

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 10, 2026

Current and Former Georgia Republican Party, and Cobb Republican Leaders Call on Michael Garza to Return \$5,800 in Campaign Contributions from Senior SPLC Attorney

MARIETTA, GA – Current and former leaders of the Cobb County Republican Party today called on Cobb County Board of Education Post 4 candidate **Michael Garza** to immediately return **\$5,800** in campaign contributions accepted from **Michael Tafelski**, Senior Supervising Attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC).

Their request follows the recent federal indictment of the Southern Poverty Law Center. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the indictment alleges offenses including wire fraud, false statements to a federally insured financial institution, and conspiracy to commit concealment money laundering. Federal prosecutors further allege the organization concealed millions of dollars in payments to confidential informants affiliated with extremist organizations—including individuals associated with the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, National Alliance, and other extremist groups—while continuing to solicit charitable donations. These allegations remain pending before the court, and all defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

The undersigned believe these facts raise legitimate questions that deserve a public response from a candidate seeking to help lead Cobb County's schools.

Joint Statement

“School board candidates should be judged not only by what they say, but by the judgment they demonstrate and the campaign contributions they choose to accept.

Michael Garza accepted \$5,800 in campaign contributions from a senior attorney employed by an organization now facing serious federal criminal allegations. Cobb County voters deserve to know whether he supports the Southern Poverty Law Center's agenda or whether he will return the money and publicly distance himself from the conduct alleged in the federal indictment.

The right decision is simple: **“return the \$5,800, answer these legitimate questions openly, and keep the focus where it belongs—on providing every Cobb County student with the opportunity to succeed.”**

The undersigned respectfully call upon Mr. Garza to:

- **Return** the \$5,800 in campaign contributions received from Michael Tafelski.

- **Explain** why these contributions are not being returned, if Candidate Michael Garza intends to keep the donation from senior members of the Southern Poverty Law Center.
- **State** whether he supports or rejects the conduct alleged in the federal indictment.

The citizens of Cobb County deserve transparency from every candidate seeking to help lead our public schools. We believe returning these contributions and addressing these questions directly would demonstrate the accountability and sound judgment expected of those entrusted with educating the next generation.

Signatories

Josh McKoon

Chairman, Georgia Republican Party

Sue Everhart

Former Chairman, Georgia Republican Party

Mary Clarice Hathaway

Chairman, Cobb County Republican Party

Salleigh Grubbs

Former Chairman, Cobb County Republican Party

Jason Shepherd

Former Chairman, Cobb County Republican Party

Scott Johnson

Former Chairman, Cobb County Republican Party

Rose Wing

Former Chairman, Cobb County Republican Party