BEFORE THE NEVADA COMMISSION ON ETHICS

STATE OF NEVADA

ETHICS COMPLAINT

In the Matter of Zach Conine

Complainant: Morgun Sholty

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Respondent: Zach Conine, Nevada State Treasurer.

Date: October 23, 2026

I. NATURE OF THE COMPLAINT

1. Morgun Sholty, brings this complaint alleging potential misuse by Zach Conine of the authority and resources of the State Treasurer's Office to assist the campaign of his endorsed successor, Tya Mathis-Coleman. The principal question is whether Conine requested, directed, approved, or otherwise caused campaign assistance at public expense under NRS 281A.520, with NRS 281A.400 applicable where its separate elements are established.

2. Conine's right to endorse a candidate is not in dispute. Whether the resources of the office he led followed that endorsement is. His publicly reported encouragement of Mathis-Coleman's candidacy, the announcement-day leadership promotion, and the subsequent official publications make the approval process a concrete subject of inquiry. The public should not be left to guess whether a constitutional office was serving Nevada or helping select its next occupant.

II. FACTUAL BASIS

3. Candidacy and endorsement. On February 11, 2026, Mathis-Coleman publicly announced her campaign for Nevada State Treasurer with Conine's endorsement. Nevada Current later reported Mathis-Coleman's account that Conine had encouraged her to seek the office. The endorsement establishes his political support; whether governmental resources were used to advance that support is the question presented. (Exs. S-1, S-3.)

4. Official publicity on announcement day. That same day, the Treasurer's official X, Facebook, and Instagram accounts published material concerning a College Savings Division retreat. The X caption expressly credited her leadership: "Under the leadership of Deputy Treasurer Dr. Tya Mathis-Coleman" the team was focused on its work. The image was a group photograph; the caption nevertheless singled out her leadership. The timing and individualized credit provide a concrete basis to examine who selected, approved, and scheduled the content and whether the campaign launch influenced those decisions. (Exs. A-1, B-1, C-14.)

5. A sustained publication record. The binder contains 18 X post URLs, 22 Facebook posts or reels, and 15 Instagram items associated with the review of Mathis-Coleman's official exposure. This is an inventory of 55 located items, including cross-platform repetitions and routine program content, not 55 proven campaign advertisements. The record includes June 8 publications concerning College Savings Division school activities, immediately before the primary election. The proper inquiry is

whether the selection, emphasis, timing, or distribution of particular items served a campaign purpose at public expense. (Exs. A-1-A-18, including A-9; B-1-B-22, including B-16; C-1-C-15.)

6. **Reported increase in individual prominence.** The preliminary comparison reports approximately ten appearances per official platform during the twelve months before the announcement, more than half in group posts, followed by more frequent individual features. The comparison is not a completed audit: the periods differ in length, and reported appearances are not interchangeable with located URLs. Even so, the reported shift identifies a specific issue for account-level review: whether Treasury's editorial choices changed to elevate its employee-candidate, rather than to meet documented program needs. Different deputy portfolios and overall posting volume must be accounted for. (Ex. D-1.)

7. **Official and personal accounts linked.** The August 19 Instagram collaborator display identifies both the official Treasurer account and an account bearing Mathis-Coleman's name alongside the originating broadcaster's account. This is a documented connection between official content and her personal account, not merely her appearance in a photograph. The art-contest subject may explain legitimate program outreach, and the personal account has not been established as a campaign account. The unanswered questions are who authorized the collaboration, who controlled each account, and whether the arrangement supplied publicly funded content or distribution for private electoral benefit. (Ex. C-15a.)

8. **Campaign events and potential approvals.** The supplied campaign-page links concern a reported October 1, 2026 high-school appearance with other Democratic candidates and an April 7, 2026 Reno fundraiser. Their precise circumstances, Mathis-Coleman's work or leave status, and any public payment remain unverified. As to Conine, the question is whether he authorized or caused any use of State time, personnel, travel, or expenditures for campaign activity. The links identify events for investigation; they do not establish his participation. (Exs. S-4, S-5.)

9. **Accounts concerning State work time.** The materials supplied to the complainant recount concerns attributed to two current Treasury employees about absences associated with campaigning, fundraising, and outside teaching. The accounts are uncorroborated and identify no particular instruction from Conine. They warrant comparison with contemporaneous work, leave, and authorization records, not a presumption that he approved improper activity or that every absence represented campaign work.

10. **The approval and expenditure records have not resolved the questions.** Requests beginning October 2, 2026 sought official-account administration, calendars, leave, communications, travel, and expenditures. Treasury denied some categories, sought clarification of others, and set anticipated review or response dates extending to December 4, 2026 and March 12, 2027, after the November 3 election. The responses did not make unqualified commitments to produce all requested records on those dates. The records needed to establish who authorized the activity therefore remain unavailable for timely public examination. (Exs. F-M.)

11. **Scope of the records issue.** The delay does not establish that Conine ordered concealment, and no independent records-suppression charge is made on that basis. The Commission is not being asked to adjudicate a Chapter 239 dispute. The point is narrower: the identified publications and account relationship can be explained only by examining records of purpose, approval, and expenditure that the public-records process has not supplied. The absence of those records is a reason to obtain them, not a reason to treat the underlying conduct as resolved.

III. APPLICABLE LAW

12. **Expenditures supporting a candidate.** NRS 281A.520(1) restricts a public officer or employee from causing governmental expenses or expenditures to support a candidate, subject to statutory exceptions. Conine's own direction or approval of campaign-directed staff work or spending would therefore require examination. The inquiry must identify the expense, his causal role, the candidate status defined in NRS 281A.050, and the application of NRS 281A.520(4)-(6). A general reference to outreach cannot substitute for examining the particular activity.

13. **Publication rule and filing date.** NRS 281A.520(2)-(3) additionally addresses specified government-funded publications prominently featuring a current public officer after a declaration of candidacy is filed. The March 2-13 filing window does not establish Mathis-Coleman's precise filing date or resolve her status for this provision. February 11 is the public-announcement date. The separate resource-use restrictions of NRS 281A.400 must be analyzed on their own terms. (Ex. S-2.)

14. **Covered interests and personal responsibility.** NRS 281A.400(2), (7), and (9) address unwarranted advantages, government resources, and influence over subordinates for interests covered by those provisions. An endorsement or supervisory relationship alone does not establish the requisite private-capacity commitment or other elements. This complaint concerns Conine's own acts, knowledge, directions, and expenditure decisions, not automatic liability for everything done by his office.

IV. CONINE'S PERSONAL ROLE REQUIRES EXAMINATION

15. **Communications strategy and authorization.** The Commission should identify the decision-makers for the February 11 leadership publications, later features, and August 19 personal-account collaboration. Relevant evidence includes Conine's communications with Mathis-Coleman, communications staff, contractors, and campaign personnel; editorial plans; delegated approval authority; and instructions concerning timing or distribution. The issue is whether his political preference became an instruction carried out with public resources.

16. **Directions to staff and expenditure of working time.** The investigation should establish whether Conine directed, approved, or caused State employees to create, edit, distribute, or repurpose material for a campaign objective. Each disputed assignment should be tied to the work actually performed and the public time or other resources expended. His authority as Treasurer identifies a potential source of direction; the records must establish whether he exercised it in the challenged conduct.

17. **Campaign events and travel approvals.** The October 1 appearance and April 7 fundraiser provide specific dates for examining any Conine approval of work time, leave treatment, transportation, lodging, or reimbursement. Any public payment must be distinguished from personal or campaign spending and properly allocated official travel. His participation in an improper authorization must be established, not inferred merely because he headed the office.

18. **Controls and knowledge.** The applicable policies, approval workflows, and delegations should establish what Conine knew, what required his approval, and whether he made or ratified a decision causing campaign assistance at public expense. Missing safeguards alone are not charged as a separate violation. Their relevance is to the actual decision path and whether the challenged use was directed, authorized, or otherwise caused by him.

V. REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION AND RELIEF

19. Complainant submits that Conine's documented political support, the announcement-day leadership publicity, and the official-personal account connection warrant investigation under NRS 281A.715 into his own involvement. He requests prompt preservation and lawful examination of communications plans, drafts, account histories, approvals, State staff and contractor assignments, event authorizations, and related expenditure records. Where warranted, NRS 281A.300 provides a means to obtain records and testimony beyond voluntary public-records production.

20. If a violation is established, Complainant requests findings specifying Conine's acts, the resources expended, and the benefit conferred, with the corrective measures and sanctions authorized by law. A Treasurer may lend his personal political support to a candidate. He may not cause the public to finance that support outside the law's exceptions. The distinction must be established through records and testimony, not left unanswered behind the office's delayed responses.

VI. EXHIBITS AND SOURCES

21. The accompanying 76-page consolidated binder, Nevada_Ethics_Evidence_Binder_Clean_Final_2026-10-21.pdf, is incorporated by reference. Exhibits A-1-A-18 contain X captures; B-1-B-22 contain Facebook captures; C-1-C-15 and C-15a contain Instagram material and the collaborator display; and F-M reproduce identified public-records correspondence. S-1-S-6 identify supplemental sources, and D-1 records the preliminary comparison. S-4 and S-5 do not establish event times, public payment, or Conine's participation; S-6 is not relied upon to allege any travel or compensation expenditure.

Respectfully submitted,

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