

U.S. labor secretary resigns amid Epstein sex trafficking case



Washington, July 13 (RHC)—US Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta resigned on Friday amid fresh scrutiny of his handling of the sex abuse case against financier Jeffrey Epstein, becoming President Donald Trump's latest adviser to leave the administration in controversy.

Trump, who has fired numerous cabinet and other administration officials during his 2 1/2 years in the White House, said it was Acosta's idea to step down.

Acosta's resignation is effective in seven days. Trump named Deputy Labor Secretary Patrick Pizzella as the acting secretary of Labor.

Acosta has served in Trump's cabinet since April 2017 and from 2005 through 2009 was the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida. It was there that he handled Epstein's first case involving sex with girls, which resulted in a punishment that critics say was far too lenient.

"Mr. Acosta now joins the sprawling parade of President Trump's chosen advisors who have left the administration under clouds of scandal and corruption, leaving rudderless and discouraged agencies in their wake. Taxpayers deserve better," Democratic US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse said in a statement.

Epstein, a billionaire hedge fund manager, pleaded not guilty to new federal charges in New York this week.

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