

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Says She Will Give Contributions To Her Campaign From Jeffery Epstein To Local Nonprofits In Light Of Allegations

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Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett in a statement issued this afternoon said she would no longer keep contributions made to her campaign by Jeffery Epstein, the billionaire financier accused of molesting little girls. The statement follows [a report on CNBC](#), which was [picked up by The Consortium](#), where Ms. Plaskett's communications director told the publication that the congresswoman had no intention of returning the money.

"I'm pretty sure she's not," Mike McQuery said and later confirmed in a follow-up phone call to verify her position, that Ms. Plaskett is unlikely to return the contribution, CNBC said. At the time, Mr. McQuery declined to comment further about the investigation and how Ms. Plaskett knew Mr. Epstein, CNBC said.

CNBC noted Ms. Plaskett's decision as significant, "as it shows that at least one politician is remaining defiant with holding onto donations from Epstein, even after Epstein's arrest," wrote the publication.

In her statement this afternoon, however, Ms. Plaskett said she would give the money to local nonprofits that work with women and children.

"In light of new information and allegations that have been made against Jeffrey Epstein I have decided to make contributions to Virgin Islands organizations that work with women and children in the amount of his previous contributions," Ms. Plaskett said. "My litmus test for accepting campaign contributions has been based on whether the donor's money was made legally or by ill-gotten means and that the contributor will not ask of me or my Congressional office for any special favors. All my contributions have passed that test. In this case however, I am uncomfortable having received money from someone who has been accused of these egregious actions multiple times."

She added, "I want it to be clear that I in no way support the allegations and have confidence in the Southern District of New York to investigate and prosecute the matter. Lastly, it is my hope that other Virgin Island elected officials or others that have received contributions from Jeffrey Epstein will do the same. "

According to the Wall Street Journal, Mr. Epstein is a former asset manager whose source of wealth has long been a mystery on Wall Street, meaning it has been hard to tell how his wealth was obtained.

Mr. Epstein, 66, owns a mansion on an island in the U.S. Virgin Islands that he also owns, called Little Saint James. Charges against the financier also allege that the USVI home was part of Mr. Epstein's sex trafficking operation. On Monday, he was charged with two counts related to sex trafficking of minors, which together carry a maximum sentence of 45 years in prison. He was arrested Saturday night at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey as he was returning from Paris on his private jet, [according to WSJ](#).

Mr. Epstein contributed \$2,700 to Ms. Plaskett, the most an individual donor can give directly to a candidate in both the primary and the general election, during her 2018 run for re-election, according to a F.E.C. record, CNBC said. In 2016, he wrote two separate \$2,700 checks for Ms. Plaskett, including one during her primary campaign which she eventually won. Ms. Plaskett finished the 2018 congressional midterms raising just over \$359,000, according to the F.E.C. record.

According to WSJ, Mr. Epstein, wearing a short-sleeved navy jail uniform, pleaded not guilty before a federal magistrate judge Monday. He will be detained at a jail in lower Manhattan until a federal judge decides next week whether to grant him bail. Prosecutors have asked for him to stay in detention until trial, citing his "exorbitant" wealth and frequent international travel, a bid his lawyers objected to in court Monday.

Mr. Epstein's legal team Monday laid out what they said would be the centerpiece of their defense: that Manhattan federal prosecutors were seeking an improper re-do of an investigation into Mr. Epstein more than a decade ago in Florida, which ended in a federal nonprosecution agreement, WSJ said.

"How in the world can that deal be undone?" said Reid Weingarten, a lawyer for Mr. Epstein. "To us, this indictment is essentially a do-over,"

Federal agents searched Mr. Epstein's Manhattan townhouse after his arrest Saturday and found hundreds of nude photographs of young women, some of whom appeared to be underage, officials said. Some of the photographs were discovered in a locked safe alongside compact discs with handwritten labels like "Girl pics nude."

In court Monday, Mr. Epstein's lawyers said the images seized were likely not of underage victims, WSJ said.

After his arrest, Mr. Epstein refused to answer any of the government's questions about his income or assets, prosecutors said Monday; his lawyers said they needed time to pull that information together.