August 13, 2026

The Honorable Rachel Mitchell
225 W Madison Street
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Dear County Attorney Mitchell:

I write to request that you take action on what appears to be significant and unexplained errors and/or omissions in the campaign finance reports filed by Katie Hobbs, Adrian Fontes, and Kris Mayes. Most of the apparent violations were committed by Katie Hobbs and her campaign committee for her gubernatorial reelection campaign. Committee # 201800057, Katie Hobbs' campaign committee for her gubernatorial reelection campaign ("Hobbs Candidate Committee"). But Fontes and Mayes' campaign finance reports are also non-compliant, as explained herein.

I. REASON REQUEST IS DIRECTED TO YOUR OFFICE

I am requesting that you take action for two reasons. One is the obvious conflict in this matter with Fontes and Mayes being two of the complained of politicians. Secondly, another complaint was filed with the Secretary of State's Office against Katie Hobbs on July 2, 2026. (Exhibit 1). It took Fontes twenty-five days to email a form letter stating that the complaint was received, which demonstrates that he is not taking it seriously. (Exhibit 2).

I understand that you likely do not have jurisdiction to enforce civil campaign finance statutes that involve statewide races. However, the issues presented here may involve knowing violations of campaign finance laws. Because campaign finance reports are filed under penalty of perjury, knowing violations could well constitute perjury and violate other criminal laws, which would provide you jurisdiction. *See* Arizona Revised Statutes §13-2701 *et seq*. (commission of perjury and false swearing are class 6 felonies).

II. SUMMARY OF THE APPARENT VIOLATIONS

The issues presented here extend well beyond ordinary reporting errors. Campaign committees occasionally amend reports to correct clerical errors or update information. That is not what occurred here. The filings at issue repeatedly altered reported receipts by millions of dollars and, in one instance, entirely eliminated a substantial category of previously reported contributions. Those circumstances justify closer examination, and likely enforcement.

Arizona's campaign finance reporting laws exist so the public may rely upon the accuracy of reports filed with your office. When a campaign repeatedly files reports that differ by millions of dollars, confidence in those disclosures is necessarily undermined. When required information is omitted, the campaign needs to correct it, or face enforcement. But the issues are so prevalent that it strains credulity to believe they are good faith oversights.

III. ELECT KATIE HOBBS 2026 QUARTER 2 FILINGS

Unlike ordinary amended reports correcting minor clerical errors, Elect Katie Hobbs has filed no less than three revisions to her 2026 Q2 campaign finance report that dramatically altered its reported fundraising totals and, more importantly, completely eliminated approximately $1.4 million in previously reported exempt small dollar contributions. These are not immaterial revisions. Between successive filings, the campaign altered its reported receipts by well over $1 million and entirely removed a category of contributions previously reported.

2026 Quarter 2 Reported Contributions ~ rounded off		
	Total receipts	Exempt small Contributions (less than $100)
Original filing[1]	~$2.6 million	~$1.4 million
1st Amended report[2]	~$3.1 million	~$1.4 million
2nd Amended report[3]	~$1.7 million	$0
Final Amended report[4]	~$2.3 million	$0

These are wild fluctuations, reporting approximately $1.4 million in what is essentially dark money, and then "losing" it by way of an amended filing report is more than a simple typo or miscalculation. It is your job to determine what happened that could occasion such a discrepancy, and whether it was a calculated attempt to obscure the true source and disposition of significant political funding.

Under Arizona law, contributions under $100 may be reported in the aggregate rather than individually disclosed. Consequently, the public has no practical ability to independently verify those reported amounts. Elect Katie Hobbs has reported approximately $1.4 million in exempt contributions and then later reported that those same contributions never existed. This should immediately raise questions regarding the accuracy of one, if not all, of the recent filings made by this committee.

In addition, the campaign's own historical reporting makes these revisions even more difficult to reconcile. During the preceding five reporting quarters, Elect Katie Hobbs reported exempt small contributions of approximately:

Q1 2025: $139,00
Q2 2025: $90,000
Q3 2025: $81,000
Q4 2025: $172,000
Q1 2026: $161,000[1]

Then, in the second quarter of 2026, that figure either inexplicably surged to approximately $1.4 million or disappeared entirely, depending on which campaign finance filing is reviewed. Such extraordinary discrepancies cannot reasonably be dismissed as routine reporting errors. Given the magnitude of the inconsistency, a thorough review or formal investigation would be entirely appropriate.

IV. CONTRIBUTOR DATA THAT RAISES CONCERNS NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED

A review of the contributor data for Elect Katie Hobbs and the other two candidates also raises similar issues. Public campaign finance reports indicate that an unusually large percentage of contributors are identified as "Not Employed."

While there may be legitimate explanations for individual entries, the sheer volume is not realistic. Of approximately 38,000 reported contributors, more than 25,000 are listed as "Not Employed." That is an extraordinary percentage and one that would cause any reasonable person to wonder why there are so many omissions. This cannot be accurate.

As for Fontes and Mayes, their numbers are as follows for 2026:

Fontes:

2026, Q1: 4,647 "Not Employed, Not Employed", 292 "Retired, Not Employed" (out of roughly 6500)

2026, Q2: 6,598 "Not Employed, Not Employed", 502 "Retired, Not Employed" (out of roughly 9K)

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[1] Reports available at https://seethemoney.az.gov

Mayes:

2026, Q1: 6,863 "Not Employed, Not Employed", 366 "Retired, Not Employed" (out of roughly 11K)

2026, Q2: 8,997 "Not Employed, Not Employed", 845 "Retired, Not Employed" (out of roughly 14K)

This problem is not limited to candidates. The Navajo County Democrat Party's report listed 386 contributors as "not employed" in Q2, and the Arizona Democrat party had 257 (out of 483) contributors as unemployed. The affiliated political committee Copper State had 15 out of 31 individual donors unemployed. In contrast, in 2026 Q2 Republican nominee for Governor Andy Biggs had 5 not working, Republican Attorney General nominee Warren Petersen had 105 "retired" (no unemployed), and Republican Secretary of State candidate Alex Kolodin had 147 retired.

I am aware that the Hobbs campaign and the other candidates have been using ActBlue during this election cycle[2]. Publicly available reports indicate that Elect Katie Hobbs has paid approximately $89,000 in merchant processing fees during this election cycle. Although merchant fees alone do not establish the amount raised, they appear generally consistent with fundraising in the range of several million dollars. That figure raises additional questions when compared with the multiple amended fundraising totals filed by this campaign.

Recently, the siting Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin, Democrat Sara Rodriguez, was forced to effectively end her campaign for Governor due to serious apparent campaign finance violations. https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/wisconsin-governor-race-sara-rodriguez-suspends-campaign/ar-AA288q00?ocid=BingNewsSerp It is also public knowledge that ActBlue has been the subject of ongoing investigations and litigation concerning donor verification and alleged straw donor activity. (Exhibits 3 and 4). I make no allegation that such conduct occurred here. However, given the magnitude of the reporting discrepancies, the unexplained elimination of approximately $1.4 million in exempt contributions, and the repeated amendments affecting millions of dollars in reported receipts, your office should determine why the committee turned in false initial reports and take appropriate enforcement action.

V. CONCLUSION

The reporting discrepancies identified above involve millions of dollars, repeated amendments, and unexplained changes to categories of contributions that cannot be independently verified by the public. Standing alone, each issue warrants explanation. Taken together, they demand an investigation.

I respectfully request that your office immediately investigate these filings, require

[2] https://secure.actblue.com/donate/katie-hobbs-1?refcode=directory

Elect Katie Hobbs, Kris Mayes and Adrian Fontes fully explain the discrepancies, determine whether the reports comply with Arizona campaign finance law, and take any enforcement action authorized by law if violations are found. I look forward to your response and to learning what steps your office intends to take to restore confidence in these filings and real transparency.

Sincerely,

Gary A. DeBerge
33357 N. Mildred Lane
San Tan Valley, AZ 85144
480-278-3884

Exhibit 1

Timothy A. La Sota, PLC
2198 E. Camelback Rd., Suite 305
Phoenix, Arizona 85016
P 602-515-2649
tim@timlasota.com

July 2, 2026

Via hand delivery to:

The Honorable Adrian Fontes
Arizona Secretary of State
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

Dear Secretary Fontes:

I write to report what appear to be serious campaign finance violations committed by Elect Katie Hobbs, Katie Hobbs' campaign committee for her gubernatorial reelection campaign. ("Hobbs Candidate Committee").

In short, the Hobbs Candidate Committee appears to be paying for significant campaign expenses that should be borne by this candidate committee from a political action committee set up to support her candidacy called Copper State Values (the "PAC"). Of course, the PAC is raising money in unlimited amounts from individuals and corporations, so-called soft money. Generally, PACs can do that, but a PAC cannot be used as a repository for soft money contributions that go to pay for expenses of a campaign committee, which is limited in what it can raise to $5,500 per individual and cannot take money from corporations or unions. That is, a candidate committee has to rely on hard money.

Another troubling aspect is that the PAC appears to be controlled by the Governor. The PAC's chair is Nicole DeMont, who also serves as the Hobbs Candidate Committee campaign manager. Unlike most efforts, which operate with at least some degree of facial independence, the Governor's reelection campaign manager is also in charge of the PAC.

I. THE HOBBS CANDIDATE COMMITTEE AND THE PAC

The Hobbs Candidate Committee has been assigned committee number 2018000057 by your office. Its chairman is Lela Alston, its Treasurer is Dacey Montoya, and the campaign manager is Nicole DeMont. (Exhibit A). The Hobbs Candidate Committee lists the following additional information for it with your office: 530 East expenses for travel, and other expenses[1]. This raises the question about why an entity that appears to serve only as an account to deposit funds into and disburse funds out of needs to be racking up those kings of expenses.

And the above are only the direct cash payments from the soft money PAC to the Hobbs Candidate Committee, for expenses that by all appearance legally must be borne by the candidate almost exclusively. The PAC, which might aptly be called the Shell PAC, also has incurred hundreds of thousands of dollars in expenses paid out to consultants. While these funds have not gone directly to the Hobbs Candidate Committee, the Hobbs Candidate Committee appears to be the beneficiary and thus the entity that should be paying, with hard money dollars.

For example, the PAC has paid Montverde Strategies just shy of $55,000, according to campaign finance reports. (Exhibits D and E). Montverde Strategies is Nicole DeMont's company. (Exhibit F). And Nicole DeMont is, again, the campaign manager for the Hobbs Candidate Committee—she is running the Governor's own re-election campaign/ campaign committee.

Other beneficiaries of the PAC's largesse are Capital Strategies, which, to nobody's surprise who has reviewed all these reports, serves as a consultant to Katie Hobbs. (Exhibit G). Capital Strategies has been paid an eye-popping $198,625.00 for the cycle by the PAC. (Exhibits D and E). But the Hobbs Candidate Committee has paid Capital Strategies a mere $33,125.00. (Exhibit H). Capital Strategies lists Katie Hobbs as a client but says nothing about Copper State Values. (Exhibit I).

The PAC makes other payments of dubious legitimacy in terms of any need on the part of the PAC, as detailed in the report. What you need to investigate is what activities, if any, by the PAC would justify the kinds of expenses it incurs. Absent that, the expenses paid directly by the PAC to the Hobbs Candidate Committee and paid by the PAC to vendors effectively on behalf of the Hobbs Candidate Committee constitute in kind contributions to the Hobbs Candidate Committee, and result in illegal contribution to the Hobbs Candidate Committee in excess of the limits in state law. *See* A.R.S. § 16-912.

One other thing to know about this whole scheme is that the Joint Fundraising Committee has distributed funds it has collected as follows:

Hobbs Candidate Committee: $568,692.71
Navajo County Democrat Party: $657,185.09

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1 These are just two of the quarterly reports—your office has the others and it is a similar story.

expenditure laws, it operates in reverse on the issue identified above, tending to show an in-kind contribution from the PAC to cover Hobbs Candidate Committee expenses, at a minimum a violation of the contribution limits. That is, if the PAC is not engaged in any independent expenditure activity on its own, then why the need for these major expenses, as shown on the PAC's campaign finance report?

The second factor is that certain party expenditures can be coordinated with that parties' nominee, which in the instance of the Navajo County Democrat Party, for example, would be Katie Hobbs. But that only includes Katie Hobbs for Governor, and is limited to in-state candidates. See A.R.S. 16-901(17). And that raises yet another issue, and that is that the PAC gave $1.1 million to the Virigina Democrat Party on October 8, 2025, in the midst of the Virginia gubernatorial election, which occurs in odd numbered years. (Exhibit X).

This large contribution by the PAC came on the heals of an August 2025 contribution to it from the Arizona Democrat Party of $1.7 million, raising the question of why the state party did not simply contribute directly to the Virginia Democrat Party. There are also troubling questions about whether donors have been informed that so much of their contributions would be sent to Virginia to help candidates there. Your investigation must look into this, too.

IV. CONCLUSION

The hard money vs. soft money distinction is a critical one and must be maintained through robust enforcement. Without it, we might as well not have any contribution limits to candidates because they could be circumvented the way Governor Hobbs has attempted to, illegally. Please take appropriate enforcement action.

Very truly yours,

TIMOTHY A. LA SOTA, PLC

Timothy La Sota

Timothy A. La Sota

Exhibit 2

ADRIAN FONTES
SECRETARY OF STATE

August 13, 2026

VIA E-MAIL

Timothy A. La Sota
tim@timlasota.com

Campaign Finance Complaint: SOS-CF-2026-021

Dear Mr. La Sota,

The Secretary of State's Office received your complaint dated July 2, 2026**,** alleging, in summary, that candidate committee, Elect Katie Hobbs (#201800057), is paying for candidate campaign expenses using "soft money" from a separate PAC (Katie Hobbs Victory Fund, #102061) associated with her campaign, thus exceeding candidate campaign contribution limits. The allegations implicate A.R.S. §§ 16-912 and 16-914.

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 16-938, the Secretary of State's Office will conduct an initial review, provide the subject of said complaint ("Respondent") reasonable opportunity to respond, and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that Arizona law was violated. Based upon which the matter may be referred to the Arizona Attorney General's Office for possible enforcement action.

Thank you for reaching out to our office regarding this matter. Please contact our Campaign Finance Analyst at campaignfinance@azsos.gov or 602-542-8683 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Luke Douglas

Luke Douglas
Chief Legal Officer

Exhibit 3

FACT SHEETS

Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Investigates Unlawful "Straw Donor" and Foreign Contributions in American Elections

The White House

April 24, 2025

INVESTIGATING "STRAW" DONORS: Today, President Donald J. Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum to crack down on illegal "straw donor" and foreign contributions in American elections, following reports and congressional investigations regarding potentially unlawful activities through ActBlue and other online fundraising platforms.

- The Memorandum directs the Attorney General to investigate and take appropriate action concerning allegations regarding the use of online fundraising platforms to make "straw" or "dummy" contributions and to make foreign contributions to U.S. political candidates and committees, all of which break the law.
- Specifically, the Memorandum notes that a congressional investigation revealed significant fraud schemes using ActBlue and, over a 30-day period during the 2024 election cycle, hundreds of ActBlue donations from foreign IP addresses using prepaid cards, despite it being illegal for foreign nationals to contribute to U.S. elections.
- It instructs the Attorney General to report the results of the investigation to the President, through the Counsel to the President.

PROTECTING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: President Trump is taking action to address malign actors and foreign nationals who seek to illegally influence American elections, undermining the integrity of our electoral process.

- Recently uncovered evidence suggests that online fundraising platforms are being used to launder excessive and prohibited contributions to political candidates and committees.
- Bad actors have sought to evade Federal source and amount limitations by breaking down large contributions into smaller ones, often attributing them to numerous individuals without their consent or knowledge.
- These "straw donations" are frequently made through "dummy" accounts, using methods such as gift cards or prepaid credit cards to avoid detection.
- ActBlue has become notorious for its lax standards that enable unverified and fraudulent donations.
- A recent House of Representatives investigation found that ActBlue detected at least 22 "significant fraud campaigns" in recent years—nearly half of which had a foreign nexus.
    - Over a 30-day window during the 2024 election cycle, ActBlue detected 237 donations from foreign IP addresses using prepaid cards.
    - The investigation revealed that ActBlue trained employees to "look for reasons to accept contributions," even in the face of suspicious activity.
- Until recently, ActBlue accepted political contributions without requiring a card verification value (CVV), making it easy to contribute without identity verification.
    - Before addressing this issue in response to a congressional investigation, ActBlue tested whether this would hurt its fundraising.
- Numerous state attorneys general have opened investigations into ActBlue over suspicious donations made through obscured identities and untraceable means.

MAKING ELECTIONS SECURE AGAIN: Voters deserve elections they can trust, and that confidence is being restored thanks to President Trump.

- President Trump is following through on his promise to secure our elections.

    - President Trump: “We’re going to fix our elections so that our elections are going to be honorable and honest.”
    - President Trump: “We will secure our elections, and they will be secure once and for all.”
- President Trump recently signed an Executive Order to protect the integrity of American elections.
- Unlike the Biden Administration, which prioritized political agendas over fair elections, President Trump is putting the American people back in charge.

Related

Investigation into Unlawful “Straw Donor” and Foreign Contributions in American Elections

Presidential Actions, Presidential Memoranda | April 24, 2025

Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Protects the Integrity of American Elections

Fact Sheets | March 25, 2025

Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Ends the Procurement and Forced Use of Paper Straws

Fact Sheets | February 10, 2025

Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Combats Cybercrime, Fraud, and Predatory Schemes Against American Citizens

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Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Launches the Gold Card Program

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Exhibit 4

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ActBlue's Mysterious Donations: Nevada AG Under Pressure to Investigate

Posted By

Chuck Muth March 11, 2025

In recent months, ActBlue, a prominent fundraising platform for Democratic candidates, has come under scrutiny for allegedly facilitating "straw donor" schemes – where contributions are made under false identities to circumvent campaign finance laws.

Investigations have uncovered numerous suspicious donations made through obscured identities and untraceable means.

In October 2024, the Treasury Department identified hundreds of transactions linked to ActBlue that were flagged by banks as potentially suspicious, suggesting possible financial crimes such as money laundering and identity theft.

Further, the House Administration Committee found evidence indicating that foreign adversaries like China, Russia, Iran, and Venezuela may have exploited ActBlue's platform to funnel illegal donations into U.S. elections.

These actors allegedly used straw donations without the knowledge of the individuals or ActBlue, raising concerns about foreign interference in the political process.

In one particularly eye-popping example from Nevada listed on the website, a donor has reportedly made 40,597 donations – at an average of $14.05 each – totaling $570,378!

Another donor has reportedly made 11,435 donations – ranging from $250 to $5,000 – totaling $495,997.

Specific Allegations Involving Nevada Elected Officials

While national investigations have highlighted vulnerabilities in ActBlue's donation processes, there is currently no public evidence directly implicating Nevada elected officials in receiving funds from alleged straw donors.

However, the platform has been instrumental in fundraising for several Nevada politicians, including Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen, along with Reps. Dina Titus, Susie Lee and Steven Horsford

These officials have utilized ActBlue for campaign contributions, underscoring the platform's significant role in Nevada's political fundraising landscape.

Given these developments, there is a growing call for Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford to launch an investigation into ActBlue's fundraising activities within our state.

Ensuring that all political donations are transparent and lawful is essential to maintaining the integrity of our elections.

In response to these concerns, legislative measures have also been proposed to enhance transparency and security in online political donations.

The Secure Handling of Internet Electronic Donations (SHIELD) Act aims to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 by requiring the disclosure of card verification values (CVVs) for online contributions and prohibiting the acceptance of donations made through gift cards and prepaid credit cards.

The allegations surrounding ActBlue's potential facilitation of straw donor schemes have prompted national investigations and legislative proposals aimed at safeguarding the integrity of campaign finance.

While no specific instances involving Nevada elected officials have been publicly documented, the Democrats' reliance on ActBlue for fundraising necessitates vigilance and proactive measures to ensure compliance with campaign finance laws.

Someone let Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford know. Maybe he can look into this instead of wasting our time and money on obstructionist lawsuits to block President Trump's agenda.

This article was written with the assistance of AI. Please verify information and consult additional sources as needed.

Picture of Chuck Muth

Chuck Muth

Mr. Muth is president of Citizen Outreach, founder of CampaignDoctor.com, and publisher of Nevada News & Views. His views are his own. He can be reached at chuck@chuckmuth.com.
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