

Craigslist's \$100K Donation Burned By Women's Group

By Lauren Smiley

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A San Francisco non-profit that helps previously incarcerated women burned a \$100,000 check from Craigslist this week in a ritual ceremony, saying accepting the money would be profiting "from a place of exploitation of girls."

The [Center for Young Women's Development](#) received the unsolicited check last Friday at their Folsom Street office, said executive director Marlene Sanchez. After much discussion and a phone conversation with Craigslist, the staff burned the check on Monday. Craigslist couldn't be immediately contact for comment Thursday about their donation going up in flames.

Sanchez says it was a hard decision to make during a recession at a non-profit whose annual budget is about \$800,000 culled from city monies, private foundations, and individual donors. Yet they took a poll of six young women they work with and Sanchez says three of them knew someone who'd been trafficked in Craigslist sex ads.



"As an organization of women that all grew up poor, when will we get the chance for another \$100,000?" Sanchez says. "But it was a chance to stand up for what we believe in and say we won't be easily bought."

"This was the easiest \$100,000 we'd ever gotten," she continued, saying the letter stated it was a one-time grant and couldn't



be used to influence any sort of legislation or propaganda against Craigslist. Sanchez said the staff called Craigslist to ask some questions about their commitment to continue supporting young women's organizations. "They were just annoyed by our question and said other people would be happy to receive it, and if we weren't happy we could just void the check."

They didn't just void it - they burned it, and Sanchez sent us the picture to prove it.

Craigslist shut down its adult services section earlier this month after [intense pressure](#) from Congress, state attorneys general, and women's rights advocates. The classified behemoth's attorneys [told a House Judiciary committee](#) yesterday they had no intent to reopen the site. Still, the site's reps [defended the sex ad section](#), saying shutting it down was a "step backward" in fighting sex trafficking.

The San Francisco non-profit joined at least one other women's organization that has rejected money from the web site. Earlier this summer, the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Health and Gender Equity got a \$25,000 check, but sent it back after seeing Craigslist's Chief Executive Officer Jim Buckmaster's "testy replies to allegations that the site facilitates sex trafficking," according to [news reports](#).



Sanchez says the site simply has not shown enough commitment to women's causes. "That check came with a lot of other stresses. That same week, we got a donation from [the [Isabel Allende Foundation](#)] for \$500 and we were jumping for joy. We know those are people who will give \$500 this year and \$500 next year. [Craigslist's donation] is a one-time, don't ask questions, just go away check."

As for the ceremony, Sanchez says all the staffers touched the check to "put energy on it," some said a prayer, and they burned it along with some sage. "We gave thanks for the many blessings we've received," Sanchez says.

It's just that Craigslist's blessing won't be among them.