



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 27, 2010

Planned Parenthood v. Linda McMahon

Planned Parenthood has entered into the campaign arena against Republican Senate candidate Linda McMahon, a former professional wrestling executive, by contacting 10,000 female Connecticut Independents via mail. The mailers assert, "Linda McMahon is an out-of-touch millionaire who made her fortune from sex, violence, and exploitation of women."



CQ Politics reports that the mailers also describe scenes from WWE events that the Democrats have long wanted to use against the Republican candidate.

One mailer, which depicts an empty wrestling ring, reads:

A woman stands before thousands of cheering men while her employer commands her to get down on her hands and knees and bark like a dog, before she is forced to remove her clothing. Another woman is seemingly knocked unconscious by a muscular man, and as he stands over her, he forces a kiss upon her lifeless face as a ring announcer claims that the woman "liked it."

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The mailer adds, "And Linda McMahon says the WWE: 'Is all about entertainment.' "

An email from a Blumenthal campaign staffer surfaced revealing the intent to find "misogynistic photos of women and WWE" so that Planned Parenthood may "hit LM hard on it," by aligning Linda McMahon to the victimization of women.

The *New Haven Register* writes, "Staff members for Attorney General Richard Blumenthal's U.S. Senate campaign assisted Planned Parenthood when the agency asked for photos of women wrestlers in order to launch an attack on Linda McMahon." According to the *New Haven Register*, the email appeared "Under the subject, 'Worst of WWE + women photos.' "

McMahon's spokesman Ed Patru responded to the mailer:

Planned Parenthood isn't a women's advocacy organization, it's a Democrat Party advocacy operation that, as we found out this week, illegally coordinates its activities with Democrat campaigns. They are engaged in an illegal and reprehensible coordination scheme with Dick Blumenthal to dig up dirt on women associated with WWE. And clearly there is coordination, because there's no other explanation for the fact that Blumenthal's campaign knew Planned Parenthood is looking for dirt on women associated with WWE.

If Linda were a Democrat, Planned Parenthood would absolutely be endorsing her, they'd be thanking her for the hundreds of wishes WWE has granted to little girls through Make-A-Wish, they'd be showering praise on WWE for its all-PG programming that portrays women as strong and independent, and for being a company in which women hold many of the top executive positions. If it wants to be intellectually honest, Planned Parenthood ought to demand that its Democrat Party



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allies return the more than \$50 million in campaign contributions it took from movie, television and music executives over the past two cycles — unless of course they don't find anything objectionable in those industries. It's also worth remembering that Planned Parenthood didn't have a single criticism for Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton when they partnered with WWE to promote their candidacies in the weeks leading up to the 2008 elections.

Patru contends that Blumenthal's campaign is "degenerating further and further into the gutter," and is simply trying to "distract voters."

According to *CQ Politics*, "McMahon, meanwhile said the mailers smack of coordination and accused Planned Parenthood of being a Democratic front group. A McMahon spokesman said if his boss were a Democrat, Planned Parenthood would "be thanking her" for all WWE did for young girls. Instead, the McMahon campaign thinks the group is working with her rival, state Attorney General Richard Blumenthal (D)."

McMahon's campaign staff is now claiming that there is an illegal coordination between the Democratic campaign office and an outside group, while Planned Parenthood and Blumenthal's office assert that they are within legal parameters. The Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* states that while nonprofit and for-profit groups are permitted to spend money on campaigns, they are not allowed to coordinate efforts on paid political advertisements.

Just last week, the Democratic Party filed a complaint with the SEC alleging that Linda McMahon was being assisted by World Wrestling Entertainment, a claim that McMahon's campaign has called "frivolous."

Tait Sycamore of Planned Parenthood denied allegations of illegal operations, however, when she responded, "The Planned Parenthood Action Fund followed all the laws. We are targeting independent voters — in these close races, they're the key, or at least one of the big swing groups. We are a trusted messenger with them."

Marc Elias, an elections lawyer working for the Blumenthal campaign, asserts that the coordination between Planned Parenthood and Blumenthal's campaign is legal because it is only intended for the Internet, and the FEC "essentially exempted the Internet from what we think of as the coordination rules."

CQ Politics reports, "The Planned Parenthood Action Fund is one of just three outside groups to make independent expenditures on the Democratic side so far. But having spent \$18,000 to date, their investment is dwarfed by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee's \$1.6 million." Another outside group is the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

Fortunately, McMahon's overwhelming wealth has permitted the National Republican Senatorial Committee to spend money on other campaigns, as McMahon has already contributed \$40 million to her own campaign. Other contributors include the National Rifle Association and Freedomworks.

A Quinnipiac Poll released on Tuesday shows McMahon trailing Blumenthal by 12 points. Most notably, the poll reveals that the majority of Connecticut women support Blumenthal, 61 to 35 percent, while men are split nearly evenly between the two candidates, indicating that perhaps the mailers have made an impact on McMahon's poll numbers.

While Planned Parenthood claims to be a non-partisan organization, their 2010 endorsements have all been of Democrats, including Phil Hare of Illinois, Glenn Nye of Virginia, and Ron Kind of Wisconsin. In



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fact, the Planned Parenthood Action Center's [website](#) features a page celebrating the Democratic candidates endorsed by the organization this year.

Photo: Republican candidate for U.S. Senate Linda McMahon, center, marches in the Spirit of Waterbury parade in Waterbury, Conn., Oct. 23, 2010.: AP Images



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