



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on February 8, 2012

Komen V.P. Resigns Over Planned Parenthood Coercion

A pro-life official with Susan G. Komen for the Cure has resigned her position after the cancer charity was pressured into rescinding its decision to stop funding the abortion giant Planned Parenthood.

In her [resignation letter](#), Komen vice president [Karen Handel](#) (left), whom [pro-abortion activists charge was behind the initial decision](#) by the charity to defund Planned Parenthood, said that she was “deeply disappointed by the gross mischaracterizations of the strategy, its rationale, and my involvement in it. I openly acknowledge my role in the matter and continue to believe our decision was the best one for Komen’s future and the women we serve.”



Handel noted that “the controversy related to Planned Parenthood has long been a concern to the organization. Neither the decision nor the changes themselves were based on anyone’s political beliefs or ideology. Rather, both were based on Komen’s mission and how to better serve women, as well as a realization of the need to distance Komen from controversy.”

She said that “Komen, like any other nonprofit organization, has the right and the responsibility to set criteria and the highest standards for how and to whom it grants.... What was a thoughtful and thoroughly reviewed decision — one that would have indeed enabled Komen to deliver even greater community impact — has unfortunately been turned into something about politics.... This development should sadden us all greatly.”

In a follow-up interview with [Fox News](#), Handel blasted Planned Parenthood for politicizing Komen’s decision to cut the funding. “What was unleashed over this past week was a vicious attack against a great organization,” Handel said. “I would think all of us should be saddened that an outside organization should put this kind of pressure on another organization.”

Handel told Fox that “private non-profit organizations have a right and a responsibility to be able to set the highest standards and criteria on their own without interference, let alone the level of vicious attacks and coercion that has occurred by Planned Parenthood. It’s simply outrageous.”

She insisted that politics had nothing to do with Komen’s decision to drop Planned Parenthood. “For Komen, for myself, the mission was always foremost on our mind,” she said, adding that the “only group here that has made this issue political has been Planned Parenthood. I clearly acknowledge that I was involved in the process, but to say I had the sole authority is simply absurd.”

Handel confirmed that Komen’s initial decision to cut funding to Planned Parenthood was based in part on the congressional investigation launched by Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.) into evidence of fraud and misuse of federal funding on the part of the abortion provider. But she added that Komen had also made



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a policy decision that it wanted to target funding to groups that, unlike Planned Parenthood, actually offer life-saving mammograms to women.

"I think the congressional investigation, along with the various state investigations, were a factor in the decision," Handel told Fox. "But make no mistake about it — it was a bigger picture than that. There was the granting criteria, as well as the controversies that were surrounding Planned Parenthood."

She explained that the allegations she was behind the defunding decision led to her resignation. "I was too much of a focal point," she said. "I really felt I had a responsibility to just step aside so they could refocus on their mission. I wanted to do the right thing on my own terms, and that's what I tried to do."

In the days following Komen's announcement that it would continue funding her organizations, Planned Parenthood head [Cecile Richards continued working the political angle](#), telling a pro-abortion audience in Charlotte, North Carolina that "Americans are just tired of people playing politics with women's health care.... By reversing this decision, I think [Komen] has gone a long way to reassuring folks that they don't want to get between women and their health care."

Steven Aden, senior counsel at the pro-family Alliance Defense Fund, expressed his disappointment with Handel's departure from Komen, noting that she had become "another victim of Planned Parenthood's mafia-style shakedown of the Susan G. Komen organization."

In accepting Handel's resignation, Komen CEO Susan Brinker admitted that officials of the charity had made mistakes "in how we have handled recent decisions and take full accountability for what has resulted." She added, however, that "we cannot take our eye off the ball when it comes to our mission. To do this effectively, we must learn from what we've done right, what we've done wrong and achieve our goal for the millions of women who rely on us."

Meanwhile there is some speculation that Komen's policy on the grants it issues may still ultimately disqualify Planned Parenthood. In reversing itself, Komen had said that it would "continue to fund existing grants, including those of Planned Parenthood, and preserve their eligibility to apply for future grants."

But Komen board member John Raffaelli said the charity still plans to base its funding decisions on an organization's ability to provide mammograms. "It would be highly unfair to ask us to commit to any organization that doesn't go through a grant process that shows that the money we raise is used to carry out our mission," Raffaelli told [Washington Post](#) columnist Greg Sargent. "We're a humanitarian organization. We have a mission. Tell me you can help carry out our mission and we will sit down at the table."

The [Christian Post](#) noted that pro-life activist [Jill Stanek](#) "acknowledged the statement may in fact give Susan G. Komen leeway to reject Planned Parenthood's future grant proposals. Yet only the future will tell whether the cancer foundation will choose to exercise that power, she wrote on her pro-life blog. 'It may be a year before we find out,' she speculated."



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