

Val Hoyle is under federal investigation for illegally directing over half a million dollars in taxpayer funds to a campaign donor.

La Mota

La Mota Operates Nearly 30 Cannabis Dispensaries In Oregon And Is Co-Owned By Rosa Cazares And Aaron Mitchell. “But questions from Hoyle’s time at the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries continue to follow her—including her relationship with the charismatic co-founders of the embattled La Mota dispensary chain, Aaron Mitchell and Rosa Cazares. The duo—who share a young child together and control close to 30 dispensaries across the state, along with multiple farms, warehouses and processing facilities—became prominent political donors to top Oregon Democrats over the past three years until a series of stories published by *WW* that culminated in the scandal involving former secretary of state Shemia Fagan dashed their rising political influence.” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

In Addition To Being Co-Owners, Mitchell And Cazares Are On-And-Off Partners Who Have A Child Together. “Mitchell, Cazares’ longtime on-and-off partner and owner of La Mota’s many companies, contributed \$20,000 in June 2021 to Hoyle’s reelection campaign (she hadn’t yet declared her run for Congress). It made him the second-highest individual donor to Hoyle’s political action committee that year.” (Sophie Peel, “Nine Months After She Left State Government, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle Can’t Shake The Long Shadows Of Her Time There,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/27/23)

In Recent Years, Cazares And Mitchell Had Become Prolific Political Donors In Oregon, Giving Over \$200,000 To Top Democrats In The State. “As *WW* reported in March, La Mota and its principals, owner Aaron Mitchell and CEO Rosa Cazares, and a political action committee controlled by Cazares, gave more than \$200,000 in campaign contributions to top Democrats in recent years, including \$68,000 to Kotek, \$10,000 to Wagner, and \$45,000 to former Secretary of State Shemia Fagan, who resigned last week after *WW* revealed a consulting contract she took with a La Mota affiliate. (All of the recipients are Democrats.)” (Sophie Peel And Nigel Jaquiss, “La Mota Founders’ Campaign Contributions To Kotek And Others: Stacks Of Cash,” [Willamette Week](#), 5/10/23)

Oregonian HEADLINE: “Oregon Secretary Of State Shemia Fagan Is Quietly Moonlighting As A Consultant For Embattled Pot Company.” (Hillary Borrud, [Oregonian](#), 4/27/23)

In February 2023, Oregon Secretary Of State Shemia Fagan Entered Into An Agreement To Provide Consulting Services To Veriede Holding, LLC, An Affiliate Of La Mota. “In a remarkable turn of events, Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan confirms in response to questions from *WW* that she entered into an agreement in February to provide consulting services to an affiliate of the troubled La Mota cannabis dispensary chain. ... ‘Secretary Fagan recused herself from the OLCC audit on Feb. 15 because she was planning to begin a limited consulting contract with Veriede Holding LLC (an affiliate of La Mota),’ spokesman Ben Morris said. ‘The contract with [Veriede] began on Feb. 20, 2023, and is for projects outside of Oregon.’” (Sophie Peel, “Secretary Of State Shemia Fagan Is Working As Private Consultant To Troubled Cannabis Couple,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/27/23)

Following The Revelation, Fagan Resigned As Secretary Of State. “Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan resigned Tuesday less than a week after it came to light that she had taken a lucrative side job consulting for an embattled cannabis company at a time when her office was auditing the state’s marijuana program.” (Hillary Borrud, “Oregon Secretary Of State Shemia Fagan Resigns,” [Oregonian](#), 5/2/23)

Since 2018, The Oregon Department Of Revenue Has Issued More Than \$1.6 Million In Tax Liens Against Mitchell, Cazares, And La Mota Companies. The IRS Has Placed More Than 1.4 Million In Liens For Nonpayment Of Personal Income And Employment Taxes. “More troubling, the Oregon Department of Revenue has issued tax liens of more than \$1.6 million against Mitchell, Cazares and La Mota companies since 2018, including at least \$621,000 in cannabis taxes dating back to 2016. And, on the federal level, the IRS placed liens on Cazares and Mitchell in March and November last year, totaling \$1.4 million for nonpayment of personal income and employment taxes.” (Sophie Peel, “The Power Couple Of Oregon Cannabis Bankrolled Top

Democrats Even As Their Companies' Taxes And Bills Went Unpaid," Willamette Week, 3/29/23) In Late 2023, Special Agents With The Federal Bureau Of Investigations And The U.S. Treasury Department Visited Former Associates Of La Mota. "Two former associates of Aaron Mitchell and Rosa Cazares, the embattled co-founders of the La Mota cannabis dispensary cone yhain, tell WW they were approached in recent weeks by special agents with the FBI and the U.S. Treasury Department asking about the duo's business practices and personal matters." (Sophie Peel, "FBI And IRS Special Agents Arrive At Portland Doorsteps To Inquire About La Mota," [Willamette Week](#), 12/13/23)

Investigation

In May 2023, The U.S. Department Of Justice Issued Subpoenas To Five Oregon State Agencies, Asking For All Records Involving Shemia Fagan, Rosa Cazares, And Aaron Mitchell. "Wide-ranging federal subpoenas issued May 24 and obtained by WW show U.S. Department of Justice investigators are seeking extensive information about former Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan and Rosa Cazares and Aaron Mitchell—the co-founders of the La Mota cannabis chain. Fagan began moonlighting for a La Mota affiliate in February as a private consultant. The subpoenas request that five state agencies—the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission, the Departments of Administrative Services and Revenue, the Secretary of State's Office, and the Oregon Government Ethics Commission—provide "all information, records, and documents...relating to the individuals and entities listed below" ahead of a grand jury proceeding June 21 at the United States Courthouse in Portland. Three names are listed: Fagan, Cazares and Mitchell." (Sophie Peel, "Federal Subpoenas Issued to State Agencies Request Extensive Information Related to Shemia Fagan, Rosa Cazares, Aaron Mitchell and the Couple's Many Companies," [Willamette Week](#), 6/7/23)

According To Two Sources, Special Agents Arrived At Their Portland Homes Asking Questions About How Mitchell And Cazares Paid Their Bills, What Cars They Drove, And The Properties They Owned. They Also Asked About The Couple's Political Interests And About The Business Structure Of La Mota. "Now it appears the feds are asking questions about the couple's business practices. According to the two sources, special agents arrived at their Portland homes within the past month and asked questions about how Mitchell and Cazares paid their bills, what cars they drove, and the properties they owned. They also asked about the couple's political interests, the two sources say, and about the business structure of La Mota. (Mitchell and Cazares registered more than 120 limited liability companies with the state in the past five years. Only four of those LLCs are currently active, according to business filings." (Sophie Peel, "FBI And IRS Special Agents Arrive At Portland Doorsteps To Inquire About La Mota," [Willamette Week](#), 12/13/23)

A Third Source Said They Were Approached About Two Months Ago By Special Agents Regarding La Mota And The Politicians Who Received Large Cash Contributions From The Couple. "A third person tells WW they were approached about two months ago by special agents regarding La Mota and the politicians who received large cash contributions from the couple." (Sophie Peel, "FBI And IRS Special Agents Arrive At Portland Doorsteps To Inquire About La Mota," [Willamette Week](#), 12/13/23)

NOTE: *In 2018, State Representative Val Hoyle Ran For Commissioner Of The Oregon Bureau Of Labor And Industry. Hoyle Won The Race Outright In May 2018 And Began Serving The Four Year Term In 2019. In 2021, Hoyle Debated Running For Another Term As Commissioner Or Running For Oregon's Fourth Congressional District. On December 1, 2021, Hoyle Announced That She Would Run For Congress After Incumbent Peter DeFazio Announced His Retirement. In November 2022, Hoyle Beat Republican Alek Skarlatos.*

KDRV HEADLINE: "Val Hoyle Now Part Of Investigation" (KDRV via [Archive.org](#), 2/13/24)

Grant Background

On August 26, 2022, The Oregon Bureau Of Labor And Industry Awarded A \$554,990 Grant To The Nonprofit, ENDVR. "The same day WW published its story, the Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries formally terminated a half-million-dollar grant awarded to a brand-new nonprofit co-founded by Cazares, and asked for the money back. ... On Aug. 26, 2022, BOLI awarded more than

half a million dollars to a nonprofit co-founded by Rosa Cazares, who also runs La Mota, the second-largest cannabis dispensary chain in the state. BOLI gave the \$554,990 grant to the brand-new nonprofit ENDVR, which pledged in its application to create an apprenticeship program for botanical extractionists—that is, lab workers who extract chemical compounds from the cannabis plant.” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/12/23)

The Grant To ENDVR Was Based On Their Pledge To Create An Apprenticeship Program For “Botanical Extractionists,” - Lab Workers Who Extract Chemical Compounds From The Cannabis Plant. “BOLI gave the \$554,990 grant to the brand-new nonprofit ENDVR, which pledged in its application to create an apprenticeship program for botanical extractionists—that is, lab workers who extract chemical compounds from the cannabis plant.” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 04/12/23)

ENDVR Had No Previous Track Record And Received Its 501(c)(3) Status Less Than Two Weeks Before Applying For The Grant. “ENDVR had no previous track record, and received 501(c)(3) status less than two weeks before applying. (WW later reported that the grant was never legally viable.)” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

The ENDVR Grant Was The Largest Of The 10 Grants Made During That Round Of Funding, Even Though Other Grants Went To Well-Established Educational Institutions, Like Chemeketa Community College. “ENDVR had no evident track record in job training—or of performing any work. Nevertheless, then-Oregon Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle called it an ‘important investment’ and vouched for the program. The council approved the grant, which was the largest of the 10 grants issued in that round of funding. The other grant recipients included a number of well-established educational institutions, like Chemeketa Community College.” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 04/12/23)

ENDVR Was Co-Founded In December 2021 By Marijuana Dispensary Chain Owner Rosa Cazares And Cannabis Edible Company Founder Laura Vega. “On March 29, WW published the results of an investigation into the business dealings of Rosa Cazares and Aaron Mitchell, co-founders of cannabis dispensary chain La Mota. ... Cazares founded ENDVR in December 2021 with Laura Vega, who founded a cannabis products company and served on an array of cannabis advisory bodies.” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/12/23)

- “Laura Vega served as a member of the Portland Minority Cannabis Cabinet and Cannabis Tax Steering Committee tasked with utilizing cannabis tax funds to help minorities disproportionately affected by prohibition. Vega also served on Oregon’s Cannabis Testing Rules Advisory Committee. She started Green State of Mind in Oregon with her husband in 2014, receiving accolades from the national media for its edibles. Green State of Mind received its recreational license in 2017, and the company has since expanded its product line, collaborated with premier industry brands and consulted on brand creation.” (“The 100 Most Influential People In Cannabis,” [High Times Magazine](#), 5/21/18)

Vega Had Previously Worked For La Mota. “Vega for a time also worked for La Mota.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led by Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried for a Year to Create an Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/06/23)

ENDVR’s Headquarters Are Listed As A Storage Unit In Beaverton, Oregon. “As for ENDVR, whose headquarters are listed as a storage unit in Beaverton, it would appear that some of its directors abandoned it after WW’s series of stories on La Mota. Ellison and Vega, the executive director when ENDVR received the grant, are no longer listed in business filings.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

NOTE: *ENDVR’s place of business listed on their [website](#) is 16501 NW Twin Oaks Drive, Beaverton OR, 97006. On the nonprofit application, Vegas lists unit 102A as the specific unit (102A does not exist at this address). On the business application, Vega lists unit 103A (the empty shop below) as the business address.*



(16501 NW Twin Oaks Drive, Beaverton OR, 97006, [Google Maps](#))

***Willamette Week*: “U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle (D-Ore.) Left Her Position As Oregon Labor Commissioner At The Beginning Of The Year To Assume Her Congressional Seat. But Questions From Hoyle’s Time At The Oregon Bureau Of Labor And Industries Continue To Follow Her—including Her Relationship With The Charismatic Co-Founders Of The Embattled La Mota Dispensary Chain, Aaron Mitchell And Rosa Cazares.”** (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

One Year Before ENDVR Received The Grant, Hoyle Tried To Create An Apprenticeship Program Specifically For La Mota. “A year before a nonprofit co-founded by La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares received a half-million dollar grant from the Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries, records show the agency tried to create an apprenticeship program specifically for Cazares’ company. That’s important for two reasons. First, then-BOLI Commissioner and now U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle (D-Ore.) received major campaign contributions from Cazares and the co-owner of La Mota, Aaron Mitchell. Second, the cannabis apprenticeship La Mota pursued—and the grant its offshoot nonprofit would eventually receive in the fall of 2022—weren’t legally viable. Records newly obtained by *WW* show BOLI staff was aware of that in 2021 but pushed forward anyway for the better part of a year.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

In Spring 2023, Willamette Week Asked Hoyle If She Had Met With Cazares At Any Point Before The Grant Was Approved. Hoyle Said, “I Don’t Recall. I Might Have. I’m Not Saying I Did Or Didn’t.” “When *WW* asked Hoyle in a spring interview if she had met with Cazares at any point about the grant, Hoyle said: ‘I don’t recall. I might have. I’m not saying I did or didn’t.’” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

In Spring 2023, Hoyle Told Willamette Week She Spoke To Laura Vega About The Grant, But Vega Claimed She Did Not Speak To Hoyle. “Hoyle told *WW* in a phone call that she remembers speaking to Vega about the apprenticeship prior to the application period, but can’t recall if she ever spoke to Cazares. (Vega says she did not speak with Hoyle.)” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/12/23)

In March 2021, Hoyle And The Director Of The Apprenticeship And Training Division Of BOLI Lisa Ransom Had Dinner With Cazares To Discuss A La Mota-Specific Apprenticeship.

“MARCH 24, 2021: La Mota’s traceable relationship with BOLI appears to have started here, when BOLI Commissioner Hoyle dined with Cazares at Portland City Grill to discuss a La Mota-specific apprenticeship. Hoyle was accompanied by Lisa Ransom, director of the apprenticeship and training division at BOLI. Hoyle spokeswoman Marissa Sandgren says it wasn’t unusual for the state labor commissioner to discuss apprenticeship opportunities with individuals: ‘Val would talk to a lot of people about apprenticeships, and those could be at dinners, events, coffee, or meetings.’ Sandgren says.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

According To The Calendar Invite, The Topic Of The Meeting Was “Rosa Cazara, La Mota re: Cannabis Apprenticeship.” “U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle (D-Ore.) left her position as Oregon labor commissioner at the beginning of the year to assume her congressional seat. But questions from Hoyle’s time at the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries continue to follow her—including her relationship with the charismatic co-founders of the embattled La Mota dispensary chain, Aaron Mitchell and Rosa Cazares. ... ENDVR had no previous track record, and received 501(c)(3) status less than two weeks before applying. (WW later reported that the grant was never legally viable.) When WW asked Hoyle in a spring interview if she had met with Cazares at any point about the grant, Hoyle said: ‘I don’t recall. I might have. I’m not saying I did or didn’t.’ Records obtained by WW, however, show that Hoyle met with Cazares and the director of the apprenticeship and training division for BOLI, Lisa Ransom, at Portland City Grill on March 24, 2021. The topic of the meeting, according to a calendar invite: ‘Rosa Cazara, La Mota re: Cannabis Apprenticeship.’ A spokeswoman for Hoyle, Marissa Sandgren, says Hoyle believes Cazares paid for her meal that night, but that it was under \$50. ‘If we knew then what we know now,’ Sandgren says, ‘that dinner wouldn’t have happened.’” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

Hoyle’s Spokeswoman Believes Cazares Paid For Hoyle’s Dinner. “A Spokeswoman For Hoyle, Marissa Sandgren, Says Hoyle Believes Cazares Paid For Her Meal That Night, But That It Was Under \$50. ‘If we knew then what we know now,’ Sandgren says, ‘that dinner wouldn’t have happened.’” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

- **A Spokesperson For Hoyle Claimed, “If We Knew Then What We Know Now,” “That Dinner Wouldn’t Have Happened.”** “A spokeswoman for Hoyle, Marissa Sandgren, says Hoyle believes Cazares paid for her meal that night, but that it was under \$50. ‘If we knew then what we know now,’ Sandgren says, ‘that dinner wouldn’t have happened.’” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

Three Months After The Initial Meeting, La Mota Co-Owner Aaron Mitchell Contributed \$20,000 To Val Hoyle’s BOLI Commissioner Campaign. “JUNE 2021: Aaron Mitchell, who owns La Mota, contributed \$20,000 to Hoyle.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

The Contribution Was Made In Cash. “Recipients of La Mota’s cash contributions included Fagan, Gov. Tina Kotek, former Bureau of Labor and Industries Commissioner Val Hoyle (now a U.S. congresswoman), and Senate President Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego). Cazares and Mitchell threw lavish fundraisers for Kotek and Fagan in 2021 and 2022, including a black-tie gala for Kotek on the eve of her gubernatorial victory.” (Sophie Peel, “Nine Months After She Left State Government, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle Can’t Shake The Long Shadows Of Her Time There,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/27/23)

Making Political Donations With “Stacks Of Cash” Was A Regular Practice Of Cazares and Mitchell. Oregon State Lawmakers Later Voted To Ban The Practice. “Republican lawmakers, including Senate Minority Leader Tim Knopp (R-Bend) and House Minority Leader Vikki Breese-Iverson (R-Prineville), drafted that bill in response to WW’s reporting in May that Rosa Cazares and Aaron Mitchell, the co-founders of embattled cannabis chain La Mota, gave tens of

thousands of dollars in political contributions to top Democrats in stacks of cash ... Campaign staff for Kotek drove last year to a West Hills mansion the couple rented at the time to pick up the tens of thousands of dollars in cash, Kotek's campaign manager told WW last month. So did campaign staff for Wagner. That raised concerns about the difficulty of tracing cash contributions, and critics said it compounds another problem with the state's campaign finance laws: Oregon is one of only five states that allow unlimited contributions. That meant donors could give limitless amounts, in cash, from sources that can't be traced." (Sophie Peel, "Oregon Senate Passes Bill Banning Politicians From Accepting More Than \$100 a Year in Cash From One Donor," [Willamette Week](#), 6/15/23)

In December 2021, Cazares Met With BOLI Again And Brought Executive Director Of The Political Training Academy Emerge Oregon As Well As Laura Vega. "EARLY DECEMBER 2021: The conversation about the apprenticeship appeared to revive in earnest. Aviles wrote to Cazares: 'We look forward to meeting with you and working with you to move along the pathway to create a successful apprenticeship program that assists you in meeting La Mota's goals.' This time, La Mota brought others onto the team. Included on a Dec. 9 meeting invite were Annie Ellison, executive director of the powerhouse political training academy Emerge Oregon, and Laura Vega, who would become Cazares' co-founder of the nonprofit that eight months later would receive the \$554,000 grant from BOLI. Vega for a time also worked for La Mota. (Ellison told WW previously that she never accepted any money from La Mota.)" (Sophie Peel, "The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota," [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

- **Val Hoyle Is A Graduate Of The Emerge Oregon Bootcamp, Where Rosa Cazares Was Vice Chair And Next In Line To Be Board Chair, And Laura Vega Was A Member Of The Current Year's Class.** "Point to almost any Democratic woman in Oregon politics and chances are she's connected to Emerge Oregon, the how-to-run-for-office bootcamp that's grown into a vast, efficient political machine whose nearly 400 alumnae sit in Congress, serve in the Legislature, preside in circuit court, run a major state agency and influential nonprofits, and govern numerous cities and counties. ... Fagan's fall from grace has prompted a reckoning for Emerge, particularly given that now-discredited cannabis company co-owner and rising Democratic donor Rosa Cazares had been next in line to be its board chair. ... Cazares had also joined with Laura Vega, a fellow cannabis industry vet and member of this year's Emerge class, to form a nonprofit, Endeavor Oregon. Former Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle, an Emerge grad who now represents the Eugene area in Congress, accepted a \$20,000 donation from Aaron Mitchell, Cazares' partner and co-owner of La Mota in June 2021, before she ran for Congress. Vega also donated \$1,000 to Hoyle's congressional campaign and Cazares and Mitchell donated a total of \$5,800, all in April 2022, records show. In August 2022, a state apprenticeship council overseen by Hoyle unanimously approved Endeavor for a \$555,000 grant, after Hoyle vouched for the new venture." (Julia Silverman and Hillary Borrud, "Emerge Oregon, The Power Political Network For Democratic Women That Nurtured Shemia Fagan, Reckons With Her Downfall," [Oregonian](#), 5/14/23)
- "Laborers Local 737 political and legislative assistant Danielle Garza will join several other union representatives as a member of the Oregon Apprenticeship and Training Council (OSATC). ... OSATC—Chaired by Oregon Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle—is responsible for approving new apprenticeship programs, advising the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries on apprenticeship policy, and making decisions about individual apprentices' registration, discipline, and placement." ("New Labor Representation On Apprenticeship Council," [Northwest Labor Press](#), 3/17/21)

Laura Vega Testified Before Oregon Bureau Of Labor And Industry Commissioner Val Hoyle And The Oregon State Apprenticeship And Training Council In Support Of Granting ENDVR The Grant. "Laura Vega, Executive Director provided an over of the ENDVR request for funding in the amount of \$554,900 to create a new manufacturing registered apprenticeship program for botanical extractions." (Meeting Minutes, [Oregon State Apprenticeship And Training Council](#), 07/27/2022)

Hoyle Vouched For The Program, Calling It An "Important Investment" For Oregon. "Cazares told the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council that ENDVR, whose place of

business in state filings is listed as a mini storage unit in Beaverton, would deliver. ‘We are all very motivated women,’ Cazares said. ENDVR had no evident track record in job training—or of performing any work. Nevertheless, then-Oregon Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle called it an ‘important investment’ and vouched for the program. The council approved the grant, which was the largest of the 10 grants issued in that round of funding. The other grant recipients included a number of well-established educational institutions, like Chemeketa Community College. ‘We’re looking at a time when [cannabis] will be legal federally. Without federal legalization, this is a billion-dollar industry in Oregon,’ Hoyle said at a July 27 meeting of the council to vet the grants. ‘And when this can be exported across state lines, it’s going to be larger. So professionalizing the workforce is important.’” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/12/23)

- “In August 2022, a state apprenticeship council overseen by Hoyle unanimously approved Endeavor for a \$555,000 grant, after Hoyle vouched for the new venture.” (Julia Silverman and Hillary Borrud, “Emerge Oregon, The Power Political Network For Democratic Women That Nurtured Shemia Fagan, Reckons With Her Downfall,” [Oregonian](#), 5/14/23)

But Members Of The Council Expressed Skepticism About ENDVR’s Plan For The Apprenticeship Program That Would Only Train Four Graduates. “Back on July 27, 2022, the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council greenlighted \$1.6 million in grants for workforce training. It approved all 10 apprenticeship proposals presented that day. Except one: the application from ENDVR for the largest amount of money requested by any of the applicants. In a recording of the meeting, members of the council expressed skepticism about ENDVR’s high personnel costs—\$97,000 a year for Vega alone—and how so few graduates, only four, would actually be trained.” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/12/23)

- **Prior To The July Meeting, Hoyle Learned That The Grant Would Only Train Four Apprentices. Hoyle Texted BOLI’s Apprenticeship Division Director, Lisa Ransom, Saying That While She Was On Board With The Grant, Vega Needed To Convince The Board That Eventually, The Program Would Train More Than 4 People.** “Records obtained by *WW*, however, show that Hoyle met with Cazares and the director of the apprenticeship and training division for BOLI, Lisa Ransom, at Portland City Grill on March 24, 2021. ... ‘When ENDVR president Laura Vega explained that the grant would train only four apprentices, Hoyle texted Ransom: ‘Is it really just 4 apprentices?’ Ransom responded that it was. (Vega explained, at this point, that because it was a new apprenticeship program, much of the money would go toward building the program so that it could train more apprentices in the future.) Hoyle texted back to Ransom: ‘There needs to be an explanation of how this will be more than 4.’ Three minutes later, she said in another text: ‘I’m going to clarify, people didn’t hear it in the way she said it.’ Hoyle did, in fact, speak up at the meeting and reiterate that the program was a novel one that would require high startup costs. Ransom texted Hoyle shortly thereafter: ‘Reminder the funding is intended to expand Apprenticeship and showing demonstrated value.’ Hoyle responded: ‘I understand.’ In immediate subsequent texts, Hoyle wrote: ‘You don’t need to convince me’ and ‘It’s the board.’” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

During The Meeting, Hoyle Text Ransom From Her Personal Phone, Questioning Vega’s Statement, Saying, “Is It Really Just 4 Apprentices?” “Throughout that meeting, records obtained by *WW* show, Hoyle—from a personal phone, not her state-issued phone—texted Ransom about the ENDVR proposal. When ENDVR president Laura Vega explained that the grant would train only four apprentices, Hoyle texted Ransom: ‘Is it really just 4 apprentices?’” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

- **After Realizing That Only Four Apprentices Would Be Trained, Hoyle Text Ransom, “I’m Going To Clarify, People Didn’t Hear It In The Way She Said It.”** “Hoyle texted back to Ransom: ‘There needs to be an explanation of how this will be more than 4.’ Three minutes later, she said in another text: ‘I’m going to clarify, people didn’t hear it in the way she said it.’”

Hoyle did, in fact, speak up at the meeting and reiterate that the program was a novel one that would require high startup costs.” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

Council Members Also Raised Concerns About Laura Vega’s Large \$97,000 Salary During The Meeting. “Back on July 27, 2022, the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council greenlighted \$1.6 million in grants for workforce training. It approved all 10 apprenticeship proposals presented that day. Except one: the application from ENDVR for the largest amount of money requested by any of the applicants. In a recording of the meeting, members of the council expressed skepticism about ENDVR’s high personnel costs—\$97,000 a year for Vega alone—and how so few graduates, only four, would actually be trained. ‘I’ve read this I don’t know how many times, and I’m baffled as a taxpayer how you can expect half a million dollars to support four people being trained,’ said council member Evan Stuart at the July meeting. ‘I don’t even know how this got through the committee.’” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/12/23)

Council Member Evan Stuart Said, “I’ve Read This I Don’t Know How Many Times, And I’m Baffled As A Taxpayer How You Can Expect Half A Million Dollars To Support Four People Being Trained.” Stuart Continued, “I Don’t Even Know How This Got Through The Committee.” “‘I’ve read this I don’t know how many times, and I’m baffled as a taxpayer how you can expect half a million dollars to support four people being trained,’ said council member Evan Stuart at the July meeting. ‘I don’t even know how this got through the committee.’” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/12/23)

Hoyle Then Abandoned The Standard Process And Delayed A Vote On The ENDVR Grant. She Directed ENDVR To Come Back With A Stronger Proposal In 30 Days. “Fast forward to the summer of 2022, and Hoyle helped shepherd a \$554,000 state grant to ENDVR, a nonprofit co-founded by Cazares. When ENDVR’s grant proposal was met with sharp criticism by the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council at a July 27 meeting, Hoyle abandoned the standard process and delayed a vote on the grant. She directed ENDVR to come back with a stronger proposal in 30 days.” (Sophie Peel, “Nine Months After She Left State Government, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle Can’t Shake The Long Shadows Of Her Time There,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/27/23)

- **After Hoyle Instructed ENDVR To Take An Additional Month To Answer The Council’s Question, Ransom Texted Hoyle That There Was Not A Meeting The Following Month. Hoyle Responded, “Well We Will Need To Schedule One.”** “Hoyle then instructed ENDVR to take another month to answer the council’s questions and return with a fuller proposal. After that, she said, the council would take a vote. Ransom then texted Hoyle: ‘There’s no meeting a month from now.’ Hoyle responded: ‘Well we will need to schedule one.’” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

Following The July Meeting, Hoyle Directed BOLI Staff To Meet Offline With ENDVR To Talk About What The Nonprofit Would Need To Do To Improve Its Proposal. “Records newly obtained by *WW* show that right after the July meeting, Hoyle directed BOLI staff to meet offline with ENDVR to talk about what the nonprofit would need to do to improve its proposal. Attending the private Aug. 1 meeting were two members of the apprenticeship council. No notes are available from the meeting.” (Sophie Peel, “Nine Months After She Left State Government, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle Can’t Shake The Long Shadows Of Her Time There,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/27/23)

After The Offline Meeting, The Human Resources Department Launched An Investigation Which Noted That Staff Felt Hoyle’s Involvement With The ENDVR Grant Was Peculiar. “Records newly obtained by *WW* show that right after the July meeting, Hoyle directed BOLI staff to meet offline with ENDVR to talk about what the nonprofit would need to do to improve its proposal. ... That meeting, however, went awry. ... The human resources department launched an investigation. Records show that Gov. Kate Brown’s deputy chief of staff at the time, Andrea Cooper, told BOLI the councilman’s comment warranted an investigation. Two things are apparent from investigation records provided by BOLI’s current administration. First, the

investigation interviews show that staff felt Hoyle's involvement with the ENDVR grant was peculiar. One BOLI staff member said in her interview, according to the investigator's notes, that BOLI's apprenticeship director was 'not happy with Val's decision to abandon normal process' at the July 27 council meeting. Another staffer, according to HR's notes, said in an interview that the initial council meeting stopped following Robert's Rules of Order, a set of parliamentary rules that Oregon governing bodies are supposed to follow when discussing matters before a vote. (Sophie Peel, "Nine Months After She Left State Government, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle Can't Shake The Long Shadows Of Her Time There," [Willamette Week](#), 9/27/23)

One BOLI Staff Member Said In Her Interview, According To The Investigator's Notes, That BOLI's Apprenticeship Director Was "Not Happy With Val's Decision To Abandon Normal Process" At The July 27 Council Meeting. "First, the investigation interviews show that staff felt Hoyle's involvement with the ENDVR grant was peculiar. One BOLI staff member said in her interview, according to the investigator's notes, that BOLI's apprenticeship director was 'not happy with Val's decision to abandon normal process' at the July 27 council meeting. Another staffer, according to HR's notes, said in an interview that the initial council meeting stopped following Robert's Rules of Order, a set of parliamentary rules that Oregon governing bodies are supposed to follow when discussing matters before a vote. (Sophie Peel, "Nine Months After She Left State Government, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle Can't Shake The Long Shadows Of Her Time There," [Willamette Week](#), 9/27/23)

Another Staffer, According To Human Resources' Notes, Said In An Interview That The Initial Council Meeting Stopped Following Robert's Rules Of Order, A Set Of Parliamentary Rules That Oregon Governing Bodies Are Supposed To Follow When Discussing Matters Before A Vote. "First, the investigation interviews show that staff felt Hoyle's involvement with the ENDVR grant was peculiar. One BOLI staff member said in her interview, according to the investigator's notes, that BOLI's apprenticeship director was 'not happy with Val's decision to abandon normal process' at the July 27 council meeting. Another staffer, according to HR's notes, said in an interview that the initial council meeting stopped following Robert's Rules of Order, a set of parliamentary rules that Oregon governing bodies are supposed to follow when discussing matters before a vote. (Sophie Peel, "Nine Months After She Left State Government, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle Can't Shake The Long Shadows Of Her Time There," [Willamette Week](#), 9/27/23)

According To BOLI Spokesperson Rachel Mann, Two Months After The Meeting, Hoyle Called BOLI Human Resources Manager Ashlie Ulstad And Told Her To Drop The Investigation. "BOLI's current administration under Stephenson declined to comment on the appropriateness of ENDVR meeting privately with BOLI staff at Hoyle's request, but agency spokeswoman Rachel Mann pointed to state statutes that advise members of a governing body—like the apprenticeship council—not to gather without a quorum because it 'creates the appearance of impropriety.' ... The second thing made clear is that the investigation came to a halt in October—after Hoyle called BOLI human resources manager Ashlie Ulstad and told her to drop it, according to Mann. Hoyle placed the call to Ulstad shortly after Ulstad interviewed Cazares about the comment. (In interview notes, Cazares said she took no offense to the face tattoo comment.)" (Sophie Peel, "Nine Months After She Left State Government, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle Can't Shake The Long Shadows Of Her Time There," [Willamette Week](#), 9/27/23)

Hoyle Claimed She Did Not Recall Telling Ulstad To Stop The Investigation, But Added, "I Could Understand If She Interpreted It That Way." "Hoyle tells *WW* that she called Ulstad because 'it seemed like an overreach to publicly rebuke a volunteer council member over what was, at worst, a bad joke. More importantly, it was my understanding that the people in the conversation did not take offense to the joke.' Hoyle says she doesn't recall telling Ulstad to stop the investigation, but adds, 'I could understand if she interpreted it that way.'" (Sophie Peel, "Nine Months After She Left State Government, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle Can't Shake The Long Shadows Of Her Time There," [Willamette Week](#), 9/27/23)

In March 2023, BOLI Terminated The Grant And Forced ENDVR To Return All Unspent Money. "MARCH 29, 2023: After *WW* reported on Cazares and Mitchell's unpaid bills and tax liens, current BOLI Commissioner Christina Stephenson terminated the \$554,000 grant. ENDVR was forced to return all unspent money; records provided by BOLI show the nonprofit had spent \$97,000

at that point.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

When The Grant Was Terminated, ENDVR Had Spent \$97,000, The Same Amount As Co-Founder Laura Vega’s Salary. “MARCH 29, 2023: After *WW* reported on Cazares and Mitchell’s unpaid bills and tax liens, current BOLI Commissioner Christina Stephenson terminated the \$554,000 grant. ENDVR was forced to return all unspent money; records provided by BOLI show the nonprofit had spent \$97,000 at that point.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

- **Laura Vega’s Salary From ENDVR Was \$97,000.** “Back on July 27, 2022, the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council greenlighted \$1.6 million in grants for workforce training. It approved all 10 apprenticeship proposals presented that day. Except one: the application from ENDVR for the largest amount of money requested by any of the applicants. In a recording of the meeting, members of the council expressed skepticism about ENDVR’s high personnel costs—\$97,000 a year for Vega alone—and how so few graduates, only four, would actually be trained.” (Sophie Peel, “A Nonprofit Co-Founded By La Mota’s CEO Got A Half-Million Dollars From The State,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/12/23)

Despite Pledging To Train Four People Of Color Apprentices In The First Year, Seven Months After The Grant Was Approved, The Apprenticeship Only Trained Two White Apprentices, At Least One Of Whom Worked For La Mota. “Those filings now list just two names: La Mota’s contracted bookkeeper, Mary Allen, and Cazares. ENDVR pledged to train four apprentices during its first year of funding—specifically, people of color. A former La Mota employee, Kenny Bowman, when reached by *WW*, said he was one of two ENDVR apprentices. By all accounts, including his own, Bowman is white. So was the second apprentice, Bowman said.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

According To Current BOLI Officials, The Grant Was Made In Error Because Registered Apprenticeship Programs Are Subject To Federal Government Standards, And Cannabis Is Still Categorized As A Schedule I Controlled Substance, Which Means ENDVR Could Never Have Registered Its Program As An Apprenticeship With The State. “THE PROBLEM: BOLI officials now tell *WW* the grant was made in error because registered apprenticeship programs are subject to federal government standards, and cannabis is still categorized as a Schedule I controlled substance. That means ENDVR could never have registered its program as an apprenticeship with the state. ‘The expenditure of appropriated funds on the registration of an apprenticeship in the marijuana industry is not an allowable use of the Office of Apprenticeship funding because marijuana remains illegal under federal law,’ says Labor Department spokeswoman Monica Vereen.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Awarded A Half-Million Dollars To A Nonprofit That Promised The Impossible,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/26/23)

According To Labor Department Spokesperson Monica Vereen, “The Expenditure Of Appropriated Funds On The Registration Of An Apprenticeship In The Marijuana Industry Is Not An Allowable Use Of The Office Of Apprenticeship Funding Because Marijuana Remains Illegal Under Federal Law.” “THE PROBLEM: BOLI officials now tell *WW* the grant was made in error because registered apprenticeship programs are subject to federal government standards, and cannabis is still categorized as a Schedule I controlled substance. That means ENDVR could never have registered its program as an apprenticeship with the state. ‘The expenditure of appropriated funds on the registration of an apprenticeship in the marijuana industry is not an allowable use of the Office of Apprenticeship funding because marijuana remains illegal under federal law,’ says Labor Department spokeswoman Monica Vereen.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Awarded A Half-Million Dollars To A Nonprofit That Promised The Impossible,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/26/23)

- **Willamette Week: “That Means A State Agency Granted Half A Million Dollars To A Program That Could Not Have Legally Registered With The State As An Apprenticeship.”** “Deputy labor commissioner Jessica Giannettino Villatoro corroborated that in an email: ‘There isn’t currently a pathway for a [cannabis] registered apprenticeship program, due to the status of the industry federally.’ That means a state agency granted half a million dollars

to a program that could not have legally registered with the state as an apprenticeship.” (Sophie Peel, “The State Awarded A Half-Million Dollars To A Nonprofit That Promised The Impossible,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/26/23)

- **Willamette Week: “The Fact That BOLI Now Concedes It Awarded Half A Million Dollars For An Apprenticeship Program That Couldn’t Legally Launch Only Intensifies Questions About A Process That’s Already Drawn Criticism.”** (Sophie Peel, “The State Awarded A Half-Million Dollars To A Nonprofit That Promised The Impossible,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/26/23)

Hoyle Acknowledged That “The Grant Was Miscategorized,” But Claimed That “Based On The Information Provided In Their Application And What We Were Aware Of At The Time, It Was The Exact Type Of Program We Wanted To Put Future Ready Oregon Funds To.” “Hoyle acknowledges ‘the grant was miscategorized’ as an apprenticeship, but says she would fund such a program again: ‘Based on the information provided in their application and what we were aware of at the time, it was the exact type of program we wanted to put Future Ready Oregon funds to.’” (Sophie Peel, “The State Awarded A Half-Million Dollars To A Nonprofit That Promised The Impossible,” [Willamette Week](#), 4/26/23)

But In December 2021, Eight Months Before The Grant Was Awarded, A BOLI Employee Flagged The Issue That The Apprenticeship Was Not Viable. “If We Have To Send It To USDOL For Approval As A Cannabis Specific Trade; We May Have Issues.” “DEC. 9, 2021: Another BOLI employee flagged an issue for Aviles: Because cannabis was federally illegal, and apprenticeship standards were set by the U.S. Department of Labor, a cannabis-based apprenticeship wasn’t viable. The two appeared to have found a work-around, though. ‘If we have to send it to USDOL for approval as a cannabis specific trade; we may have issues,’ wrote Loren Burnham, an apprenticeship representative with BOLI. ‘But I know how to work around that as well. We approve it as a training program, let it run for a few years and work all the kinks out and then resubmit. In the end, they have a standardized method of training, approved by a state agency.’ Aviles concurred: ‘I think we went through knowing we are not establishing standards that specifically state cannabis in them,’ she wrote. ‘This was my understanding when management brought this to us back in April, hence why I mentioned it again. It was my understanding if we mentioned [cannabis], it could create issues.’” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

An Employee In The Apprenticeship Program At BOLI Said, “I Know How To Work Around That As Well. We Approve It As A Training Program, Let It Run For A Few Years And Work All The Kinks Out And Then Resubmit. In The End, They Have A Standardized Method Of Training, Approved By A State Agency.” “DEC. 9, 2021: Another BOLI employee flagged an issue for Aviles: Because cannabis was federally illegal, and apprenticeship standards were set by the U.S. Department of Labor, a cannabis-based apprenticeship wasn’t viable. The two appeared to have found a work-around, though. ‘If we have to send it to USDOL for approval as a cannabis specific trade; we may have issues,’ wrote Loren Burnham, an apprenticeship representative with BOLI. ‘But I know how to work around that as well. We approve it as a training program, let it run for a few years and work all the kinks out and then resubmit. In the end, they have a standardized method of training, approved by a state agency.’ Aviles concurred: ‘I think we went through knowing we are not establishing standards that specifically state cannabis in them,’ she wrote. ‘This was my understanding when management brought this to us back in April, hence why I mentioned it again. It was my understanding if we mentioned [cannabis], it could create issues.’” (Sophie Peel, “The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota,” [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

- **Irene Aviles, Who Was Managing The La Mota Project, Responded, “I Think We Went Through Knowing We Are Not Establishing Standards That Specifically State Cannabis In Them,’ She Wrote. “This Was My Understanding When Management Brought This To Us Back In April, Hence Why I Mentioned It Again. It Was My Understanding If We Mentioned [Cannabis], It Could Create Issues.”** “Records show Ransom then delegated the matter, primarily to a staffer in her division named Irene Aviles, who over the next eight months met multiple times with La Mota staff to discuss an apprenticeship for

the company. ... DEC. 9, 2021: Another BOLI employee flagged an issue for Aviles: Because cannabis was federally illegal, and apprenticeship standards were set by the U.S. Department of Labor, a cannabis-based apprenticeship wasn't viable. The two appeared to have found a work-around, though. 'If we have to send it to USDOL for approval as a cannabis specific trade; we may have issues,' wrote Loren Burnham, an apprenticeship representative with BOLI. 'But I know how to work around that as well. We approve it as a training program, let it run for a few years and work all the kinks out and then resubmit. In the end, they have a standardized method of training, approved by a state agency.' Aviles concurred: 'I think we went through knowing we are not establishing standards that specifically state cannabis in them,' she wrote. 'This was my understanding when management brought this to us back in April, hence why I mentioned it again. It was my understanding if we mentioned [cannabis], it could create issues.'" (Sophie Peel, "The State Agency Once Led By Congresswoman Val Hoyle Tried For A Year To Create An Apprenticeship With La Mota," [Willamette Week](#), 9/6/23)

La Mota Used Val Hoyle To Put Cazares In Touch With An Oregon Mayor To Lobby For The Business. "The council upheld staff's recommendation. That must have stung. After all, Engelke had received emails from—and the city manager had met with—Cazares. (Cazares wrote in an email that 'Val' had shared the mayor's contact information with her. Engelke tells WW that former Oregon labor commissioner and now U.S. Congresswoman Val Hoyle [D-Ore.] called her earlier that day and asked if she could give the mayor's contact information to Cazares.) ... Then, on June 21, the city received a curious business application from Cazares: for a sex shop called 'Jessica's Adult Entertainment.' Just days before, the building at 1625 Sherman Ave. had been painted bubble-gum pink." (Sophie Peel, "A Bright Pink Building Four Hours South of Portland Hints at La Mota's Tactics," [Willamette Week](#), 05/10/23)

Laura Vega Donated \$1,000 To Val Hoyle For Congress On April 24, 2022, Eight Days Before The Application Window Opened For The BOLI Grant Program That ENDVR Would Apply.

Contributor name	Recipient	State	Employer	Receipt date	Amount
VEGA, LAURA	VAL HOYLE FOR CONGRESS	OR	GREEN STATE OF MIND	04/24/2022	\$ 1,000.00

([Federal Election Commission](#), Accessed 1/8/24)

- **The Timing Of Vega's Donation Coincided With ENDVR's Grant Application.** "The donation to Hoyle's congressional campaign by Vega, who co-founded ENDVR alongside La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares in late 2021, came just one week after ENDVR received non-profit status by the IRS and two weeks before the nonprofit submitted a grant application to the BOLI to establish an apprenticeship program." (Kyle Morris, "Democrat Rep Hoyle received campaign donations from cannabis entrepreneurs who applied for grant she oversaw," [Fox News](#), 5/31/23)
- **Vega's Donation To Hoyle's Campaign Is Unusual Because It Is Much Larger Than Other Donations She Made.** "For her part, Vega, Cazares's non-profit cofounder, donated \$1,000 to Hoyle's congressional campaign, the biggest federal donation Vega has made." (Jeff Eager, "Not according to Hoyle? La Mota owners' funky contributions to U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle," [Oregon Roundup](#), 06/12/23)
- **Vega Lives Well Outside Hoyle's Congressional District.** ([Federal Elections Commission](#))
- **Hoyle Refused To Return Vega's Donation After News Reports About It.** "U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle (D-OR) has not returned a \$1,000 campaign contribution from the cofounder of a cannabis nonprofit to which Hoyle directed an illegal \$554,000 apprenticeship grant last year. [...] Laura gave Hoyle's congressional campaign \$1,000 back in April 2022, before Hoyle finally convinced the committee to issue the grant to ENDVR. According to Hoyle's recently filed Federal Election Commission report, she's kept that contribution." (Jeff Eager, "Hoyle keeps former La Mota employee contribution," [Oregon Roundup](#), 10/31/23)

La Mota CEO And ENDVR Co-Founder Rosa Cazares And Her Partner Aaron Mitchell Donated \$5,800 To Val Hoyle's Congressional Campaign Two Days Before The Application Window Opened For The BOLI Grant Program That ENDVR Would Apply

For. “It was not until the following spring, after Hoyle announced she would run for Congress, that Mitchell and Cazares would contribute to her campaign again. This time, the two collectively gave \$5,800 to Hoyle’s congressional campaign. They did so on April 30—just two days before the application window opened for the BOLI grant program that ENDVR would apply for.” (Sophie Peel, “Val Hoyle Dined With La Mota CEO Rosa Cazares A Year Before Her Agency Awarded Key Grant,” [Willamette Week](#), 8/15/23)

La Mota’s Progressive Business PAC, Run By Cazares, Donated \$1,000 To Hoyle On 11/08/22.

Source name	Recipient	Election	State	Receipt date	Amount
PROGRESSIVE BUSINESS PAC	VAL HOYLE FOR CONGRESS	GENERAL	OR	11/08/2022	\$ 1,000.00

([Federal Election Commission](#), Accessed 1/8/24)

Progressive Business PAC Is A Political Action Committee Run By Cazares And Funded In Part By Corporate Contributions Made By La Mota. “KOIN 6 News has discovered that Mitchell, Cazares, their company La Mota and a political action committee run by Cazares called the Progressive Business PAC have collectively donated \$70,865 to now Gov. Tina Kotek; more than \$21,000 to U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle, who was formerly the Oregon labor commissioner...” (Amanda Arden, “Here are the Oregon local, county and state candidates and PACs owners of La Mota have donated to,” [KOIN-Portland](#), 5/3/23)

NOTE: *Progressive Business PAC is an Oregon state PAC and is not registered with the FEC.*