



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
**FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION**  
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**To:** Chair Silver, Commissioners Brandt, Ortiz, and Wilson

**From:** Kendall L.D. Bonebrake, Chief of Enforcement  
Angela J. Brereton, Assistant Chief of Enforcement

**Subject:** *In the Matter of Committee to Elect Stevevonna Evans 2018 Adelanto City Council, Stevevonna Evans for Board of Supervisors 2020, and Stevevonna Evans; FPPC No. 20/1097; Enforcement Division’s Response to Respondent’s Motion to Vacate Default Judgment*

**Date:** June 2, 2026

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### **BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

As detailed in the Default, Stevevonna Evans (“Evans”) was a successful candidate for the Adelanto City Council in the November 6, 2018 General Election, an unsuccessful candidate for San Bernardino County Supervisor in the March 3, 2020 Primary Election, an unsuccessful candidate for Mayor of Adelanto in the November 8, 2022 General Election, and a successful candidate for Adelanto City Council in the November 5, 2024 General Election. As a four-time candidate and having served as a public official for at least six years, Evans should have known the requirements of the Act, including the proper way to terminate a committee, which, in this case, would have reduced the number of violations significantly.

Despite Evans’ experience, the Enforcement Division received at least seventeen filing officer referrals in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 for the failure to timely file campaign statements related to Evans’ campaigns for office in the 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2024 elections. In an effort to gain compliance and resolve this matter, the Enforcement Division contacted Evans on numerous occasions from 2020 – 2025.<sup>1</sup> Enforcement staff reached Evans on a few of these occasions; however, eventually, Evans was unresponsive to the Enforcement Division.

Administrative proceedings began on December 11, 2024, when Evans, individually and on behalf of Committee to Elect Stevevonna Evans 2018 Adelanto City Council (“the 2018 Committee”), and Stevevonna Evans for Board of Supervisors 2020 (“the 2020 Committee”), was served with a Report in Support of Finding Probable Cause (“Probable Cause Report”). Evans did not respond to the Probable Cause Report or request a conference, and an Order Finding Probable Cause was issued after the Enforcement Division’s ex parte request.

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<sup>1</sup> Default Decision and Order FPPC No. 20/1097 at pages 11-12.

Accordingly, Evans, individually and on behalf of the 2018 Committee and the 2020 Committee, was personally served with the Accusation at Adelanto City Hall on June 11, 2025, satisfying the service requirement for Accusations.<sup>2</sup> Respondents did not file a Notice of Defense within the statutory time period, which ended on June 26, 2025.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the failure to file a Notice of Defense, on November 5, 2025, a letter titled “Notice of Default Decision and Order” was sent to Evans at Adelanto City Hall, the same address Evans was personally served with the Accusation.<sup>4</sup> This letter served as pre-notice that the Enforcement Division intended to pursue a default in the Respondent’s case. The initial notice of the default appeared on the published agenda for the Commission’s public meeting on November 20, 2025. On February 5, 2026, a second letter, “Notice of Intent to Enter Default Decision and Order,” was sent to Evans at Adelanto City Hall.<sup>5</sup> This letter informed Respondents that on March 19, 2026, at the Commission’s public meeting, the Enforcement Division would ask the Commission to adopt the default and impose an administrative penalty of \$76,500. A copy of the Default, Decision, and Order and accompanying exhibits the Commission would consider at its meeting on March 19, 2026, was enclosed with the letter. Evans was also provided instructions regarding the opportunity to respond to the Default. Evans failed to respond or contact the Enforcement Division.

On March 19, 2026, the Commission approved a Default, Decision and Order for the case: *In the Matter of Committee to Elect Stevevonna Evans 2018 Adelanto City Council, Stevevonna Evans for Board of Supervisors 2020, and Stevevonna Evans*; FPPC No. 20/1097 (the “Default”). On March 31, 2026, Evans was personally served<sup>6</sup> at Adelanto City Hall with a copy of the signed Default Decision and Order, Exhibit 1 in Support of a Default Decision, Exhibits A-1 through A-20, and a copy of California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 18361.11.

The Notice of Default and Administrative Fine letter accompanying the Default packet explained that Evans had seven days from the date the letter was served on Evans to serve a written motion to vacate with the Commission.<sup>7</sup> On April 24, 2026, 24 days after being served, Evans filed a Motion to Vacate the Default, Decision and Order. As such, Evans’ Motion to Vacate was not timely served and may be denied on procedural grounds.

If the Commission chooses to consider the Motion to Vacate on the merits, the Default shows that Evans did not behave in a manner consistent with a genuine desire to comply with the campaign disclosure laws or to resolve the case on its merits. Given Evans’ experience with the Act as a candidate and current officeholder, the behavior related to this matter is inexcusable and is not the type of behavior contemplated to fall under the good cause standard. As stated in the Default documents approved by the Commission and noted here, Evans has failed to establish

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<sup>2</sup> Default Decision and Order FPPC No. 20/1097 at page 111; and Gov. Code § 11505, subd. (c).

<sup>3</sup> Default Decision and Order FPPC No. 20/1097 at page 5.

<sup>4</sup> Default Decision and Order FPPC No. 20/1097 at page 186.

<sup>5</sup> Default Decision and Order FPPC No. 18/1359 at page 188.

<sup>6</sup> Personal service was effectuated by acceptance of the documents by an agent authorized to accept service, listed as Laura Lowe in the proof of service. See Code Civ. Proc. § 416.90.

<sup>7</sup> Gov. Code § 11520, subd. (c), and 2 CCR § 18361.11, subd. (d)(2).

sufficient good cause to justify granting the Motion to Vacate the Default, and it should be denied.

## LAW

The Commission has the authority to vacate its prior decision on a default and grant the respondent a hearing on a showing of good cause.<sup>8</sup> “Good cause” includes, but is not limited to, (1) failure of the person to receive notice of the Accusation, and (2) mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect.<sup>9</sup> Evans does not dispute the personal service of the Accusation; therefore, Evans’ request to vacate rests on the presence of mistake, inadvertence, surprise or excusable neglect.

When a request to vacate a default judgment is made, courts have applied California Code of Civil Procedure § 473, subdivision (b), which states, in part: “The court may, upon any terms as may be just, relieve a party or his or her legal representative from a judgment, dismissal, order, or other proceeding taken against him or her through his or her mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect.” A review of how courts have ruled on this standard sheds light on how the Commission can and should similarly apply the standard for good cause under Government Code Section 11505, subdivision (c).

In *Gillingham v. Lawrence*, the court denied the defendant’s motion to vacate a default, stating, in part:

The defendant could read, and the summons expressly told him the time within which he must appear and answer. He let the time pass, and never even consulted an attorney. ... While courts are liberal in relieving parties of defaults caused by inadvertence or excusable neglect, and while they much prefer that a case should be heard on its merits, yet they do not act as guardians for incompetent parties or parties who are grossly careless as to their own affairs. ... Where a party willfully slumbers upon his rights when he should be alert, and makes no efforts to protect himself, courts cannot patiently listen to flimsy excuses and the claim of ignorance of the law. It was the duty of defendant to read the summons, and not only to read it but to heed it.<sup>10</sup>

The *Palmer v. Lantz* court stated, “[Code of Civil Procedure Section 473] is not designed to afford relief from a judgment which may be validly entered upon constructive service to those who with full knowledge of such service upon them, by reason of receipt of a copy of the summons and complaint through the mail, remain inactive.”<sup>11</sup> Additionally, the *Price v. Hibbs* court stated, “One may not be relieved from his default unless he makes a showing that he has acted in good faith and demonstrates that his excusable neglect was the actual cause of his failure

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<sup>8</sup> Gov. Code § 11520, subd. (c), and 2 CCR, § 18361.11, subd. (d)(2).

<sup>9</sup> Gov. Code § 11520, subd. (c), and Code Civ. Proc. § 473.

<sup>10</sup> *Gillingham v. Lawrence*, 11 Cal. App. 231, 233-234.

<sup>11</sup> *Palmer v. Lantz*, 215 Cal. 320, 324, citing *Gray v. Lawlor*, 151 Cal. 352 and *Boland v. All Persons*, 160 Cal. 486.

to attend the trial. Neither one's change of mind nor his inexcusable negligence is ground for vacating a judgment."<sup>12</sup>

## ARGUMENT

The Commission's discretion to grant a Motion to Vacate a Default rests on whether the respondent asserts good cause for not responding to the present administrative action. Here, Evans has asserted no facts on which the Commission can rely to grant the Motion to Vacate based on good cause.

### A. Evans Decided Not to File the Notice of Defense

Evans asserts that the failure to respond was due to mistake, inadvertence, surprise, and excusable neglect. Evans also states, "my failure to timely respond was not willful."<sup>13</sup> However, communications with the Enforcement Division show that Evans read the Accusation packet and decided not to file the Notice of Defense. Evans spoke on the phone with the Enforcement Division attorney previously assigned to this matter, Senior Commission Counsel Marissa Corona, on June 25, 2025, regarding the Accusation and deadline for filing the Notice of Defense. Evans followed up the conversation with an email stating:

Good afternoon Marissa,

First let my [sic] thank you again for your willingness to repeatedly attempt to contact me. I'm happy we finally connected.

After our conversation and reviewing the Accusation packet, I have decided NOT to file the Notice of Defense.

Please send over next steps so we can work together on getting this closed out.

Thank you for your time,  
Councilwoman Evans<sup>14</sup>

Per Evans' request to resolve the matter, Senior Commission Counsel Corona followed up with Evans four times via email and three times via telephone between June 27, 2025, and August 12, 2025. Evans did not respond to any of these contact attempts. Subsequently, the Enforcement Division submitted the Default for pre-notice in November 2025, and for the Commission's approval in March 2026. Again, Evans did not respond to any of the notices regarding the Default.

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<sup>12</sup> [Price v. Hibbs, 225 Cal. App. 2d 209](#), 217.

<sup>13</sup> Evans' Motion to Vacate, Evans' Declaration, page 16, lines 12-13.

<sup>14</sup> See attached Exhibit 1, Email from Stevevonna Evans to Marissa Corona, June 25, 2025 (capitalization included in the original).

The Motion to Vacate asserts that “[t]he record supports a finding of good cause because Respondent’s failure to respond was the result of mistake, inadvertence, surprise, and excusable neglect rather than a willful decision to ignore the proceeding.”<sup>15</sup> This assertion is disingenuous.

In Evans’ own words, Evans reviewed the Accusation packet and decided not to file a Notice of Defense. Under these circumstances, the case law supports denying Evans’ Motion to Vacate the Default. As in *Palmer v. Lantz*, the good cause standard is not designed to afford Evans relief from the Default, because Evans had full knowledge not only of the service of the Accusation but also of its actual allegations, having read the packet. As the *Gillingham v. Lawrence* court said, “Where a party willfully slumbers upon his rights ... courts cannot patiently listen to flimsy excuses and the claim of ignorance of the law.”<sup>16</sup> Here, Evans willfully chose not to respond to the Accusation, and the enumerated excuses and claims of ignorance do not support granting the Motion to Vacate the Default. And as in *Price v. Hibbs*, Evans’ change of mind now that the Default has been approved is not grounds for vacating the Default. Consequently, Evans has asserted no facts on which the Commission can rely to grant the Motion to Vacate based on good cause, and the Motion to Vacate should be denied.

### **B. Evans’ Personal Hardships Did Not Prevent Evans From Filing a Notice of Defense**

Evans references the good cause standard in the Motion to Vacate in an attempt to persuade the Commission that various personal hardships caused her to commit the violations detailed in the Default. Evans’ use of the good cause standard in this way is incorrect and irrelevant to whether the Motion to Vacate should be granted. The good cause standard in Regulation 18361.11 applies to the failure to respond to the Accusation. As detailed above, Evans decided not to file a Notice of Defense and has asserted no facts on which the Commission can rely to grant the Motion to Vacate based on good cause.

Remarkably, though Evans asserts facing “significant personal hardships” in March through December 2020 (COVID-19 and medical diagnosis), June 2021 (surgery), February through August 2023 (re-marriage and separation/divorce), December 2024 (application for restraining order), and 2023 through 2025 (divorce proceedings), none of the articulated personal hardships prevented Evans from running for city and county offices in 2020, 2022 or 2024. Moreover, Evans remains in office to date.

In the Motion to Vacate, Evans cites [GC Brothers Entertainment, LLC v. Alcoholic Beverage Control Appeals Bd.](#), 84 Cal. App. 5th 1019, 1032, to support their position that “California courts construe relief-from-default provisions liberally in favor of allowing matters to be decided on the merits where possible,”<sup>17</sup> and that “...the requirement of a showing [of good cause] is more relaxed under the licensing law than under the Code of Civil Procedure.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Evans’ Motion to Vacate, page 12, lines 1-3.

<sup>16</sup> [Gillingham v. Lawrence](#), 11 Cal. App. 231, 233-234.

<sup>17</sup> Evans’ Motion to Vacate, page 11, lines 20-24.

<sup>18</sup> Evans’ Motion to Vacate, page 6, lines 6-7.

However, Evans misconstrues the court’s guidance. Liberal application of the rules allowing relief from defaults does not mean applying the good cause standard to the violations in the Default. Such relief may only be granted if respondents show good cause regarding failing to respond to the Accusation. Indeed, in the *GC Brothers Entertainment, LLC* case, the issue was whether the respondents received the Accusation in order to properly respond. Here, in contrast, Evans admits that she received the Accusation and chose not to respond to it.

Evans incorrectly applies the good cause standard to the violations in the Default. Whether there was good cause to commit the violations is irrelevant to the Motion to Vacate. Evans has asserted no facts on which the Commission can rely to grant the Motion to Vacate based on good cause, and it should be denied.

### **C. The Full Extent of Evans’ Campaign Activity is Unknown Due to the Extensive Number of Missing Campaign Statements and Reports**

Evans asserts that the “... violations [in the Default] stem from a lack of reporting for amounts less than \$9,000,”<sup>19</sup> and “[t]here was no effort to hide financial activity, because there was no ongoing campaign activity after the election and no campaign funds were received or expended during the relevant time.”<sup>20</sup> These assertions are inaccurate, misleading, and irrelevant to whether the Motion to Vacate should be granted.

Despite facing “significant personal hardships,”<sup>21</sup> Evans repeatedly ran for and held public office. In 2020, while serving on the Adelanto City Council, Evans unsuccessfully ran for the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. In 2022, while serving on the Adelanto City Council, Evans unsuccessfully ran for Mayor of Adelanto. In 2024, Evans successfully ran for and currently serves on the Adelanto City Council, and the term expires in 2028.

As the Default shows, Evans repeatedly failed to timely complete and file the required paperwork over a period of nearly six years, and continues to do so. The public has not received any disclosure regarding any of Evans’ campaign activity since February 21, 2020, when the 2020 Committee filed the second pre-election campaign statement. The 2018 Committee last filed a campaign statement on September 3, 2019. Evans filed no campaign statements or reports for the 2022 Adelanto Mayor campaign or the 2024 Adelanto City Council campaign, so the public has no information about what Evans raised and spent for those campaigns. Evans’ assertion that “there was no ongoing campaign activity” does not excuse the obligation to file campaign statements and reports, and it is highly suspect that there was no campaign activity at all since 2020 with two subsequent campaigns for office.

To summarize, Evans was on the ballot in multiple elections, had two open committees, ran for two offices without establishing the required committees, and has since failed to timely file

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<sup>19</sup> Evans’ Motion to Vacate, page 8, lines 26-27.

<sup>20</sup> Evans’ Motion to Vacate, page 17, lines 7-9.

<sup>21</sup> Evans’ Motion to Vacate, page 4, line 7.

nearly 60 required campaign statements and reports across these four campaigns. And despite the assertion that Evans has “made a good-faith effort by taking corrective action,”<sup>22</sup> and “is actively seeking to cure the noncompliance,”<sup>23</sup> only one of the numerous outstanding campaign statements and reports has been filed as of May 28, 2026. On May 4, 2026, 2,285 days late and after the Default was approved, Evans filed the semi-annual campaign statement for the reporting period of July 1 through December 31, 2019 for the 2018 Committee. On May 6, 2026, the California Secretary of State (“SOS”) received a termination Statement of Organization for the 2018 Committee. However, the SOS rejected that termination statement for failing to include the termination date.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the 2018 Committee is still an open committee with continuing filing obligations.

Even so, the egregious and continuing failure to file campaign statements and reports is irrelevant to the Motion to Vacate. The question here is whether Evans failed to timely file a Notice of Defense for good cause. As previously shown, Evans has failed to establish sufficient good cause to justify granting the Motion to Vacate the Default, and it should be denied.

#### **D. The Comparable Default Cases Imposed Comparable Total Penalties to Evans’ Default as Well as Comparable Penalties per Violation**

Evans argues that the penalty imposed by the Commission in the Default was “grossly disproportionate and not in the interest of justice.”<sup>25</sup> Supporting this argument, Evans points to the comparable cases included in the Default: *In the Matter of Sandy Genis for Costa Mesa City Council 2016 and Sandy Genis*, FPPC No.18/1359, and *In the Matter of Pham for Assembly 2018, Long Pham, and Mary Pham*, FPPC No. 18/569. However, Evans wholly misrepresents the penalties imposed in the comparable cases, and even if accurate, those penalties are completely irrelevant to the Motion to Vacate.

As Evans points out (though citing the incorrect law), the Commission considers the factors enumerated in California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 18361.5, subdivision (e), when determining the appropriate penalty for a particular violation of the Act. One of these factors is “Penalties previously imposed by the Commission in comparable cases.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, the Default here included comparable cases in order to compare and assess consistent penalties.

The *Genis* Default, Case No. 18/1359,<sup>27</sup> was approved by the Commission at the November 21, 2024 Commission meeting. The *Genis* Default included 33 counts for campaign late-filing and late-reporting violations, and the total penalty imposed by the Commission was \$68,000, not less

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<sup>22</sup> Evans’ Motion to Vacate, page 8, line 6.

<sup>23</sup> Evans’ Motion to Vacate, page 9, line 3.

<sup>24</sup> See attached Exhibit 2, Letter from the SOS Political Reform Division to Steevonna Evans and the 2018 Committee, May 11, 2026.

<sup>25</sup> Evans’ Motion to Vacate, page 8, line 25-26.

<sup>26</sup> 2 CCR § 18361.5, subd. (e)(3).

<sup>27</sup> [Genis Default, Case No. 18/1359](#). The Respondent in the *Genis* Default brought a Motion to Vacate before the Commission, which the Commission heard and denied at the February 13, 2025 Commission meeting.

than \$6,000 as Evans claims. As detailed in the Default, some of the penalties charged for similar violations as the *Genis* Default were the same or similar, and others were lower.<sup>28</sup>

The *Pham* Default, Case No. 18/569,<sup>29</sup> was approved by the Commission at the October 17, 2024 Commission meeting. The *Pham* Default included 8 counts for campaign late-filing, campaign bank account, and campaign recordkeeping violations, and the total penalty imposed was \$39,500, not \$5,000 as Evans claims. As detailed in the Default, all of the penalties charged for similar violations as the *Pham* Default were lower.<sup>30</sup>

The penalties imposed in the Default are comparable and consistent with the cited prior Enforcement cases. The time for Evans to discuss with the Enforcement Division whether lower penalties could be considered was at any time from the case being opened until March 19, 2026. Unfortunately, Evans has come to the negotiating table too late.

Regardless, the penalties imposed in the Default are completely irrelevant to the Motion to Vacate. The question here is whether Evans failed to timely file a Notice of Defense for good cause. As previously shown, Evans has failed to establish sufficient good cause to justify granting the Motion to Vacate the Default, and it should be denied.

## CONCLUSION

The Default shows that Evans did not behave in a manner consistent with a genuine desire to comply with the campaign disclosure laws or to resolve the case on its merits. The Motion to Vacate does not indicate any change in Evans' positions. Rather, it is designed to detract from the seriousness of the continued nondisclosure of campaign activity by an experienced sitting city councilperson and to delay the imposition of the penalties.

While the Commission generally has discretion to vacate a default, it is specifically predicated upon a showing of good cause that has not occurred in this matter. Evans has not shown good cause to vacate the Default, Decision, and Order because Evans failed to show that the failure to respond to the Accusation was due to mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect. Instead, Evans chose not to respond to the Accusation and repeatedly failed to engage with the Enforcement Division to resolve this case on the merits. Such behavior is inexcusable and is not the type of behavior contemplated to fall under the good cause standard.

Evans has failed to establish sufficient good cause to justify granting the Motion to Vacate the Default, and it should be denied.

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<sup>28</sup> [Default, Case No. 20/1097](#), pages 21-22.

<sup>29</sup> [Pham Default, Case No. 18/569](#)

<sup>30</sup> [Default, Case No. 20/1097](#), pages 22-23.