

# WisDems: IRS complaint filed against Kleefisch's 1848 project campaign tax shelter

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MADISON, Wis. — Rebecca Kleefisch made it clear that she is a candidate for governor, telling a reporter “[you're not wrong](#)” when asked if she was running. But Kleefisch is missing one thing: a campaign committee. Instead, she's running for governor through her 1848 Project, a dark money, nonprofit group that is abusing the tax code and shielding the identity of Kleefisch's contributors.

By running her campaign through this shadow group, Kleefisch is both avoiding paying taxes and the scrutiny that comes from being an announced candidate. [According to the IRS](#) a 501(c)(4)'s social welfare work “does not include direct or indirect participation or intervention in political campaigns,” and the IRS expressly prohibits political activity from being the organization's primary activity. But with Kleefisch's confirmation that she is running for governor, it could not be more clear that Kleefisch is using her organization to house a gubernatorial campaign.

In addition to Kleefisch's comments confirming her intent to run for governor, the 1848 Project has done little to hide its true purpose. For example, she has hired political operatives for key roles in the organization, including Communications Director Alec Zimmerman, who was Kleefisch's communications director when she was lieutenant governor, and Executive Director Charles Nichols, who has held multiple positions with the Republican Party of Wisconsin. The organization has also run multiple radio ads featuring Kleefisch directly attacking Gov. Evers on a range of

issues.

With the abundance of evidence that the 1848 Project is nothing more than a front for her campaign for governor, a concerned Wisconsinite has filed a formal complaint with the IRS asking for a full investigation of the group's actions. [Click here to view the full complaint.](#)

In the meantime, Rebecca Kleefisch owes Wisconsinites answers about the 1848 Project (aka her exploratory gubernatorial campaign):

- When will the 1848 Project's donors be disclosed publicly?
- What expenses has the 1848 Project made to raise Kleefisch's profile across the state?
- What role do partisan political operatives play in the 1848 Project?
- When Kleefisch announces her run for governor will she disband the 1848 Project, or will it continue to act as a dark money organization to support her candidacy?

"Up to this point, Rebecca Kleefisch has evaded taxes and scrutiny with her dark money organization, the 1848 Project," said Democratic Party of Wisconsin Rapid Response Director Kayla Anderson. "With her comments confirming a run for governor, it's clear this isn't a nonprofit - it's a gubernatorial campaign in disguise, and an abuse of the tax code. Kleefisch needs to disclose who is funding this shadow campaign and what role these GOP political hacks are playing in it. Wisconsinites deserve nothing less than full transparency."