


Political Whore Nancy Pelosi takes dirty money bribes from sex traffic site

 From left: Backpage.com CEO Carl Ferrer, founder James Larkin, Chief Operating Officer Andrew Padilla, and founder Michael Lacey testified before Congress last year about the website's facilitation of online sex trafficking. Mr. Larkin gave \$10,000 to House Majority PAC, which is connected to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, California Democrat. (Associated Press/File)

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By [S.A. Miller](#) - *The Washington Times* - Thursday, January 4, 2018

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A political action committee connected to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has finally bowed to the sexual misconduct scandal sweeping the country, belatedly returning a \$10,000 contribution made by a founder of Backpage.com, a classified-ad website that is a

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hub for sexual exploitation and human trafficking of women and girls.

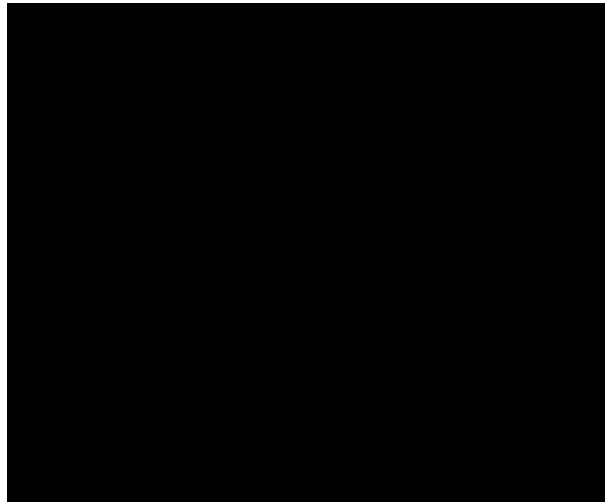
The House Majority PAC's chief told The Washington Times just three weeks ago that the 2016 donation had already been spent and that it was impossible to give it back.

But House Majority PAC President Alixandria Lapp, hoping to escape a growing controversy over keeping the cash for so long, said in a letter to the editor in a California newspaper this week that the money had been donated to a sexual assault prevention center in Arizona.

Allie Bones, CEO of Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, said her organization has not received the money.

"We received word that we would be receiving a donation from House Majority PAC on December 29th, but nothing has been received at this time," she said.

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Scrutiny of political contributions linked to Backpage intensified amid the uproar over sexual harassment that began with the Harvey Weinstein scandal in Hollywood and spread to Capitol Hill.

In a Dec. 17 report, The Times highlighted the Backpage contribution to Mrs. Pelosi's super PAC, three state Democratic parties and several Arizona Democrats in Congress.


Since 2010, the owners and their wives have shoveled about \$99,000 to candidates and about \$95,000 to Democratic parties in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico, according federal campaign finance data collected by the Center for Responsive Politics.

Bowing to mounting pressure, including a bipartisan Senate investigation that found the owners knowingly sold ads to pimps who coerce minors into prostitution, Backpage a


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 A lawsuit filed last year by a student expelled from Oberlin College in Ohio reveals that every student who went through the college's formal sexual assault adjudication process was found responsible on at least one count. (Associated Press/File)

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Cash is king in campaigns to keep immigrants under temporary protected status in U.S.

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year ago closed its adult services sections.


The website, however, continues to be a marketplace for the sex trade.

Detroit police last month arrested two men who were using Backpage to run a sex trafficking ring after an underage girl told police she was brought to the city and put to work as a prostitute, with “dates” arranged on the website.

In June, a Chicago man was arrested after using Backpage to sell a 16-year-old girl who was eventually killed by a client.


Such stories about Backpage are relatively commonplace across the country.

Mrs. Lapp’s letter to the editor was in response to an op-ed in the same paper by Rep. Edward R. Royce, California Republican, who called on Mrs. Pelosi to renounce the contribution.

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“It’s time for Pelosi to do the right thing and finally wash her hands of this dirty money,” he wrote in The Orange County Register.

Mrs. Lapp insisted that Mrs. Pelosi, California Democrat, had nothing to do with soliciting money from the Backpage owner or the recent decision to dispose of the tainted cash. She noted that it would violate federal law for an elected official to direct the actions of a super PAC.

Mrs. Pelosi’s chief of staff, Drew Hammill, made the same point.

“Leader Pelosi was not involved or aware of this donation when it was made. Despite the inaccurate assertions of the Washington Times, Leader Pelosi has no control over what funds this PAC accepts nor can she order the PAC to return donations,” he said in an email to The Times.

QUESTION OF THE DAY

How long will you stick to your New Year's resolutions?

- ONE DAY
- ONE WEEK
- ONE MONTH
- FOREVER
- I DON'T EVEN BOTHER

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House Majority PAC followed the lead of the lawmakers who previously gave the money to the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence.

The founders and controlling shareholders of Backpage, Michael Lacey and James Larkin, live in Arizona and were responsible for much of the contributions.

Backpage executives and shareholders John Brunst and Scott Spear and their wives also made scores of political contributions.

The four men have made a fortune from the website. In California alone, Backpage rakes in about \$2.5 million per month, according to court records.

While getting rid of the Backpage cash in their campaign coffers, Democratic lawmakers still refuse to call on the state parties to give up their share of the money.

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Even Sen. Kamala D. Harris, a California Democrat who as state attorney general brought felony pimping charges against Mr. Lacey and Mr. Larkin in 2016, refused Thursday to address their political contributions.

Mr. Larkin gave the \$10,000 to House Majority PAC just a week after Ms. Harris announced the charges against him and his business partner in October 2016.

A judge dropped the pimping charge in August, citing federal law that shields internet sites from most liability. Related money laundering charges are proceeding against the men.

Legislation spearheaded by Sen. Rob Portman, Ohio Republican, would tighten federal law to hold accountable websites such as Backpage that host thinly disguised ads for commercial sex and child prostitution. The bill is expected to easily pass the Senate early this year.

The majority of the contributions to state parties since 2010 went to the Colorado Democratic Party, despite the Arizona residency of the Backpage owners. They handed over a total of \$70,000 to the Colorado party, all in 2014.

They gave \$15,000 to the New Mexico Democratic Party in 2014.

Mr. Larkin last year made a single \$10,000 contribution to the Arizona Democratic Party, according to federal campaign records.

None of the three state parties responded Thursday to The Times' questions about their plans for the Backpage cash.