When two of her close political allies were being investigated for corruption, Steel voted to defund the anti-corruption office doing the investigation.

**Hutchens And Rackauckas Served As Honorary Co-Chairs On Steel's Campaign For Board Of Supervisors.**

“Orange County District Attorney Tony Rackauckas, county Sheriff Sandra Hutchens and former Assemblyman Jim Silva (R-Huntington Beach) are serving as honorary co-chairs for her campaign, Steel said.” [Los Angeles Times, 5/17/13]

**2018: Tony Rackauckas Was The Orange County District Attorney.** “Orange County voters on Tuesday appeared to oust longtime Dist. Atty. Tony Rackauckas in favor of challenger Todd Spitzer, a significant shift for an office that has been repeatedly rocked by scandals in recent years.” [Los Angeles Times, 11/7/18]

**2018: Sandra Hutchens Was The Orange County Sheriff.** “Republican Undersheriff Donald Barnes will succeed retiring Sheriff Sandra Hutchens as Orange County’s top cop, taking over a department that has grappled with allegations of misconduct, scandals and state and federal investigations for much of the last four years.” [Voice of OC, 11/7/18]

**The Orange County District Attorney And Sheriff Departments Were Involved In A Corruption Scandal Regarding Misuse Of Jailhouse Informants.** “When former California Atty. Gen. Kamala Harris in 2015 launched a criminal investigation into corruption inside Orange County’s jails, local activists and attorneys hoped it would finally reveal the breadth of a scandal that engulfed the Sheriff’s Department and district attorney’s office — and may have affected countless court cases. Four years later — after an investigation into the misuse of informants inside the county’s jails came to an anticlimactic end in a Santa Ana courtroom with no explanation and no charges filed — those same advocates were left asking a much simpler question: What happened?” [Los Angeles Times, 1/20/20]

**Los Angeles Times: The Purpose Of The Office Of Independent Review Was “Exposing Corruption And Wrongdoing.”** “Some contend it’s necessary in order for the OIR to gain access to sensitive information, while others believe it prevents the OIR from performing its mission — exposing corruption and wrongdoing.” [Los Angeles Times, 5/20/20]

**2018: Steel Voted To Defund The Office Of Independent Review.** “Instead, Supervisors Do, Shawn Nelson, and Michelle Steel took a nonbinding straw vote to defund the office.” [Orange County Register, 6/12/18]

**2018: At The Time Of Steel’s Vote, The Office Of Independent Review Was Serving An “Important Role” In Providing Oversight For The Sheriff’s Department And District Attorney’s Office Amid The Informant Scandal.** “The board’s straw vote to cut funding to the Office of Independent Review, which oversees both the Sheriff’s Department and the District Attorney’s Office, comes as federal and state investigators are looking at both agencies over whether they misused jailhouse informants to illegally gain confessions. As part of the probe, Dept. of Justice investigators have indicated they believed the OIR serves an important role. Government watchdogs agree.” [Orange County Register, 6/12/18]

**2015: Steel Voted To Cut $450,000 Annual Funding From The Office Of Independent Review.** “An independent investigator will no longer review complaints about Orange County’s biggest law enforcement agency under a tentative vote by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday. The unanimous straw vote to eliminate $450,000 in annual funding for the Office of Independent Review isn’t final. But it’s meant to give budget writers direction as they prepare for the final hearing June 23. And supervisors made clear they don’t support the office as it exists, criticizing its work as repetitive and toothless.” [OC Register, 6/10/15; Orange County Board of Supervisors, 6/23/15]

**Headline: Orange County Register: “O.C. Supervisors Threaten To Stop Funding Orange County Sheriff’s Independent Investigator.”** [OC Register, 6/10/15]

The Office Of Independent Review Analyzed The Jailhouse Informant Scandal And Provided The Board Of Supervisors With A Confidential Report. “Despite OIR public reports published in October 2014 and March 2015, with coverage and analysis of the informant controversy, and at least one confidential report to the Board on the same subject, the Board continued to feel they learned too much from the press before hearing from the OIR.” [Orange County Grand Jury, 11/22/16]

The Office Of Independent Review Said It Had Met With Sheriff Department Executives In Regards To The Jailhouse Informant Scandal. “OIR has met with OCSD executives about this issue on several occasions since the issue first emerged. As is often the case when addressing significant matters, the Department has proceeded along two tracks: an examination of possible systemic deficiencies and an evaluation of possible individual performance issues as raised by the Public Defender.” [Orange County Office of Independent Review, 10/23/14]

The Office Of Independent Review Was Monitoring Changes The Sheriff Made To Its Informant Program. “The Department also identified inadequacies in its training and preparation of the classification deputies for the responsibilities of handling informants. Accordingly, the Department moved swiftly to institute new protocols and to refine its agreements with outside agencies that are designed to prevent a recurrence of these troubling information gaps. OIR monitored these reforms and believes they are responsive to the concerns raised by the Public Defender. From a systems perspective, the new approach constitutes a significant improvement.” [Orange County Office of Independent Review, 3/31/15]

2015: The Office Of Independent Review “Continues To Review And Monitor All Allegations Of Employee Misconduct Directed Against Sheriff’s Department Personnel.” “OIR continues to review and monitor all allegations of employee misconduct directed against Sheriff’s Department personnel. OIR’s goal is to ensure that the investigations are thorough and outcomes are legitimate. It tracks cases from beginning to end, and has the opportunity to raise questions with investigators and make recommendations as the cases unfold.” [Orange County Office of Independent Review, 3/31/15]

2015: The Board Of Supervisors Expanded The Office Of Independent Review’s Jurisdiction To Include “Systemic Issues And Specific Incidents” At The District Attorney’s Office. “Supervisors expanded the review office in December 2015 to include examining ‘systemic issues and specific incidents’ at the District Attorney’s Office, and for the office to have the same access to confidential records as the county counsel. Rackauckas’ office has said the OIR can look at records and make recommendations to supervisors, but that supervisors don’t have the authority to change how the DA’s office is run.” [Voice of OC, 4/17/18]

The Expansion Was In Response To The Jailhouse Informant Scandal. “A divided Board of Supervisors voted Tuesday to expand a sheriff’s oversight office to include the District Attorney’s Office, largely prompted by allegations that prosecutors illegally used jailhouse informants.” [OC Register, 11/10/15]

Orange County: The Office Of Independent Review Was Responsible For “Systemic Issues Involving The Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department, Probation Department, Office Of The District Attorney, Office Of The Public Defender And The Social Services Agency.” “In December 2015, the Board of Supervisors
(Board) adopted Ordinance 15-022 amending the purpose and intent of the OIR to perform the following functions:
(a) Review systemic issues involving the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department, Probation Department, Office of the District Attorney, Office of the Public Defender and the Social Services Agency and serve as an independent resource and counsel for the Board in order to ensure accountability with regard to the performance and operations of relevant County Departments; (b) Review specific incidents occurring in relevant County Departments which may identify systemic issues with regard to the performance and operations of those County Departments; and (c) Provide a resource to ensure that high risk and potential liability issues are identified and addressed through corrective actions. The Office of Independent Review shall exercise all powers vested in the Board under federal and state law that may be delegated by the Board.” [Orange County, FY 2017-2018 Annual Budget, accessed 8/3/20]

The Informant Scandal Was Deemed An “Systemic Problem” By A State Appeals Court. “A majority of Orange County supervisors have turned down a request for their law enforcement watchdog to look into whether the District Attorney’s Office and Sheriff’s Department are continuing the illegal use of informants and withholding evidence, an issue previously described by an appeals court as a ‘systemic problem’ within the agencies. Supervisor Todd Spitzer, who is running for district attorney against incumbent Tony Rackauckas in the June election, last week asked his board colleagues to direct Kevin Rogan – the new director of the county’s Office of Independent Review, or ‘OIR’ – to examine a new lawsuit filed against the county and report back to the supervisors in closed session.” [Voice of OC, 4/17/18]
A Wall Street Journal investigation found Steel’s business partner and husband helped agents of the Chinese communist government gain access to President Trump through hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign donations so that they could gather information about US leaders and influence our election.


Steel Was The Chief Financial Officer At Shawn Steel Law Firm. [California Secretary Of State, filed 5/4/15]

Shawn Steel Was Michelle Steel’s Husband. “After her confirmation Wednesday, Park-Steel, joined by her husband, attorney Shawn Steel, two daughters and mother, told reporters she was happy to be confirmed. She pledged her continuing support for the city’s affirmative action policies, but insisted that she had no regrets about the views she expressed in her article. ‘Because of their skin color—white--5,000 applicants were prohibited from taking the firefighter exam in February,’ Park-Steel, a comptroller in her husband’s law firm, wrote in The Times. Park-Steel, at the time a member of the Fire Commission, wrote that the prohibition was a ‘Draconian’ outgrowth of a 1974 consent decree requiring the Fire Department eventually to have a 50% minority force.” [Los Angeles Times, 9/7/95]

Wall Street Journal: Shawn Steel Helped “The Chinese State […] Get Close And Potentially Influence” Trump. “Soon after Donald Trump took office, people with ties to the Chinese state poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into his re-election bid to get close to and potentially influence the new president. […] As guests of a Republican official named Shawn Steel, Chinese nationals, including a man working for China’s central government, attended an invitation-only gathering in May 2017 where GOP leaders discussed campaign strategies and other issues.” [Wall Street Journal, 6/23/20]

Wall Street Journal: The China-Tied Effort Sought To “Gather Information On U.S. Leaders And If Possible Affect Policy-Making.” “The effort had early success in gaining access for those involved, helping them meet the president or top Republicans at fundraisers or at an internal GOP leadership meeting. It reveals how China seeks to build inroads into U.S. politics, gather information on U.S. leaders and if possible affect policy-making.” [Wall Street Journal, 6/23/20]


Orange County Register: Steel’s Guests Were Connected To Donors Who Gave “Hundreds Of Thousands Of Dollars” To Trump’s Re-Election Campaign In Exchange For Access. “Soon after Donald Trump was sworn in as president in 2017, the Journal reports, donors with ties to the Chinese state gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to the president for his re-election campaign in exchange for access,
then reported their efforts back to prominent Chinese officials. Some of these Chinese nationals were guests of Shawn Steel at an invitation-only meeting in San Diego in May 2017 where Republican leaders discussed campaign strategy, according to the Journal.” [Orange County Register, 6/24/20]