

## California Catholic Daily

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### "We apologize"

*Planned Parenthood issues mea culpa, but attacks students whose undercover sting revealed willingness to accept racist's donation*

[[PPstory.jpg]]Planned Parenthood of Idaho officials have apologized after one of their fund-raisers was caught on tape agreeing with an actor posing as a racist donor who wanted his money to go toward reducing the number of black people.

However, the organization also criticized the journalists whose investigation sparked the story, accusing them of using "racist" tactics.

Last summer, writers with *The Advocate*, a student magazine at UCLA, contacted several Planned Parenthood fund-raising centers across the country by telephone to discover how they would respond to donors with expressly racist motives. In February, the student journalists released recordings and transcripts of some of the calls.

In a phone conversation with an Idaho Planned Parenthood office, the caller stated, "the less black kids out there, the better." Autumn Kersey, the office's Director of Development, laughed nervously and said, "Understandable, understandable... Excuse my hesitation, this is the first time I've had a donor call and make this kind of request, so I'm excited and want to make sure I don't leave anything out."

On Feb. 27, Planned Parenthood of Idaho released a statement apologizing for the employee's actions, the *Idaho Statesman* newspaper reported. "A fundraising employee violated the organization's principles and practices when she appeared to be willing to accept a racially motivated donation," said Rebecca Poedy, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Idaho, in a written statement. "We apologize for the manner in which this offensive call was handled. We take full responsibility for the actions of the fundraising staff member who created the impression that racism of any form would be tolerated at Planned Parenthood. We took swift action to ensure that each of our employees understands their responsibility to communicate clearly with donors about the fact that we believe in helping all individuals, regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation, make informed decisions about their reproductive health care."

But then Poedy went on to attack the student journalists responsible for the story. "While the actions of our staff member were unacceptable, it's also unacceptable for opponents of abortion to use racist, deceptive tactics to smear Planned Parenthood," Poedy said. "The race-baiting tactics on display in this case are not news 'exposes,' but rather the product of the most cynical form of politicking."

Lila Rose, a UCLA student and editor-in-chief of *The Advocate* who led the investigation, responded to Planned Parenthood's apology: "They do not change their ways. They attack the whistleblower."

Meanwhile, *The Advocate* is calling for UCLA to cut its ties to Planned Parenthood. The magazine is waiting for responses from Ohio before releasing additional recordings from Planned Parenthood offices in other states. In Ohio, a Planned Parenthood representative seemed to have no problem with the caller's overt racism, according to a transcript published by *The Advocate*:

*Ohio donor: There's definitely way too many Black people in Ohio, so I am just trying to do my part.*

*PP Rep: OK, whatever.*

*Ohio donor: Well, Blacks especially need abortions, so that's what I'm trying to do.*

*PP Rep: For whatever reason, we'll accept the money.*

*Ohio donor: OK. Great, thank you.*

*(This story is an edited version of an original report provided by Catholic News Agency.)*

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