News



In this Nov. 8, 2020, file photo, Matt Schlapp, chairman of the American Conservative Union, leaves after speaking at a news conference outside the Clark County Election Department in North Las Vegas. Schlapp repeated false claims about voter fraud and Donald Trump winning Nevada in the 2020 election. (AP/John Locher)



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Matt Schlapp, the longtime Republican activist who co-chaired the Catholics for Trump campaign group in 2020 and then parroted the former president's lies about a stolen election, is accused of making "sustained and unwanted and unsolicited" sexual advances against a former staffer for Herschel Walker's failed U.S. Senate campaign.

The Daily Beast reported on Jan. 6 that it had interviewed the staffer, a man who alleges that Schlapp, chairman of the American Conservative Union and lead organizer for the Conservative Political Action Conference, "groped" and "fondled" his crotch after buying him drinks at Atlanta bars last fall.

The staffer, who was not identified in the story, described Schlapp as behaving inappropriately, not respecting his personal space and telling the staffer that he wanted to spend the evening with him to discuss his future. The Daily Beast article indicated that the staffer presented the outlet with contemporaneous videos, text messages and phone logs to corroborate his account.

Schlapp's attorney, Charlie Spies, issued a prepared statement denying the allegations against Schlapp, calling them false and adding that Schlapp "denies any improper behavior," The Daily Beast reported.

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Schlapp, a combative conservative political operative who helped disrupt the recounting of votes in Florida during the 2000 presidential election, traveled to Georgia on Oct. 19 to stump for Walker, the former professional football player and Republican whose Senate campaign was dogged by accusations that he had pressured and given money to women to have abortions after he impregnated them. Walker, who ran on a strict anti-abortion platform, denied those allegations. He lost to U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, the incumbent Democrat, in a Dec. 6 runoff election.

In 2020, Schlapp, who is married to conservative political commentator Mercedes Schlapp, co-chaired Catholics for Trump, a group that sought to mobilize faith-based voters for Trump's reelection campaign. The group's advisory committee included mainstream conservative Catholics such as political consultant Mary Matalin and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, but also controversial figures such as Taylor Marshall, a far-right YouTube Catholic personality, and Frank Pavone, the longtime anti-abortion activist and partisan provocateur whom the Vatican laicized in late 2022.

In an April 2020 interview with the Eternal Word Television Network's EWTN News Nightly show in which he promoted Catholics for Trump, Schlapp said that Trump had been a strong defender of religious freedom and an aggressive proponent of "the right to life."

"There's no question that polls demonstrate that Catholics who are practicing their faith, who go to church regularly, like the policies that they see under President Trump," Schlapp said on the show.

When Trump lost the 2020 presidential election, Schlapp echoed the former president's falsehoods about widespread voter fraud. In November 2020, he appeared on Raymond Arroyo's "The World Over" show on EWTN, where he claimed that "tens of thousands of illegal ballots" had been cast against Trump in swing states like Nevada, Pennsylvania and Georgia. Federal and state courts dismissed more than 60 lawsuits filed by the Trump campaign and its allies alleging systemic electoral fraud, finding no evidence to back those claims.