



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on July 3, 2012

N.Y. State Sues Ex-Head of Pro-Abortion Group For Lavish Spending

Kelli Conlin, a former president of the prominent abortion-rights group NARAL Pro-Choice New York has been accused of pocketing hundreds of thousands of dollars in charitable money to fund her lavish lifestyle. According to the New York state attorney general's office, Conlin, who pleaded guilty last year for fabricating business records, [spent](#) \$250,000 in charitable contributions on hotel rooms, shopping sprees, fine dining, and other personal amenities.



Ms. Conlin's sudden departure in January 2011 raised a slew of questions, as she was chief of the pro-abortion group for almost two decades. Only weeks after her resignation, [YNN's Capital Tonight](#) obtained a forensic audit conducted for the NARAL that unveiled extensive financial misconduct, including 120 meals at a sushi restaurant, \$17,000 for a one-month rental home in the Hamptons, and \$50,000 for designer clothing and shoes at retailers like Giorgio Armani.

Further, purchases on the organization's dime included \$100,000 in car services to transport her children to school in Manhattan's opulent Upper West Side. Capitol Tonight also reported that Conlin's annual salary for 2009 was a sizable \$309,000, and that a number of large transactions in NARAL's accounts appeared questionable, potentially concealing other financial improprieties.

A separate investigation launched by New York state "uncovered substantial additional wrongdoing and seeks to hold Conlin fully accountable for her misconduct," the state attorney general's office [affirmed](#) in a press release.

The attorney general's office said in a statement that Conlin "perpetuated her scheme by falsifying her expense reports to conceal the personal nature of the expenses, maintaining tight control over the outside consultants who were charged with bookkeeping duties and intimidating NARAL staff members who raised questions regarding her expense habits."

Previously, Conlin had agreed to pay \$75,000 to NARAL Pro-Choice New York and its affiliates to avoid jail time and probation. However, David Nachman, enforcement section chief for the attorney general's Charities Bureau, said Conlin's lavish spending habits amounted to "hundreds of thousands of dollars in improper benefits." In turn, the state attorney general's office is asking that she repay every dime, with interest, and pay for its own legal and investigative expenses.

NARAL and the National Institute for Reproductive Health asserted Friday that they encouraged the civil action and had instituted new financial measures since Conlin left the organization in January 2011. The group acknowledged it had administered an internal investigation and that NARAL officials had fully cooperated with the attorney general's investigation.

Kristan Hawkins, Executive Director of Students for Life, [said](#) NARAL's financial scandal "shows just how corrupt pro-abortion groups are," pointing out that the group has been defrauding women about its



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priorities. “They are not in it to help women, but rather for their own selfish profit.”

State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman previously recused himself from the case after pro-life Democrat Sen. Ruben Diaz Sr. revealed his close family ties with NARAL, as his father previously served as treasurer for the pro-abortion group. Consequently, Mr. Schneiderman’s office delegated an outside counsel to investigate Conlin in March 2011. Schneiderman has been on the NARAL board for more than a decade and has been the largest donor to the pro-abortion group’s political action committee, donating more than \$75,000 in the last six years.

“Ms. Conlin betrayed the trust of NARAL’s supporters and donors by using charitable funds to finance her lavish lifestyle,” Jason Lilien, chief of the Charities Bureau, [charged](#), in commenting on the scandal. “Our office is committed to rooting out corruption in the charitable sector wherever it exists, and we will vigorously crack down on those who rip off the public for their own personal gain.”

Photo: New York Democratic candidate for governor, state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, is flanked by former NARAL Pro-Choice New York President Kelli Conlin, third from right in purple, and the organization’s board chair person Lorna Brett Howard, right, after he received their endorsement, at New York’s City Hall, Sept. 29, 2010: AP Images



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