate Planned Parenthood's practices.

abortion planned parenthood



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