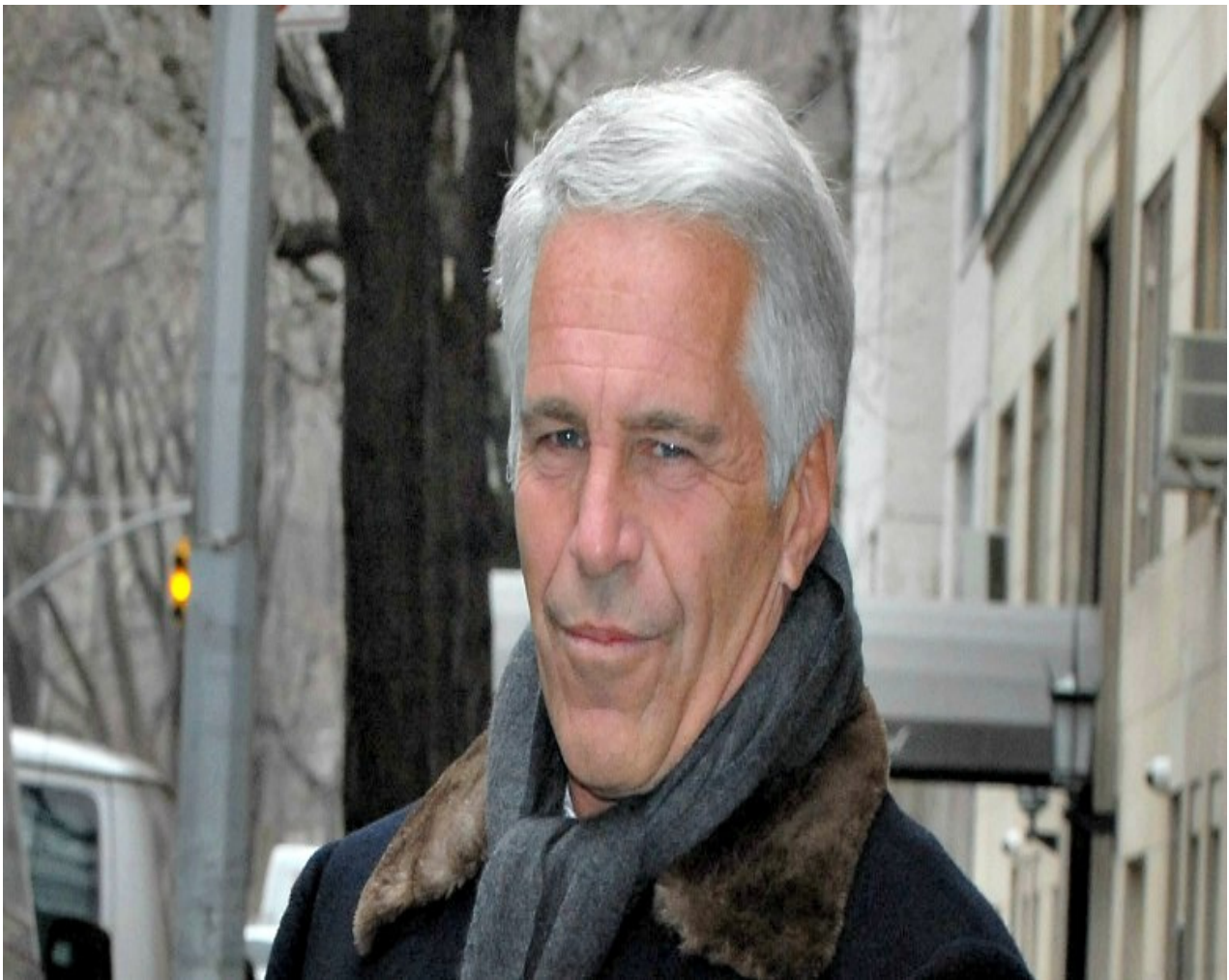


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Says Contribution To Her Campaign From Man Jailed For Paying Underage Girls For Sex Does Not Compromise Her Integrity

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Ernice Gilbert **October 19, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, in a statement issued to The Consortium this afternoon, said that campaign funds she received from Jeffrey E. Epstein, above, -- an American financier whose estimated worth is about \$2 billion, and who was convicted in 2008 of soliciting an underage girl for prostitution and given an 18-month prison sentence -- would not compromise her integrity.

Ms. Plaskett's statement follows a press release issued by Dennis Lennox on Wednesday on behalf of Republican general election candidate Gordon Ackley, which

unearths two Federal Election Commission filings, revealing that Mr. Epstein had made two donations to the Plaskett campaign of \$2,700, the first which came during the primary election and the second for the general election, totaling \$5,400.

Ms. Plaskett assailed Mr. Ackley, relegating his comments as hypocritical, and contending that Mr. Ackley has endorsed Donald Trump, whose campaign has been rocked by allegations that the Republican nominee for president had sexually assaulted multiple women. These allegations were nonexistent before Mr. Trump was caught on tape talking lewdly about women, claiming that, because of his status, he was allowed to grope them.

"Any individual is free to give to campaigns. Mr. Epstein and any Virgin Islander, by law, is free to contribute to any candidate they feel is best suited to lead the territory, as Mr. Ackley did when he contributed to my last campaign," Ms. Plaskett said. "It should be abundantly clear from my last campaign, when contributors openly complained in newspapers and over the airwaves that I did not take the position they wanted me to take, that I am not influenced by an individual contributing to my campaign. I will always take positions that I believe are best for all the people of the Virgin Islands.

"Mr. Ackley's claims are heinous and hypocritical. Not only does he endorse Donald Trump, who himself has been accused of sexual assault along with racist and discriminatory language, but he is using victims of sexual assault in the territory as a political ploy to distract Virgin Islanders from the fact that neither he or the local Republican party has offered any solutions in their platform to address any of the issues affecting our territory. As a woman, as a mother and as a Virgin Islander, I would encourage candidates to stick to the issues. That's what the people want," Ms. Plaskett concluded.

Mr. Epstein, who owns and lives on a private island in the U.S. Virgin Islands off the east end of St. Thomas called Little St. James, pleaded guilty in 2008 to two charges and was sentenced to 18 months in jail, though he was allowed to spend many days working on the outside. He was accused of paying underage girls for sexual services.

Mr. Ackley assailed the congresswoman, calling Ms. Plaskett's receiving of the funds "disgusting." He said Ms. Plaskett should give the \$5,400 to women in the territory who had been sexually abused.

"It is disgusting that our congresswoman took thousands of dollars from a convicted pedophile," Mr. Ackley said. "Congresswoman Plaskett's own actions have proven that she lacks the sound judgment and moral character to honorably serve and represent Virgin Islanders."

Asked by The Consortium whether Ms. Plaskett saw a conflict in accepting funds from Mr. Epstein, who was classified as a level three sex offender by a New York judge, a response was not returned. And Mr. Ackley, who The Consortium asked to explain his support for Mr. Trump even as he castigates Ms. Plaskett, Mr. Ackley said contrary to the delegate's claim, he had not endorsed Mr. Trump.

"Congresswoman Plaskett is putting the interests of a billionaire convicted pedophile, who has trafficked underage girls, ahead of families in the Virgin Islands," Mr. Ackley charged. "Unlike Congresswoman Plaskett, I have not endorsed a presidential

candidate, as we in the Virgin Islands are denied the full enjoyment of our U.S. citizenship -- that is, the right to vote for president. Congresswoman Plaskett must disavow billionaire convicted pedophile Jeffrey Epstein and donate his money to services for victims of sexual abuse."

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