

# WisDems: Requests FEC investigation into possible Vukmir violations

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*Vukmir appears to have illegally used state campaign committee funds to pay for federal campaign expenses*

MADISON — Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Martha Laning today sent the Federal Election Commission a letter requesting an investigation into whether Republican U.S. Senate candidate Leah Vukmir and her U.S. Senate campaign illegally used state campaign committee funds to pay for federal campaign expenses.

Read the letter:

Office of General Counsel  
Federal Election Commission  
1050 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20463

October 4, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin (“DPW”) to draw your attention to what appear to be multiple violations of federal election law by Republican U.S. Senate candidate Leah Vukmir, who appears to have made repeated use of state campaign committee funds for federal campaign purposes.

According to state campaign finance reports submitted to the state of Wisconsin Ethics Commission by Ms. Vukmir's state campaign committee, "Friends of Leah Vukmir" (the "state committee"), Ms. Vukmir has, on as many as fifty-three occasions, used funds from her state committee to pay for expenses incurred during — and to the benefit of — her federal U.S. Senate campaign.

Ms. Vukmir announced her candidacy for U.S. Senate on September 7, 2017, and formed "Leah For Senate," a federal U.S. Senate campaign committee (the "federal committee"), by submitting a FEC Form 1 Statement of Organization dated September 8, 2017.

Over the year since Ms. Vukmir first announced her federal candidacy, the state committee has made fifty-three disbursements — not including transfers to other Wisconsin state campaign committees, to multiple payees, and for a range of campaign-related expenditures, including:

- "Candidate Expenses - Meals";
- "Candidate Expenses - Travel";
- "IT - Campaign IT Maintenance";
- "Utilities - Phone / Cell Phone"; and,
- "Bank Charges."

The fifty-three state committee disbursements total \$4,804.92, including \$2,964.53 that was spent on telecom and "Campaign IT Maintenance." Most, if not all, of these state committee expenditures appear to have benefited Ms. Vukmir's federal campaign and committee. Most glaringly, the state committee paid \$390.00 to Verizon Wireless, between October 2017 and January 2018, after which the state committee's Verizon Wireless expenditures ceased, while Verizon Wireless disbursements began on the federal committee's filings, suggesting that the previous state committee expenditures were made explicitly to the benefit of the federal committee.

If any state committee expenditures were, in fact, made to the benefit of Leah Vukmir's federal U.S. Senate candidacy, then it appears that Ms. Vukmir has potentially violated federal campaign finance laws on as many as fifty-three occasions, skirting both campaign contribution limits and disclosure requirements.

Given the close proximity to November's election, the DPW urges a swift investigation into Ms. Vukmir and her associated committees' potential violations of

federal campaign finance law.

Ms. Vukmir should be ordered to immediately answer for these inconsistencies and provide a detailed accounting of any illicit federal use of state committee funds. DPW further requests that Ms. Vukmir's federal committee be ordered to retroactively comply with federal campaign contribution limits and disclosure requirements, and that Ms. Vukmir face appropriate punitive measures for any violations of federal election law.

The DPW looks forward to your investigation and any findings that arise thereof.

Sincerely,

Martha Laning  
Chair  
Democratic Party of Wisconsin  
15 N. Pinckney Street, #200  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703.