



**Planned Parenthood Advocacy Project
Los Angeles County Action Fund**

May 3, 2022

Rick Caruso
Founder and CEO of Caruso Affiliated
101 The Grove Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Dear Mr. Caruso,

As voters and potential constituents, we have been deeply disturbed to observe your long-standing support of anti-choice individuals and organizations. Throughout your career, you've publicly supported organizations and policymakers who have taken aggressive action to limit access to abortion, overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and defund Planned Parenthood. You've donated nearly \$1 million to policymakers who put forth legislation that criminalized abortion. We write to you today to gain clarity about your position on reproductive rights, and with the expectation that you will right these wrongs.

According to publicly available documents and media reports, you supported John Kasich's presidential campaign, both financially and personally, and went as far as to join his campaign as California State Co-Chair. When [pressed about his strong anti-abortion stance](#), you dismissed the concern. As governor of Ohio, Kasich signed some of the most restrictive abortion bans in the country, prohibiting the most common abortion procedures and even going so far as not allowing any exceptions for rape or incest. Kasich also penalized doctors who perform such abortions, putting healthcare providers at risk of serving up to 18 months in prison if they were to perform the procedure.

You've financially supported many candidates who put forth legislation to defund public health clinics that provide reproductive services, including Planned Parenthood. These candidates include Senator David Vitter of Louisiana, Congressman Pete Sessions of Texas, and Congressman Joe Heck of Nevada.

Just a few years ago, you provided financial support for Kevin McCarthy's campaign, a man who called himself a "staunch anti-abortion rights advocate." You also held a fundraiser for Mitt Romney during the 2008 presidential primary, despite the fact that he has repeatedly identified as "proudly pro-life." In 2017, you provided significant financial support to the National Republican Congressional Committee, a committee whose chairman signed an amicus brief to the Supreme Court asking the court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. You also supported Mitch McConnell's campaign in 2007; McConnell later worked to [limit women's access to abortion](#), and sought criminal punishment for doctors who provided constitutionally protected healthcare services for women around the country.

The list goes on. You have supported some of the strongest enemies to reproductive rights in the country. You have used your wealth and influence to support policymakers who likened abortion to

murder, and who have made concerted efforts to defund Planned Parenthood and overturn Roe v. Wade.

You now claim that you have had a change of heart, but that is not enough. Voters need a clear picture of where you stand on reproductive rights and a better understanding of why you supported such harmful policies and lawmakers in the past.

We request that you immediately take **all** of the following actions:

1. **Clearly state and explain in writing your stance on reproductive rights and abortion.** This explanation should include your position both today and over the past decade when you supported individuals and organizations who were openly anti-choice. Do you support a woman's right to choose in all situations? If not, in what situations do you deny a woman's right to choose?
2. **Issue a public apology for the countless actions you've taken that put women's health and well-being at risk.** These actions include, but are not limited to, funneling nearly \$1 million to individuals and organizations who took aggressive actions to limit reproductive healthcare; using your influence to bolster political candidates who are openly anti-choice, and supporting individuals and organizations who took action to defund Planned Parenthood and overturn Roe v. Wade.
3. **Participate in a listening session with leaders in the reproductive rights and justice movements.** We are asking you to join reproductive rights and justice leaders for an honest discussion so that you can learn more about the harm you have caused to women nationwide. We want to make sure you have a firm grasp of the issues and a clear understanding of the harm caused by anti-choice candidates and policies.

Los Angeles voters deserve an explanation for your past actions and positions. We hope you agree that people deserve to have autonomy and the right to choose when and if they want to start a family. Los Angeles needs a leader who will champion reproductive rights and access to healthcare. With such an important election coming up, voters deserve to know what you stand for.

Sincerely,



Celinda M. Vázquez

Executive Director

Planned Parenthood Advocacy Project Los Angeles County Action Fund