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After deposition, U.S. House Democrats accuse Les Wexner of lying about Epstein ties

BY: MORGAN TRAU - FEBRUARY 20, 2026 5:00 AM



Group of U.S. House Oversight Committee Democrats speak to press in Ohio. (Photo by WEWS.)

U.S. House Democrats accused Central Ohio retail billionaire Les Wexner of facilitating Jeffrey Epstein's alleged sex trafficking ring, following Wexner's deposition Wednesday.

Wexner has denied any wrongdoing. Read [Wexner's full statement here](#).

Wexner, who lives in New Albany, Ohio, founded LBrands, which created Victoria's Secret, Bath & Body Works and Abercrombie & Fitch. Members of Congress headed to his mansion to question him about his longtime business relationship and friendship with Epstein, the financier and convicted sex offender.

During a break in the day Wednesday, Democrats spoke to press outside.

"There is no single person that was more involved in providing Jeffrey Epstein with the financial support to commit his crimes than Les Wexner," Oversight Committee Ranking Member Robert Garcia, D-California, said.

In a statement to Congress, Wexner said he met and hired Epstein as a financial advisor in the 1980s. He also admitted that he visited Epstein's island.

Democrats explained that he claimed he had just "walked around with his family" for an hour.

"This community deserves to know why the most powerful man and one of the richest men, if not the richest man, in Ohio, gave so much of his wealth to the largest modern sex trafficking ring in American history, why his money was used to traffic, abuse, and rape women and children," Garcia said.

The Democrats don't believe Wexner, they said.

Their investigation has shown that Wexner funded much of Epstein's life – including paying him \$1 billion, Garcia said. (UPDATE: Garcia has since said that he had misspoke, the [Columbus Dispatch reported](#). Wexner testified he didn't know exactly how much Epstein stole from him after he previously estimated the figure in the hundreds of millions. Wexner was also asked about Epstein managing around \$1.3 billion in stocks for him.)

Epstein lived in his home, used his yachts and planes, U.S. Rep. Yassamin Ansari, D-Arizona, said. But Wexner says he doesn't remember.

"It is almost inconceivable to be missing the amounts of money that are missing, and somehow Mr. Wexner has no idea," U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Texas, said.

In his letter, Wexner claimed to be duped by his former confidant.

"I was naïve, foolish, and gullible to put any trust in Jeffrey Epstein," Wexner wrote. "He was a con man. And while I was conned, I have done nothing wrong and have nothing to hide. I completely and irrevocably cut ties with Epstein nearly twenty years ago when I learned that he was an abuser, a crook, and a liar."

One survivor, however, said that she was assaulted at Wexner's home, U.S. Rep. Stephen Lynch, D-Massachusetts, said.

"I want the American people, but more specifically, I want the survivors and anyone who is struggling right now to know that we see you, we feel you, and we are fighting for you," Crockett said. "We will not stop."

Still, Wexner said that he "never witnessed nor had any knowledge of Epstein's criminal activity."

"There's no question in my mind that there was a relationship and that Mr. Wexler is very aware, and likely aware, of what was going on," Garcia said.

The Republican voice was notably missing from the deposition. Democrats said no GOP members came in, only staffers.

Statehouse Ohio Republicans are waiting for the investigation to play out.

"These were horrible things; it's sort of, in a larger picture, shows what happens when there's groupthink and people are turning their back in a particular situation," House Speaker Matt Huffman, R-Lima, said. "But we'll see what comes out of the deposition ultimately."

In D.C., U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi downplayed the Epstein files.

"The Dow is over 50,000 right now. The S&P at almost 7,000, and the Nasdaq smashing records. Americans 401ks and retirement savings are booming. That's what we should be talking about," Bondi said.

President Donald Trump, who first claimed the files were a "hoax," has avoided talking about it with press.

The Democrats accused Trump of being a part of a "cover-up," and Crockett explained that Wexner "didn't quite remember" Trump being in the same room as Epstein.

Trump did show up to Victoria's Secret runway shows, Crockett continued.

Wexner said he found that "odd," because Trump wasn't "engaged in fashion."

"Look, I think that we have – my first answer is yes, this deposition absolutely does matter, and it's important to get – remember, Mr. Wexner is under oath to tell the truth. So every single answer that he gives is a broader part of our investigation. This is just the beginning of our work in trying to get the truth on Mr. Wexler, so it absolutely matters," Garcia said.

Asked what happens if the Justice Department doesn't do anything, Garcia said that's up to President Trump.

"We're putting the pressure on," Garcia said.

Despite Wexner maintaining his innocence, both federal and state lawmakers continue to distance themselves.

Over the past several weeks, politicians have started donating money given to them by Wexner.

Ohio Republican U.S. Rep. Mike Carey said he donated to organizations aimed at preventing human trafficking.

Ohio Treasurer Robert Sprague said he donated to an organization that helps women and children facing homelessness.

State Sen. Michele Reynolds, R-Canal Winchester, said she donated her funds to charities that help fight food insecurity.

Ohio Republican U.S. Sen. Jon Husted's team said he would be donating, but didn't indicate where.

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