



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 23, 2013

## Lawsuit: Colo. Agency Illegally Funneled \$14M to Abortion Provider

A conservative legal advocacy group has filed a lawsuit against the state of Colorado, contending that state officials illegally funneled millions in tax dollars to a Planned Parenthood abortion provider. According to [Alliance Defending Freedom](#) (ADF), which filed the suit on behalf of Jane Norton, the former head of Colorado's Department for Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE), officials with the CDPHE authorized the payment of some \$14 million to Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood and its affiliate, Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains Services Corporation, in violation of a 1984 voter-approved constitutional amendment which banned funds from going to abortion providers.



The ADF noted that in 1986 pro-abortion forces introduced an initiative to overturn the Abortion Funding Prohibition Amendment, but voters rejected the effort, demonstrating a solid backing for pro-life ideals among Colorado voters. As head of CDPHE, Norton called for an audit of Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood in 2001 and cut off funding to the organization after an investigation determined that state funds were indirectly being used to subsidize Planned Parenthood's abortion business. "State officials later ignored that determination and resumed funding, claiming that the funds only consisted of federal taxpayer dollars," reported the ADF.

The lawsuit, filed with the state district court in Denver, says that public records and other research conclusively prove that officials have used state tax dollars to help prop up Planned Parenthood's abortion business in the state. Additionally, the suit contends that even federal tax dollars the state administers are off limits to the abortion provider.

According to the lawsuit, "since about January 15, 2009 to the present date, the Colorado Government Defendants and other Colorado government agencies have provided approximately \$14 million in public funds to Defendant Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood and thereby have, in violation of Colorado's Abortion Funding Prohibition Amendment, directly or indirectly subsidized Planned Parenthood Services' abortion operations."

[LifeSiteNews.com](#) reported that Norton, who was appointed executive director of the CDPHE in 2001, called for the independent audit to determine if her department's ongoing payments to the state Planned Parenthood affiliate violated the 1984 funding ban. "In order to be eligible for government funding in Colorado, Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood could not be financially connected with Planned Parenthood Services, the official abortion-providing side of the business in the state," explained LifeSite. "Although Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood claims the two groups are totally separate, they both share office space, doctors, staff, and office and medical supplies."



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A subsequent investigation by an outside accounting firm discovered that Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood was subsidizing Planned Parenthood Services' abortion business with below-market rental rates for its office space. LifeSite recalled that "Norton confronted Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood with the accountants' findings and offered them a choice: Raise the abortionists' rent to market rate or lose their state funding. The group refused to raise the abortionists' rent. As a result, Norton ended the state's 24-year contract with Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood, cutting off nearly \$400,000 in planned funding for that year."

Norton left the CDPHE in 2003 to become Colorado's Republican lieutenant governor, with the Planned Parenthood funding ban intact. But by 2009, with a Democratic governor in office, a new CDPHE director quietly reinstated funding to Planned Parenthood with no clear evidence that it had ever cut its financial ties to the abortion side of the business.

According to public records that Norton and the ADF have presented as evidence in the case, in the past four years the state of Colorado has paid Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood roughly \$14 million in what Norton contends are unconstitutional subsidies. Additionally, noted LifeSite, "the amount per year that Planned Parenthood receives from the state has been increasing too, from a low of \$1.9 million in 2009 to a high of \$3.5 million in 2013."

ADF Senior Counsel Michael Norton, who is married to Jane Norton, said that records "clearly show state officials have provided both federal and state taxpayer funds to Planned Parenthood in clear violation of the state constitution."

He added, "Public officials should respect the law and the democratic process rather than ignore both to fill Planned Parenthood's bank account. Colorado voters already decided the issue when they amended the state constitution to prohibit tax-dollar subsidies to abortionists."



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