



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 4, 2017

L.A. Times Criticizes California AG for Charging Pro-life Activist With Felonies

In a stand that surprised many observers, the *Los Angeles Times* editorial board, which has a history of supporting abortion on demand, published an editorial on March 31 criticizing California Attorney General Xavier Becerra's (shown) decision to file 15 felony charges against pro-life activist David Daleiden for filming undercover videos of Planned Parenthood and other "reproductive health" employees.



The *Times* first acknowledged that Daleiden had "surreptitiously recorded healthcare and biomedical services employees across the state of California with the intent of discrediting the healthcare provider, Planned Parenthood." However, it was wrong in continuing that observation with a false conclusion: "... something his heavily edited videos failed to do." (More about that later.)

Much of the remainder of the editorial made more sense. It continued:

But that doesn't mean that California Atty. Gen. Xavier Becerra should have charged Daleiden and his co-conspirator, Susan Merritt, with 15 felony counts — one for each of the 14 people recorded, and a 15th for conspiracy. It's disturbingly aggressive for Becerra to apply this criminal statute to people who were trying to influence a contested issue of public policy, regardless of how sound or popular that policy may be. Planned Parenthood and biomedical company StemExpress, which was also featured in the videos, have another remedy for the harm that was done to them: They can sue Daleiden and Merritt for damages. The state doesn't need to threaten the pair with prison time.

The only questionable part of that statement, as this writer sees it, is that the public policy that Daleiden and his associate were trying to influence was "sound or popular." Though there have been countless polls taken on the subject, a Marist Poll sponsored by the Knights of Columbus taken in January found that significant majorities of Americans oppose the use of tax dollars to fund abortions and want the Supreme Court to rule in favor of abortion restrictions. That poll asked several questions, but among the responses was that nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of Americans want abortion restricted to, at most, the first trimester. Among those who want restrictions, 74 percent want the U.S. Supreme Court to rule in favor of those restrictions. This equates to about 55 percent of Americans who support such action by the Court.

"There is a consensus in America in favor of significant abortion restrictions, and this common ground exists across party lines, and even among significant numbers of those who are pro-choice," said Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. "This poll shows that large percentages of Americans, on both sides of the aisle, are united in their opposition to the status quo as it relates to abortion on demand."

While the *Times* editorial perpetuates many falsehoods (e.g., "We don't believe the videos revealed any wrongdoing on the part of Planned Parenthood. Nothing in the activists' recordings proved that anyone was trafficking in fetal tissue. Nor is there any public policy that needs to be changed. A woman's right



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to an abortion is well established, even if some like Daleiden continue to wish it away.”), the fact that such an influential, generally pro-abortion newspaper has come out against Becerra’s excessive executive overreach is significant.

A report published by LifeNews on March 29 revealed a major conflict of interest on Becerra’s part, since he received thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from Planned Parenthood. Life News cited as its source data from the Center for Responsive Politics (CRP), a non-profit, nonpartisan research group based in Washington, D.C., that maintains a public online database of its information. CRP’s website, [OpenSecrets.org](#), allows users to track campaign contributions and lobbying by lobbying firms and individual lobbyists.

The charts produced by CRP (click on links to read) indicate that Planned Parenthood abortion gave Becerra [\\$1,000 in 2014](#), [\\$2,000 in 2012](#), [\\$500 in 2004](#), [\\$1,000 in 2002](#), and [\\$1,035 in 1998](#).

Life News also quoted the statement made by Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, about Becerra’s appointment as attorney general:

Planned Parenthood Federation of America applauds Gov. Brown’s appointment of Rep. Xavier Becerra as California’s Attorney General. Rep. Becerra is a long-time champion for women’s reproductive rights and health. As a former California Deputy Attorney General, he understands the importance of a woman’s right to access the full range of health care, including safe, legal abortion. At a time when reproductive health is gravely under attack in states across the country, we need leaders like Rep. Becerra to be responsible stewards of the law and protect the rights of millions of Americans, including the 850,000 California women, men and families that Planned Parenthood serves every year.

That statement of approval from the president of the nation’s largest abortion provider stating that Becerra understands a woman’s “right” to abortion — combined with the track record indicating that Planned Parenthood contributed thousands of campaign dollars to Becerra over a period of years — is clear evidence that the man who heads California’s Justice Department is incapable of making an impartial legal decision on any case involving Planned Parenthood. His connection to the abortion provider should immediately disqualify him and cause him to recuse himself from any such decisions.

In our [March 29 article](#) about Becerra’s filing of felony charges against Center for Medical Progress (CMP) founder David Daleiden and his associate Sandra Merritt, we noted that Becerra alleged that Daleiden and Merritt had invaded the privacy of staff personnel at Planned Parenthood by filming undercover videos of themselves trying to buy fetal tissue from the abortion provider.

We reported that of the 15 charges brought against Daleiden and Merritt, 14 involved eavesdropping and recording “confidential communication between themselves and” various unnamed “Does” by means of “an electronic amplifying and recording device.”

The 15th charge alleged that Daleiden and Merritt, under the business name of Biomax Procurement Services, signed an exhibitor agreement and paid a \$3,225 registration fee to apply for exhibit space at the San Francisco NAF (National Abortion Federation) conference.

Apparently, Daleiden and Merritt committed an unspeakable “crime” and “secretly recorded conference speakers, vendors, and attendees” at an event where many people moved about and exchanged information freely. This was not a top-secret closed-doors meeting. Nor was it a venue where government agencies exchanged top-secret information that would threaten national security if disseminated.



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We observed in our article:

If the matters at hand were so secret that the act of exposing them justified criminal charges being brought, maybe the explanation is that the people participating in the conference were simply up to no good. Otherwise, why all the secrecy? If someone had secretly videotaped a conference of people whose hobby was growing African violets, would anyone have bothered bringing charges against them? Who would care?

This is not the first time that charges have been brought against Daleiden and Merritt. As [we reported in an article last June 15](#), a Harris County, Texas, grand jury, which was called to evaluate charges against Planned Parenthood, inexplicably turned on Daleiden and Merritt and indicted them, instead.

However, on June 13, a Houston judge dismissed a misdemeanor charge of attempting to buy human organs against Daleiden, who had secretly videotaped Planned Parenthood officials in Houston.

Note that the charges brought against Daleiden in Houston — and which were eventually dismissed — were misdemeanors.

Things in California have become very bad, indeed, when the state's attorney general thinks that similar actions performed there merit felony charges. Apparently, even the liberal, pro-abortion *Los Angeles Times* agrees.

Photo: AP Images

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