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Last night I attended the televised debate between
Congressmember Karen Bass and Rick Caruso, who are both
running for Mayor of the City of Los Angeles. As a result of
what I heard last night and my research prior to the debate, I
have decided to endorse Karen Bass for Mayor. I have two
main reasons for supporting Congressmember Bass over Rick
Caruso. The first involves the extremely important issue of a
woman's right to be afforded safe, legal, affordable, and
available abortions, and to also have the legal right to use
contraceptives. Karen Bass, as she said last night, has been "a
lifelong, pro-choice democrat." Ms. Bass stated that abortion is
about values and that protecting a woman's right to choose is a

question of values. Rick Caruso also stated last night, “I am pro-choice and always have been.”

Unfortunately for Mr. Caruso, his deeds put his words in question. For example, the Los Angeles Times reported that Mr. Caruso has given extensive financial support to anti-abortion politicians. They stated that he gave more than \$240,000 to a super PAC supporting John Kasich’s GOP presidential run in 2016. 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.

Their reporting continues: “Caruso contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to Republican party committees between

2003 and 2017. He hosted a fundraiser in 2007 at his Brentwood home for GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney, around the time Romney said legalized abortion ‘cheapened the value and sanctity of human life.’ According to a Los Angeles Magazine profile, Caruso also hosted a fundraiser at his home for George W. Bush’s reelection campaign, at which Vice President Dick Cheney — a stalwart opponent of abortion rights — was “the guest of honor.” Bush nominated Samuel A. Alito Jr., the justice who wrote the draft opinion overturning Roe, to the Supreme Court after his reelection.

Planned Parenthood Advocacy Project Los Angeles County Action Fund, the local political arm of the national reproductive healthcare nonprofit, released a letter which discussed these contributions, stating that “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."

When challenged on your support for Republicans, you stated last night in the debate that you supported them for a long time because it reflected your values. Many of these candidates were clearly and publicly anti-choice.

You said last night “I am pro-choice and always have been.” It is impossible for me to believe this because it is reported that you donated \$100,000 to a PAC supporting President George W. Bush’s reelection in 2004; \$50,000 to a PAC supporting Representative Kevin McCarthy in 2017; and \$4,300 to a committee supporting Senator Mitch McConnell in 2007. Your financial contributions to these anti-choice mandatory motherhood candidates speak louder than your words.

Also, I have had an experience that you have not had. When I was a teacher in California in the 60’s, I went to Mexico for a vacation. There I was raped at gunpoint by a medical

doctor I had trusted. I returned to California and learned that I was pregnant and, to my dismay, learned that it was a crime in California for a doctor to perform an abortion and that my only alternative to terminate my pregnancy was to have a back alley abortion by someone who would do it for the money and who was not a doctor or nurse. Like many women at that time, I almost died from that back alley abortion. I was left in a bathtub hemorrhaging in a pool of my own blood. At some point an ambulance was called and I was rushed to a hospital where I was packed in ice to try to bring down my fever which was 106 degrees. Fortunately, I survived, but many women who were in the same situation in California and throughout the nation did not.

I was very happy when in 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Roe v Wade* but recently the *Dobbs* decision reversed *Roe v Wade* and has left many women and girls throughout the

country in a situation where their lives may be endangered by illegal abortions because 26 states have restricted abortions. Please don't say it doesn't matter in a race for mayor in Los Angeles. Women's lives matter. The lives of teenage girls matter. I cannot support you especially because you contributed to George Bush who appointed Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito who wrote the *Dobbs* decision.

The last time I saw Karen Bass prior to last night was at our major Bans Off Our Bodies at City Hall in May. She made time to be a featured speaker on choice. That is what a real pro-choice advocate does.

In addition, there is a second reason why I cannot support Rick Caruso. I represented 72 USC students or former students who alleged that they were victims of Dr. George Tyndall and USC. My law firm fought for compensation for the victims and USC ultimately settled the case. However, it was very important

to many of the victims that USC, a university which they loved, do an investigation and make a report to them and the public at large explaining why USC failed to protect them for decades from Dr. Tyndall. You promised that USC would do an investigation and provide a report to them. It appears there was an investigation but either there was no written report or the report was never made public. Promising victims and then breaking a promise to them is simply not acceptable. They wanted the truth, they wanted transparency, they thought you would provide that, but you failed to do so. No adequate explanation has been given. No excuse that has been given is acceptable. Many of the victims feel betrayed and you as Chair of the Board of Trustees are responsible for that.

Karen Bass has been a leader for women's rights for decades. I am proud to support her and I am proud of the women I represented. Los Angeles needs a mayor that they can

trust to live their values. Mr. Caruso I cannot trust you. That is why I am endorsing Karen Bass for mayor.

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September 22, 2022