

NOTICE OF UNLAWFUL \$60,000 CORPORATE CONTRIBUTION AND ITS MISREPORTING ON TWO CERTIFIED FILINGS

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Indiana Election Commission
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Filed via email with the Indiana Election Division at elections@iec.in.gov

Respondents: Max for Indiana, File No. 8302 (candidate committee of Maximillian "Max" Engling, candidate for Indiana Secretary of State); Maximillian Engling, individually, as candidate and treasurer of record; and Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc., a 501(c)(4) nonprofit corporation, EIN 99-4223525

I. SUMMARY OF THE COMPLAINT

On June 30, 2026, Max for Indiana, the candidate committee of Republican Secretary of State nominee Maximillian Engling, accepted a \$60,000 contribution from Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc., an Indiana nonprofit corporation. Indiana law caps corporate contributions to all statewide candidates at \$5,000 per calendar year ([IC 3-9-2-4\(1\)](#)). This contribution exceeded the cap by \$55,000 — twelve times the legal limit.

The committee reported the contribution twice: on a CFA-11 "Large Contribution" Report filed July 1, 2026, the day after receipt, and on its CFA-4 quarterly report filed July 15, 2026. On both filings, the corporate donor was misclassified as an "other organization" — a category with no contribution limit — rather than as a corporation, though both forms provide that classification.

The consequence of the misclassification was that an illegal contribution appeared lawful: reported as coming from an "other organization," \$60,000 raises no flag; reported as coming from a corporation, it is an immediate violation. Mr. Engling serves as his own treasurer and certified both filings as true, correct, and complete, on forms bearing this printed warning:

A person who knowingly files a fraudulent report commits a Level 6 Felony. ([IC 3-14-1-13](#)) A person who fails to file a complete or accurate report as required by the Indiana Campaign Finance Law commits a Class B Misdemeanor ([IC 3-14-1-14](#)) and may be subject to civil penalties ([IC 3-9-4-16](#), [3-9-4-17](#), [3-9-4-18](#).)

The donor also violated Indiana campaign finance law. By contributing \$60,000 to influence an Indiana candidate election, Hoosier Leadership for America either recklessly exceeded the state's corporate contribution limits — a Class B misdemeanor ([IC 3-14-1-10](#)) — or engaged in conduct that defines a political action committee under [IC 3-5-2.1-78](#), which requires registration with the Indiana Election Division and public disclosure of its contributors.

Complainant accordingly requests: corrected filings; refund of the excess contribution; the civil penalties the statutes provide; referral of Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. to the appropriate prosecuting attorney pursuant to [IC 3-6-4.1-21](#) regarding the violation of [IC 3-14-1-10](#); and a subpoena under [IC](#)

[3-6-4.1-19](#) directing Mr. Engling to appear and be examined regarding the preparation, classification, and certification of these filings.

The public record establishes the misclassification in the filings; it cannot establish the treasurer's state of mind in certifying it, which is the fact that separates a Class B misdemeanor from a Level 6 felony. That question can be resolved only through examination of Mr. Engling, the person who made the certifications.

Chair Boyce, Complainant respectfully requests that the Commission convene at the earliest practicable date. Early voting begins October 6; the election is November 3. The misdemeanor-to-felony range the General Assembly attached to this conduct is exactly why timing matters: voters choosing their next chief election officer deserve a resolved record, and Mr. Engling deserves prompt examination rather than an open question hanging over the campaign's final weeks.

Whatever the answer, it serves no one to leave it unasked until after the election.

II. FACTS

A. The committee's two filings and their classifications

On July 1, 2026, Max for Indiana filed a CFA-11 Supplemental "Large Contribution" Report, State Form 48492, disclosing a \$60,000.00 contribution received one day earlier, on June 30, 2026, from "Hoosier Leadership for America," 3822 Stanton Hall Pkwy, Fort Wayne, IN 46815, itemized as "Contribution: Direct" ([Exhibit A](#)).

The CFA-11 form directs the filer to classify each contributor as follows: "enter INDV for individual; PAC for political action committee; CORP for corporation; LAB for labor organization; NONE for all entries which are not one of the above categories." The committee classified the Hoosier Leadership for America contribution as "Other Organization," not as a corporation. In the same filing, the committee classified another contributor as an individual and reported a contribution from a candidate committee under the residual category ([Exhibit A](#)).

On July 15, 2026, Max for Indiana filed its CFA-4 Report of Receipts and Expenditures for the period April 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026, disclosing the same \$60,000 contribution from the same contributor at the same address ([Exhibit B](#)). On the CFA-4, the contribution is itemized on Schedule A-5 ("Contributions by Other Organizations"), not Schedule A-2 ("Contributions by Corporations").

B. The contributor is a nonprofit corporation, not a political action committee

Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. was, on June 30, 2026, and remains an active Indiana domestic nonprofit corporation, incorporated July 26, 2024, whose Articles of Incorporation state that it is "organized and operated exclusively for social welfare purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code" ([Exhibit C-1](#)). Its active status was affirmed in a Business Entity Report filed with the Indiana Secretary of State on July 6, 2026 ([Exhibit C-2](#)).

The contributor address reported on both of the committee's filings — 3822 Stanton Hall Pkwy, Fort Wayne, IN 46815 — is the mailing address of record for Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. in the Internal Revenue Service's Tax Exempt Organization records for EIN 99-4223525 ([Exhibit D](#)), confirming the identity of the reported contributor as the 501(c)(4) nonprofit corporation.

As of June 30, 2026 — the date of the contribution — the organization's own public website identified it as "a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization (EIN 99-4223525)" and stated that its activities were "[p]aid for by Hoosier Leadership for America and not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee" ([Exhibit E](#)).

Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. is not registered as a political action committee with the Indiana Election Division, and no committee under that name or any apparent variant is registered with the Federal Election Commission. Complainant searched both registries on July 24, 2026 (Exhibits [E](#), [G](#)). Nothing in either of the committee's filings indicates the funds originated from a separate segregated fund, and no such fund is registered with the Indiana Election Division.

C. The treasurer and his certifications

Respondent Engling serves as treasurer of his own committee, having been designated candidate-as-treasurer on the CFA-1 Statement of Organization he signed, filed May 22, 2026 ([Exhibit H](#)). He certified the CFA-11 (dated July 1, 2026) and the CFA-4 (dated July 15, 2026) as true, correct, and complete, in his capacities as both treasurer and candidate, via the Secretary of State's online campaign finance portal. The CFA-1 and both reports bear on their face the printed statutory warnings described in Section I (Exhibits A, B, H).

D. The committee's principals were familiar with the contributor

Prior to his candidacy, Respondent Engling served as Central Indiana Regional Director in the U.S. Senate office of Senator Jim Banks, and press reporting states he is currently on leave from that office to campaign full time ([Exhibit I](#)). Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. has been described in national press reporting as Senator Banks' organization, including coverage of the organization's inaugural summit, which Senator Banks headlined in September 2025 ([Exhibit J](#)).

The committee's chairperson, Andrew Ireland, appeared as a keynote panelist at Hoosier Leadership for America's September 2025 summit, as reflected in the press reporting at Exhibit J and the CFA-1 at Exhibit H.

On June 19, 2026 — the evening before the Indiana Republican Party state convention at which delegates selected the party's nominee for Secretary of State — Hoosier Leadership for America hosted a reception for Indiana GOP convention delegates at The Pearl, 248 W. Main St., Fort Wayne, Indiana. The organization's invitation, hosted on its own website and still publicly accessible as of the capture date, bears the disclaimer "Paid for by Hoosier Leadership for America" and the organization's 501(c)(4) disclaimer, and billed as special guests Senator Jim Banks and "Secretary of State Candidate Max Engling" ([Exhibit K](#)).

Photographs of the June 19, 2026 event, published in the public photo gallery of Senator Banks's campaign Facebook page, depict Senator Banks and Respondent Engling appearing together before a display featuring Respondent Engling's photograph and the text "MAX ENGLING – IN Secretary of State" alongside the Hoosier Leadership for America mark (Exhibits [L-1](#), [L-2](#)).

The reported \$60,000 contribution was received just eleven days after the June 19 event. The CFA-11 disclosing it was filed the following day.

III. VIOLATIONS

Count One — Improper designation and inaccurate reporting on two certified filings (the committee and its treasurer)

Indiana law requires that corporate contributions be designated as such. [IC 3-9-2-5\(c\)](#). The contribution was not so designated on either the CFA-11 filed July 1, 2026 or the CFA-4 filed July 15, 2026. Each report is accordingly inaccurate as filed and certified by its treasurer, and each constitutes a separate violation of the reporting provisions: the committee is subject to civil penalty under [IC 3-9-4-16\(a\)\(12\)](#) as to each filing, and the treasurer who certified each report is subject to [IC 3-14-1-14](#) and, to the extent the mischaracterization was knowing, to the felony provisions of [IC 3-14-1-13](#).

Count Two — Excessive corporate contribution (Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc.)

Under [IC 3-9-2-4\(1\)](#), a corporation — including a nonprofit corporation — may contribute an aggregate of no more than \$5,000 per calendar year to all candidates for state office, an office that includes Secretary of State. The facts established in Section II.B, applied to that limit, establish that Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. exceeded it by no less than \$55,000. The Commission may assess a civil penalty of up to three times the excess contribution, plus costs of investigation, [IC 3-9-4-16\(a\)\(5\)](#), [\(e\)](#), and a corporation that recklessly exceeds the limit commits a Class B misdemeanor, [IC 3-14-1-10](#).

Nor is there any alternative characterization available to Respondent. The only status under which an entity such as Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. could lawfully contribute \$60,000 to a candidate's committee is that of a registered political action committee — an entity required to register with the Election Division and publicly itemize the contributions it receives.

Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. has never registered as a political committee with the Election Division or the Federal Election Commission. Any contention by Respondent that it is not subject to the corporate contribution limit is therefore an admission that it operated as an unregistered political action committee — a status that would require it to register with the Election Division and publicly disclose all of its donors, past and present.

IV. WHY EXAMINATION OF THE TREASURER IS NECESSARY

The facts established above bear directly on the examination requested in Section VI, item (d).

First, the contributor's status is beyond dispute. State and federal records — including the corporation's own filings and the IRS record matching the very address the committee reported — establish that the contributor was a corporation on the date of the contribution. No political committee under the contributor's name was registered at any point in 2026. And the contributor's own website identified it as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit at the time.

Second, the misclassification was repeated. The contribution was classified as something other than corporate on two separate certified filings. The first was submitted the day after the money was received, on a form that lists "corporation" as an available classification — and on which the committee classified its other contributors correctly.

Third, the treasurer had ample reason to know the contributor's status. The committee's principals knew the contributor, as described in Section II.D. And the warning that a knowingly false report is a felony was printed on the face of the form Respondent Engling signed to become treasurer and on each report he certified (Exhibits A, B, H).

Taken together, these facts narrow the range of innocent explanations for the treasurer's certifications — and they are precisely why the remaining question can only be answered by examining, under oath, the one person who made them.

V. ADMINISTRATION OF THIS COMPLAINT

Consistency with the Commission's enforcement practice. The Commission regularly enforces the campaign finance article against candidate committees for reporting delinquencies and irregularities, including through its approval of Campaign Finance Orders 2025-677 through 2025-698 and a campaign finance settlement agreement at its February 25, 2026 public meeting. Complainant requests only that this matter receive treatment consistent with that established practice.

Member disclosures. Given the quasi-judicial character of these proceedings and the associations described in Section II.D, Complainant respectfully requests that each member of the Commission disclose on the record, before consideration of this matter: (a) any communication with any Respondent, or any agent, employee, or representative thereof, concerning this matter; and (b) any personal, professional, or financial relationship with any Respondent or any officer thereof.

Preservation of records. Because the examination requested in Section VI, item (d) will concern the preparation, classification, and certification of the filings described herein, records and communications relating to the June 30, 2026 contribution — including its solicitation, acceptance, classification, and reporting — are potentially relevant to this proceeding. Complainant respectfully notes, for the benefit of all parties, that the duty to preserve potentially relevant records, in whatever form they exist, attaches upon reasonable anticipation of an official proceeding, and that this complaint's filing places that duty beyond question as to each Respondent.

VI. RELIEF REQUESTED

Complainant requests that the Commission consider and vote separately on each of the following:

- (a) An order directing Max for Indiana to file an amended CFA-11 and an amended CFA-4, each correctly designating the June 30, 2026 contribution as a corporate contribution;
- (b) An order directing refund of the amount exceeding the limit of [IC 3-9-2-4\(1\)](#); civil penalties against Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. pursuant to [IC 3-9-4-16\(a\)\(5\)](#) and [\(e\)](#); and civil penalties against the committee pursuant to [IC 3-9-4-16\(a\)\(12\)](#) with respect to each of the CFA-11 and CFA-4 filings, consistent with the Commission's prior orders in comparable matters, together with costs of investigation;
- (c) Referral of the matter to the appropriate prosecuting attorney pursuant to [IC 3-6-4.1-21](#) with respect to the violation of [IC 3-14-1-10](#) by Respondent Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc.;
- (d) Issuance of a subpoena pursuant to IC [3-6-4.1-19](#) directing Maximillian T. Engling to appear before the Commission for examination regarding the preparation, classification, and certification of the filings described herein.

VII. VERIFICATION

I affirm under the penalties for perjury that the foregoing representations are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Executed on July 24, 2026.

David Shelton

EXHIBITS: all available [here](#)

A — CFA-11 Supplemental "Large Contribution" Report, Max for Indiana, filed July 1, 2026

B — Q2 2026 CFA-4, Max for Indiana, filed July 15, 2026

C-1 — Certificate of Incorporation and Articles of Incorporation, Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc., filed July 26, 2024

C-2 — Business Entity Report 2026/2027, filed July 6, 2026

D — IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search record, EIN 99-4223525

E — Archived capture of the Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. public website

F — Indiana Election Division political committee registry search results, dated July 24, 2026

G — Federal Election Commission committee registry search results, dated July 24, 2026

H — CFA-1 Candidate's Statement of Organization, Max for Indiana, filed May 22, 2026

I — Excerpt of Indiana Capital Chronicle, "Banks staffer Engling says decision on secretary of state's race came quickly," June 3, 2026

J — Excerpt of national press reporting concerning Hoosier Leadership for America, Inc. and its September 2025 inaugural summit

K — Archived capture of the Hoosier Leadership for America invitation/RSVP page for the June 19, 2026 reception, hosted on the organization's website

L-1, L-2 — Photographs of the June 19, 2026 event as published in the public photo gallery of Senator Banks's campaign Facebook page, with archived capture of the gallery posting