



M U L T I S T A T E

### **Political operative accused of plying Solis with Viagra, arranging massage parlor trips is slapped with \$25K fine for unregistered lobbying**

A veteran political operative who supplied FBI mole Danny Solis with a steady supply of Viagra and allegedly arranged for the former alderman to receive sex acts has been slapped with a \$25,000 fine for failing to register as a lobbyist.

The Chicago Board of Ethics' hefty fine against Roberto Caldero comes eight months after the Chicago Sun-Times blew the lid off the explosive charges against Solis that prompted the former alderman to spend two years wearing a wire to help the feds build their corruption case against indicted Ald. Edward Burke (14<sup>th</sup>).

The board concluded there was "probable cause to conclude" that Caldero, a close associate of former U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez, had "engaged in several acts of unregistered lobbying in 2015" in violation of the city's ethics ordinance.

Last Friday, the board met with Caldero and his attorney and gave them an opportunity to refute its finding that "the facts available to the board demonstrated he engaged in unregistered lobbying in several attempts to influence a city elected official on behalf of a client with respect to taking city action in both a legislative matter and an administrative matter."

Since Caldero and his attorney did not refute the finding, the board found unanimously that Caldero had, in fact, "engaged in unregistered lobbying" and assessed the \$25,000 fine.

"I'm disappointed in the decision," Caldero told the Sun-Times Monday. "We will appeal it and look for other avenues to resolve this issue."

When the Board of Ethics meets again in October, "it will consider further action against the person who retained or employed Mr. Caldero."

"If that person is determined to have violated the ordinance by retaining or employing a person who failed to register as a lobbyist as required by the Governmental Ethics Ordinance, that person will be subject to a fine between \$500 and \$2,000, the maximum fine for this violation," the ruling states.

**The Sun-Times reported in January** that the federal affidavit accuses Caldero of plying Solis with Viagra and arranging for the then-chairman of the City Council's Zoning Committee to visit massage parlors, where he was allegedly serviced by a prostitute.

Caldero was further accused of soliciting campaign donations from the Cacciatore family, which, among other businesses, owns Elgin Sweeping Services, a major street-sweeping company.

At the time, Caldero was representing Elgin Sweeping in its efforts to obtain relief from a change in the city's water billing practices that investigators indicated could have cost the company more than \$1 million. Elgin Sweeping had a city contract to provide street sweeping services and at the time relied on filling its equipment at city fire hydrants.

During several wiretapped conversations, Solis and Caldero made plans to exchange Viagra or visit massage parlors while also discussing how the alderman might help Elgin Sweeping reduce its water bill.

In late 2014, Solis allegedly placed a series of calls and texts to Caldero asking if he had any of that “blue medicine,” meaning Viagra, according to the feds.

At one point, Caldero explained the Affordable Care Act had made it more difficult to get Viagra and that the price had climbed to \$400 for 10 pills, which surprised the alderman.

In July 2015, Solis called Caldero with another request.

“I want to get a good massage, with a nice ending. Do you know any good places?” the alderman said.

When Caldero promised to arrange the liaison, Solis asked, “What kind of women do they get there?”

“Asian,” Caldero said.

“Oh good. Good, good, good. I like Asian,” Solis said.

In an interview in January, Caldero acknowledged providing Solis with Viagra and arranging massage parlor visits, but said he did so out of friendship, not to curry favor for a client.

“If Danny asked me for almost anything, I would do it. It’s never been a quid pro quo,” said Caldero, 65, a longtime friend of both Solis and Gutierrez.

Caldero traced his relationship with Solis to their days as students at the University of Illinois at Chicago when they were both arrested in a protest over low Hispanic enrollment.

Caldero also said there was nothing improper about Elgin Sweeping seeking relief from the city’s plan to increase its water bill by hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

The Cacciatore family has major real estate holdings in the 25th Ward and had donated regularly to Solis for many years, Caldero said.

At the time, Caldero said federal investigators had not contacted him.

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### **[Elizabeth Warren unveils sweeping anti-corruption plan](#)**

2020 Democratic contender Sen. Elizabeth Warren released Monday a massive new plan to prevent [corruption in Washington, D.C.](#), as a part of her promise to institute what she calls “the most sweeping set of anti-corruption reforms since Watergate” if elected.

**Why it matters:** If enacted, the wide-ranging proposal would dramatically restructure the federal government by limiting lobbyists’ influence on Congress, expanding protections for workers and requiring federal judges to publicly post their financial reports and speeches.

**Details:** To prevent conflicts of interest in the executive branch, her plan would force presidents and vice presidents to place their businesses into a blind trust to be sold off and senior government officials to divest from privately owned assets.

- It would also restrict the crossover between lobbying and government by preventing former elected officials and senior government appointees from becoming lobbyists and vice versa.
- It would apply the [Code of Conduct for United States Judges](#), which governs the behavior of most federal judges, to Supreme Court justices. Federal judges would also have to post their financial reports, recusal decisions and private speeches.

- It would prevent companies from putting arbitration clauses in employee contracts for employment, which forces individuals to agree to never file a lawsuit in federal court against the company.
- **Worth noting:** These are only some of the top-line proposals from Warren's lengthy plan.

**What they're saying:** Warren said the plan's goal is "to take power away from the wealthy and the well-connected in Washington and put it back where it belongs — in the hands of the people."

**Between the lines:** Warren believes the rest of her far-reaching legislative goals like the Green New Deal and Medicare for All hinge on her anti-corruption plan.

**Yes, but:** "There are some unresolved questions on the legality of Warren's plan to ban all fundraising activities for lobbyists given recent Supreme Court rulings on campaign finance and free speech," per [Politico](#).

**What's next:** Warren will give a speech in New York City's Washington Square Park at 7pm ET to discuss the plan — near the site of 1911's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire.

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### [Anti-greyhound racing group launches 'unprecedented' campaign in WV](#)

With publication Tuesday of an op-ed by Senate President Mitch Carmichael, R-Jackson, calling for West Virginia to stop subsidizing greyhound racing purses to the tune of \$15 million a year, Grey2K USA — a national organization that opposes greyhound racing on humane grounds — announced that it is launching an “unprecedented” lobbying campaign to end greyhound racing in the state.

“This will be, speaking for us, an unprecedented lobbying campaign in terms of investment in every sense,” said Grey2K Executive Director Carey Theil. “In terms of substantial financial investment, time and focus.”

He said that will include having at least three lobbyists at the 2020 legislative session.

Since its formation in 2001, the Massachusetts-based nonprofit has lobbied successfully to outlaw greyhound racing in six states, including passage last fall of a constitutional amendment to end dog racing in Florida.

“We view this debate in West Virginia to be a critical one,” Theil said. “We’re going to ask, as President Carmichael did today, does West Virginia want to be the last state to sanction and subsidize an industry that’s cruel and inhumane?”

In the op-ed, first published on the West Virginia Press Association’s news-sharing website, Carmichael cited the Florida referendum to outlaw greyhound racing, and warned that West Virginia “may find itself once again as a dubious national outlier.”

“Absent legislative action, West Virginia is in danger of finding itself as the last state in the nation that sanctions and subsidizes an industry whose time has passed — greyhound racing,” Carmichael stated in the op-ed.

Contacted Tuesday, Carmichael said he has never been a fan of subsidizing greyhound racing. He said he is disturbed by the death and injury rates reported for racing greyhounds.

“This is an activity whose time has passed,” he said, noting that West Virginia is one of only a handful of states where greyhound racing is still legal.

In 2017, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 437 to eliminate the \$13 million to \$15 million a year in state Lottery funds that are used to subsidize greyhound racing purses. The bill also would

have eliminated a provision in state law that requires Mardi Gras and Wheeling Island casinos to have greyhound racing as a condition of maintaining video lottery, table games and sports betting at their facilities.

The bill passed the Senate 19-15, with Carmichael's support, and passed the House 56-44.

However, Gov. Jim Justice vetoed the bill in a ceremony in Wheeling, stating, "If we get rid of greyhound racing, it will mean job losses and fewer people coming to West Virginia. Eliminating support for the greyhounds is a job killer, and I can't sign it. The last thing we need to do is drive more people out of West Virginia. We can't turn our back on communities like Wheeling that benefit from dog racing."

Industry proponents contend that it provides about 1,700 jobs in West Virginia, although a 2015 study commissioned by the Legislature found that greyhound racing accounted for just over 600 full- and part-time jobs in the state.

Anticipating publication of Carmichael's op-ed, Grey2K, on Tuesday, launched a new website, [greyhoundracingfacts.org](http://greyhoundracingfacts.org), and a Twitter feed, @dogracingfacts, as part of its West Virginia campaign, Theil said.

"He supported the issue two years ago when it passed the Legislature, so, obviously, we've had a dialogue with him on this issue for some time," Theil said of Carmichael.

Carmichael said Tuesday he believes most West Virginians support using the Lottery funds for purposes other than to artificially boost greyhound racing purses.

"It makes no sense, any way around this," said Carmichael, who added that he's confident legislation to end the funding will pass the Legislature in 2020.

"We're going to pass this again," he said. "I'm positive."

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### **[NRA Appoints Jason Ouimet Permanent Head of Lobbying Arm](#)**

The National Rifle Association made Jason Ouimet the permanent head of its Institute for Legislative Action (ILA) during the gun rights group's Saturday board meeting.

"Jason is a principled leader with tremendous field vision and political savvy," NRA CEO Wayne LaPierre told the *Washington Free Beacon* in a statement. "He has a strong campaign background and more than 15 years as a government affairs professional at NRA playing pivotal roles in all NRA's legislative accomplishments and victories. Our 5 million members and America's gun owners have the strongest ally and the best advocate in Jason."

Ouimet was appointed to the position on a permanent basis by LaPierre and confirmed without objection by the board.

"I thank Wayne and the NRA leadership for entrusting me with a post so crucial to America's freedom," Ouimet said in a statement. "Backed by millions of patriotic NRA members, NRA-ILA is the foremost defender of our Second Amendment, the safeguard of freedom itself."

Ouimet had [already been acting as the interim head of ILA](#) after Chris Cox was forced out as a result of [the group's recent leadership fight](#). Cox had run the lobbying operation since 2002 and was well-respected on Capitol Hill. His departure has raised questions over how well the organization will be able to influence the upcoming 2020 elections—especially after being [outspent by gun control groups in 2018](#).

"Chris Cox is the guy everybody dealt with," Steven Law, president of the Senate Leadership Fund, [told Politico](#). Gregg Keller, a former American Conservative Union executive director, told the publication that "the situation has folks nervous."

Ouimet is now the one who will have to restore confidence in the gun rights group's effectiveness on Capitol Hill. He is currently orchestrating the response to the most recent push for new gun control measures after mass shootings last month in Texas and Ohio. President Trump has yet to announce what gun policy he'll support but prospects for sweeping new gun control laws favored by Democrats are growing dimmer by the day.

Ouimet's resume is an asset in the fight. He has a great deal of experience within the NRA and in national politics. After graduating from Kent State in 1999, he worked for the Republican National Committee doing field research in battle ground states for the Bush 2000 campaign. He then went to the National Republican Senatorial Committee where he worked on several successful campaigns before being hired as a legislative assistant by Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R., Ga.).

In 2005, Ouimet was hired to be a lobbyist for the NRA. He has remained with the gun rights group since then. In that time, he has moved from lobbyist to deputy director of federal affairs to director of federal affairs and now executive director of NRA-ILA.

He is well-liked by gun rights advocates inside and outside of the organization and his initial appointment settled at least some nerves within ILA in the wake of Cox being ousted. He has promised the NRA-ILA will continue to aggressively fight new gun control measures under his leadership.

"To every NRA member and gun owner in this country, I pledge that our defense will never waver on my watch," Ouimet said.

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### **[Private prison, detention companies spending on Alabama politicians](#)**

Geo Group, the nation's largest private prison and detention center company, is investing in Alabama's lawmakers just as the company hopes to land a portion of the state's nearly \$1 billion contract to build three new prisons.

Other players are also investing in lobbyists and lawmakers to compete for a share of the prize.

Geo Group gave at least \$80,000 to Alabama lawmakers in 2017 and 2018, while CoreCivic spent just \$4,500 those two years. (Figures taken from campaign finance reports and compiled by the Montana-based nonprofit National Institute on Money in State Politics.)

Gov Kay Ivey has received a combined \$12,500 from Geo Group and CoreCivic in 2017 and 2018.

U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, R-Haleyville, received the most campaign contributions from private prison and detention center companies, taking in \$22,500 since 2011, but his selection in 2011 to be chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security makes him an outlier. As chairman Aderholt headed the congressional committee that funded the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The two largest private prison and immigrant detention center companies in the U.S. – Geo Group and CoreCivic (formerly called Corrections Corporation of America) – received a combined \$358 million in ICE contracts in 2018. In 2011 and 2012, while serving as chairman of the appropriations subcommittee, Aderholt received \$12,500 from Geo Group and CoreCivic.

The [Center for Immigration Studies](#) found that on a single day, Sept. 22, 2012, private prison and detention center companies housed 67 percent of all immigrant detainees in facilities those companies owned and/or operated.

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Geo Group and CoreCivic gave Rep. Aderholt a combined \$17,000 between 2011 and 2015. In 2017 and 2018, he brought in \$5,500 from Geo Group.

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Carla Crowder, Director of the Montgomery-based Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, in a message to **APR** on Saturday said the hefty campaign contributions are disappointing, but not surprising given the millions of dollars that private prison companies have poured into other states in order to keep their shameful business model afloat.

“Other states are moving to reduce their reliance on private prison companies. More and more banks are refusing to provide financing to these corporations that profit off the incarceration of human beings, even children,” Crowder said. “Our elected leaders seem willing to embrace for-profit incarceration, even as other states have learned the hard way that its expensive, harmful, and not good policy.”

Crowder noted that politicians in other states are returning or refusing campaign contributions from Florida-based Geo Group over the company’s role in immigration detention centers. Ten members of Congress in 2018, either gave Geo Group’s donations back or refused it, [according to Open Secrets](#).

“I would love to see the same here in Alabama, especially given all that is at stake with prison reform in our state right now,” Crowder said. “The public-private partnerships being proposed would leave Alabama taxpayers and our children on the hook for close to \$1 billion to our-of-state companies who are working feverishly to buy favor with state leaders. It does not have to be this way.”

Then-Gov. Robert Bentley in 2016, announced the Alabama Prison Transformation Initiative Act, which called for construction of four new prisons through an \$800 million bond issuance. That legislation failed, was brought back up in 2017, and failed again.

Gov. Kay Ivey was appointed governor in April 2017, following Bentley’s resignation, and soon floated the idea of leasing new prisons from private companies, who’d build and finance them. Ivey announced in August the five companies in the running to build one or more of three planned new prisons are: GEO Group, Corvias, LLC, Corrections Consultants, CoreCivic and Alabama Prison Transformation Partners. The three prisons are to be built between two companies, according to ADOC’s request for qualifications.

In 2017, records show Geo Group began spending on Alabama lawmakers in earnest, and the pace of that spending continued through 2018.

All seven members of the legislative prison oversight committee received donations either directly from one of the two large private prison and immigrant detention center companies or the companies’ PACs, or from lobbyists who work for the companies. *It’s important to note, however, that those lobbying firms represent many clients, so campaign donations don’t necessarily mean the money was given to politicians on behalf of the private prison and detention center companies.*

### **Members of the legislative prison oversight committee who received contributions**

#### **State Sen. Cam Ward, R-Alabaster**

2017 – \$2,500 from Geo Group

2017 \$3,500 from Swatek, Howe & Ross, which represents Geo Group.

#### **State Sen. Clyde Chambliss Jr., R-Prattville**

2018 – \$1,500 from Geo Group.

2018 – \$1,000 from Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, which represents Geo Group.

#### **State Senate Minority Leader Bobby Singleton, D-Greensboro**

2018 – \$2,500 (Geo Group)

2018 – \$2,000 from Bradley Arant Boult Cummings (represents Geo Group)

2017 – \$1,000 from Swatek, Howe & Ross, (Geo Group)

**State Rep. Jim Hill, R-Moody**

2018 – \$2,000 from Geo Group

2017 – \$1,000 from Swatek, Howe & Ross (Geo Group)

**State Rep. Proncey Robertson, R-Mount Hope**

2018 – \$1,000 from Bradley Arant Boult Cummings (Geo Group)

2018 – \$500 from Swatek, Howe & Ross (Geo Group)

**State Sen. Dan Roberts, R-Mountain Brook**

2018 – \$1,000 from Windom, Galliher & Associates, (lobbies for Corrections Consultants)

2018 – \$500 from The Jones Group (Geo Group)

**State Rep. Chris England, D-Tuscaloosa**

2017 – \$1,000 from Swatek, Howe & Ross (Geo Group)

**Other statewide politicians who received contributions in 2017,2018**

**Gov. Kay Ivey**

2018 – \$10,000 from Geo Group

2017 – \$2,500 from CoreCivic

**U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, R – Haleyville**

2011, 2012 – \$5,000 from Geo Group \$7,500 from CoreCivic

2013 – \$1,000 from CoreCivic

2014 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

2015 – \$2,500 from CoreCivic

2017,2018 – \$5,500 from Geo Group

**State Sen. Del Marsh, R- Anniston**

2017 and 2018 – \$7,500 from Geo Group

**U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Tuscaloosa**

2016 – \$2,000 from Geo Group

**Former state Attorney General Luther Strange, R**

2017 – \$2,000 from CoreCivic

**Lt. Gov. William Ainsworth, R**

2017,2018 – \$4,000 from Geo Group

**U.S. Rep. Martha Roby, R, Montgomery**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

2016 – \$2,500 from CoreCivic

**U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Saks**

2018 – \$2,500 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Connie Rowe, R-Jasper**

2018 – \$1,500 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Kyle South, R-Fayette**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Mac Mccutcheon, R-Monrovia**

2017 – \$2,500 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Corley Ellis, R-Columbiana**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Arnold Mooney III, R-Indian Springs**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. William Poole, R-Tuscaloosa**

2017, 2018 – \$5,000 from Geo Group

**Elaine Beech, D-Chatom (lost election)**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Prince Chestnut, D-Selma**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Artis McCampbell, D-Livingston**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Ralph Howard, D-Greensboro**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Matthew Friday, R- Montevallo**

2017, 2018 – \$2,500 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Pebblin Warren, D-Tuskegee**

2018 – \$500 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Paul Lee, R-Dothan**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Chris Sells, R-Greenville**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Mike Jones Jr.,R-Andalusia**

2017 – \$2,000 from Geo Group

**State Rep. Steve Clouse, R-Ozark**

2017, 2018 – \$5,000 from Geo Group

**State Sen. Tim Melson, R-Florence**

2018 – \$2,500 from Geo Group

**State Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur**

2017 – \$2,500 from Geo Group

**State Sen. Majority Leader Greg Reed, R-Jasper**

2018 – \$2,500 from Geo Group

**State Sen. Steve Livingston, R-Scottsboro**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Sen. Jim McClendon, R-Springville**

2018 – \$2,500 from Geo Group

**State Sen. Greg Albritton, R-Range**

2018 – \$1,000 from Geo Group

**John Knight, D-Montgomery** (Lost election)

\$1,000 from Geo Group

**State Sen. Thomas Whatley, R-Auburn**

2018 – \$2,000 from Geo Group

Geo Group in April 2017, bought the Alabama Therapeutic Education Facility in Columbiana, the purchase part of the company's \$360 million purchase of Community Education Centers, a string of in-custody and reentry treatment centers that owned or managed 12,000 beds nationwide. That acquisition was [expected to bring in \\$250 million](#) annually for Geo Group.

Two months earlier, in February 2017, [then-U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions rescinded](#) the Obama administration's 2016 order to reduce the federal government's use of private prison companies.

In October 2016, Geo Group hired as lobbyists two former Sessions' aides, David Stewart and Ryan Robichaux, of the Birmingham-based law firm Bradley Arant Boult Cummings.

Geo Group has been an early and vigorous supporter of President Donald Trump. During the 2016 presidential election, Geo Group and a subsidiary gave a combined \$500,000 to a pro-Trump super PAC and to the president's inaugural committee, [according to The Washington Post](#). The paper also noted that Geo Group moved its annual leadership conference in 2017, at the Trump National Doral golf course in Florida.

In January 2017, Geo Group began intake at its 780-bed Folkston ICE Processing Center in Georgia, which the company said it expected to generate approximately \$21 million in annual revenues.

### **Lobbying**

In 2018, Geo Group paid \$180,000 for lobbying to the Birmingham-based firm Bradley Arant Boult Cummings. The company spent a total of \$1.5 million on lobbying in 2018.

Geo Group has spent \$800,000 on lobbying so far this year, paying Bradley Arant Boult Cummings \$70,000.

CoreCivic spent \$1.2 million to lobby lawmakers in 2018, and to date this year, the company has spent \$790,000.