

This all seems very familiar.

21 years ago, another man made a very shocking and disturbing accusation about two companies involved in providing human tissue for scientific research. The purported whistle blower claimed that abortion providers trafficked fetuses and altered abortion procedures to obtain tissue specimens.

Ultimately, the truth came out. The man admitted under oath that he had lied, and it became clear that he had been well paid for it. Congress dropped its inquiry, newspapers reported that the accusations had been recanted, and Republicans and Democrats both put the disturbing episode behind them.

But now we live in a time when lies and distortions simply travel faster than truth. Hearings like this one provide a platform and give a veneer of credibility to fantasies developed in the minds of people who want one thing, and one thing alone: to block access to abortion.

Every time a judge or jury has looked at this preposterous set of accusations, the answer has been the same: Planned Parenthood is cleared of wrongdoing, and Mr. Daleiden and his organization have been revealed as having repeatedly broken the law in an effort to trick us into believing in a tax-payer funded black market for body parts.

In fact, when a grand jury in Texas was given all of evidence entirely to get to the bottom of accusations against Planned Parenthood, it not only cleared the abortion provider; it indicted Mr. Daleiden!

In the six years since Mr. Daleiden has been releasing his heavily doctored hoax videos, he has been handed legal defeat after legal defeat. But unlike 21 years ago, when folks could gather around the TV or read the newspaper to hear all the facts, the damage has been done. With social media, the discredited videos move light years faster than the truth, confirming the fears and suspicions of those who have been primed to put their faith in shadowy conspiracies instead of evidence and facts.

But we know better, and we can stay on the side of truth. The accusations discussed today are abhorrent, and fortunately, they are untrue. Tissue donation is carefully regulated, and the process is entirely set up to help improve and protect human life. If an organization breaks the rules, there are, appropriately, consequences in place.

And the University of Pittsburgh, which has been baselessly attacked today, is one of the nation's top public research universities, 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation for NIH funding. Pitt people beat polio, pioneered TV, and turned my city into the world's organ-transplantation capital. If any of your loved ones have suffered from breast cancer, HIV or diabetes, Pitt may well have played a role in extending their lives.

Scientific advancements to combat our most cruel diseases -- like ALS, Parkinson's and HIV -- depend on the study of human tissue and fetal tissue. Attacks on that research and those who perform it are simply not compatible with the protection of life.

To value and protect life is to support and celebrate the work of our scientists and medical experts. I hope we can work together to get this conversation back on track.