

MAX ENGLING

In May 2026, Max Engling filed to run for Indiana Secretary of State. In 2024, he unsuccessfully challenged U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz for the Republican nomination in Indiana's 5th Congressional District, finishing third in the primary with about 10% of the vote. Though he is not a widely recognized candidate, Engling touts over 14 years of public service in Indiana and Washington D.C., claiming to have trained representatives – including most of the Indiana members – and built conservative coalitions. He rose from a House intern to become director of member services under former Speaker Kevin McCarthy. Most recently, he served as the central Indiana regional director and a senior adviser for U.S. Senator Jim Banks' office from early 2025 to 2026. Engling grew up in the Cicero area of Hamilton County, Indiana before graduating in 2010 from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. He went on to earn a master's degree in National Defense and Strategic Planning as a civilian at the U.S. Naval War College. He currently lives in Cicero, Indiana with his wife, Kelcey, and their four children. He lived in D.C. area for years before the family returned to Indiana in 2023.

Key findings:

Engling supports closing primary elections. Engling said his major campaign focuses include closing primary elections. His campaign website argues “Republican primaries should be decided by Indiana Republicans – not forcing winners who don't match the district.” Engling blamed Democrats voting in Republican primaries to elect a person who “doesn't actually fit the district that they're running for and is a much more moderate person in that position.”

Engling's priorities include safeguarding elections to make sure only citizens are allowed to cast ballots. Engling's campaign website called for ballots to be cast by only “verified” U.S. citizens, with “no exceptions, no loopholes.” Engling said he was in support of putting a marker on non-citizens' identification documents so that people who are not citizens of the U.S. are rendered unable to register to vote.

BACKGROUND

PERSONAL LIFE

Engling identifies as a Christian and Conservative. “Max Engling is a Christian, Conservative, husband to Kelcey and proud father of four children. As one of eight kids growing up, Max learned the values of hard work, faith, and personal responsibility from an early age. Those values continue to guide his life and his campaign for Indiana Secretary of State.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

Family

Engling lives in Cicero, Indiana with his family. “Max worked in construction to help pay his way through IUPUI before later earning a master's degree in National Defense and Strategic Planning as a civilian at the U.S. Naval War College. He and his family now live in Cicero, Indiana, where they are active members of their church, serving in several teaching and volunteer roles.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

Engling has four children with his wife, Kelcey. “Max Engling is a Christian, Conservative, husband to Kelcey and proud father of four children. As one of eight kids growing up, Max learned the values of hard work, faith, and personal responsibility from an early age. Those values continue to guide his life and his campaign for Indiana Secretary of State.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

Engling had seven siblings. Max Engling is a Christian, Conservative, husband to Kelcey and proud father of four children. As one of eight kids growing up, Max learned the values of hard work, faith, and personal responsibility from an early age. Those values continue to guide his life and his campaign for Indiana Secretary of State.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

Engling said he grew up in the Cicero area of Hamilton County before graduating in 2010 from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. “Engling says he grew up in the Cicero area of Hamilton County before graduating in 2010 from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. He soon became inspired by the tea party movement and landed a committee intern position in Washington the following year.” [Daily Journal, 6/3/26]

Engling was living in the D.C. area until he and his wife decided to return to Hamilton County with their four children in 2023. “Engling was living in the D.C. area until he and his wife decided to return to Hamilton County with their four children in 2023.” [Daily Journal, 6/3/26]

Timeline

2006 – 2010: Indiana University Indianapolis (Bachelors, Political Science/Psychology)

Feb 2011 – May 2011: Intern, Committee on House Administration, U.S. House of Representatives

May 2011 – May 2013: Staff Assistant, Committee on House Administration, U.S. House of Representatives

Feb 2014 – Dec 2016: Professional Staff, Member & Committee Services, Committee on House Administration, U.S. House of Representatives

Jan 2017 – Jan 2019: Staff Director, Franking Commission, Committee on House Administration, U.S. House of Representatives

Aug 2017 – Dec 2020: U.S. Naval War College (Master of Arts, Defense and Strategic Studies)

Jan 2019 – Dec 2022: Member Services, U.S. House of Representatives

Jan 2023 – Aug 2023: Director of Member Services, U.S. House of Representatives

Oct 2023 – May 2024: Candidate, Indiana's 5th Congressional District

Jul 2024 – Dec 2024: Agriculture Policy Education Advisor, Beck's Hybrids

Jan 2025 – Present: Regional Director – Central Indiana, U.S. Senator Jim Banks
[LinkedIn, accessed [6/18/26](#)]

Education

Engling worked in construction to help pay his way through IUPUI. “Max worked in construction to help pay his way through IUPUI before later earning a master's degree in National Defense and Strategic Planning as a civilian at the U.S. Naval War College. He and his family now live in Cicero, Indiana, where they are active members of their church, serving in several teaching and volunteer roles.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

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Career

As of 2026, Engling worked for U.S. Senator Jim Banks. “Today, Max works for U.S. Senator Jim Banks, traveling across Indiana to meet with faith leaders, grassroots activists, business owners, elected officials, and Hoosiers to hear their concerns and priorities. Through those conversations, Max says several themes are clear: Hoosiers want secure elections, less government, and an easier path for small businesses to succeed.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

- **Engling was the central Indiana regional director and a senior adviser for Banks' Senate office.** “Engling, who is the central Indiana regional director and a senior adviser for Banks' Senate office, joins Knox County Clerk David Shelton and conservative activist Jamie Reitenour in challenging Morales.” [Daily Journal, 5/21/26]
- **Engling joined Banks' staff in early 2025.** “Banks won election to the U.S. Senate in 2024 after eight years in the U.S. House. Engling joined his staff in early 2025 after a dozen years in Washington as a Republican congressional staffer and a 2024 GOP primary loss to U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz.” [Daily Journal, 6/15/26]

Engling moved to DC during the Tea Party movement and worked for the House Administration Committee, the chief elections committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, and in House leadership. “He later moved to Washington, D.C., during the Conservative Tea Party movement and worked for the House Administration Committee, the chief elections committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he gained experience in election law, oversight, and Congressional communications. He also worked in House leadership, helping advance Conservative policies and pass legislation.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

- **In 2024, Engling said he had over 14 years of public service in Indiana and Washington DC.** “I have 14-plus years of public service both here and in Washington, DC. My job in Congress was to train representatives (including most of our Indiana members) and build conservative coalitions. I am the only candidate with the experience and drive to actually achieve our conservative goals.” [Current Publishing, [3/22/24](#)]
- **Engling said his job in Congress was to train representatives (including most of the Indiana members) and build conservative coalitions.** “I have 14-plus years of public service both here and in Washington, DC. My job in Congress was to train representatives (including most of our Indiana members) and build conservative coalitions. I am the only candidate with the experience and drive to actually achieve our conservative goals.” [Current Publishing, [3/22/24](#)]
- **Engling rose from a House intern to become director of member services under former Speaker Kevin McCarthy.** “Before Spartz reentered the race, Engling, who rose from a House intern to become director of member services under former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, received donations from leadership PACs affiliated with Republican members such as Reps. Don Bacon of Nebraska and Jake Ellzey of Texas, as well as donations from McCarthy and NRCC Chairman Richard Hudson of North Carolina. Engling also has the backing of the Republican Main Street Partnership PAC. Goodrich picked up endorsements from several of his legislative colleagues.” [Roll Call, 4/4/24]

Engling touted his history of working for Beck’s Hybrids and other unnamed small businesses in Indiana. “He also worked for Beck's Hybrids, where he helped build an agricultural education program connecting state and federal legislative staff with Indiana agriculture and the vital farming economy. Throughout his career, he has worked with many small businesses in Indiana and understands the importance of reducing unnecessary government burdens.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

Engling was a former model who was featured on The Hill’s 50 Most Beautiful 2012 list, GQ’s Capitol Hill style project, Refinery 29’s 30 under 30 list, and Washington Life’s Under 40 list. “It’s been a whirlwind year for Max Engling, the former model named No. 1 on The Hill's 50 Most Beautiful list last year. Since taking the top spot, new modeling opportunities for Engling have popped up. He's been photographed in GQ as part of the magazine's Capitol Hill style project. He's also been featured in Refinery 29's 30 under 30 list, Washington Life's Under 40 list and Washingtonian's great hair issue.” [The Hill, 7/23/13]

2024 Campaign for Congress

2023: Engling announced he was running for Indiana’s 5th Congressional District after incumbent Rep. Victoria Spartz announced she was not seeking reelection. “Max Engling announced Oct. 17

that he is running as a Republican to represent Indiana's 5th Congressional District. Rep. Victoria Spartz has announced that she is not seeking reelection to that district, which comprises Hamilton, Madison, Delaware, Grant and Tipton counties, and part of Howard County.” [Current in Noblesville, 10/17/23]

- **After Rep. Spartz announced her intention to run for re-election after all, Engling stayed in the race, saying “Congresswoman Spartz's well-documented history of waffling on the issues and re-election campaign leaves Indiana families without a principled voice in Congress.”** “Max Engling said he, too, will remain in the race for the nomination. ‘Congresswoman Spartz's well-documented history of waffling on the issues and re-election campaign leaves Indiana families without a principled voice in Congress,’ he said. ‘Decisive conservative leadership means standing your ground when it comes to reducing the debt, fighting for Indiana families and getting America back on track. ‘I’m in the race to win, and the congresswoman's latest announcement make me more committed than ever to stay in this race,’ Engling concluded.” [Herald Bulletin, 2/5/24]
- **2024: Spartz ultimately won the Republican primary, with Engling finishing in third.** “Spartz had 39% of the vote when the AP called the race at 8:29 p.m. Eastern time. Chuck Goodrich, a state lawmaker and the CEO of a construction company, was running second and former House staffer Max Engling was third.” [The Republic, 5/8/24]

2024: Engling’s priorities included “Driving down the cost of living,” “Securing our border” and “Solving the national debt crisis.” “After talking with Hoosiers around the district and knocking around 1,000 doors for Republican candidates in the 2023 municipal election, it is clear that the top three issues are: Driving down the cost of living Securing our border a Solving the national debt crisis” [Current Publishing, [3/22/24](#)]

Before Spartz reentered the race, Engling received donations from leadership PACs affiliated with Republican members of Congress including Reps. Don Bacon of Nebraska and Jake Ellzey of Texas, as well as donations from McCarthy and NRCC Chairman Richard Hudson of North Carolina. “Before Spartz reentered the race, Engling, who rose from a House intern to become director of member services under former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, received donations from leadership PACs affiliated with Republican members such as Reps. Don Bacon of Nebraska and Jake Ellzey of Texas, as well as donations from McCarthy and NRCC Chairman Richard Hudson of North Carolina. Engling also has the backing of the Republican Main Street Partnership PAC. Goodrich picked up endorsements from several of his legislative colleagues.” [Roll Call, 4/4/24]

2026 Campaign for Secretary of State

May 2026: Engling filed to run for Secretary of State. “Max Engling, an aide to U.S. Sen. Jim Banks, told IndyStar he filed to run the morning of May 20. IndyStar had learned earlier in the morning that state Rep. Andrew Ireland was also seriously weighing a bid to challenge Morales, though Engling's entry into the race may impact his plans.” [Indianapolis Star, 5/20/26]

Engling’s entrance into the race led to a swarm of prominent Republicans sharing their plans to back him instead of Secretary of State Diego Morales. “Republicans U.S. Sen. Jim Banks and Attorney General Todd Rokita have both pulled their support for Secretary of State Diego Morales in his reelection campaign after a last-minute addition to the race. Rokita said he has asked Morales, also a Republican, to end his campaign altogether. ‘The Secretary of State’s office is too important to be lost to

out-of-touch, left-wing Democrats who put Hoosiers last,' Rokita said in a statement. 'With so many self-inflicted wounds and issues, I now do not believe he can win in November.' Rokita had initially endorsed Morales last year. Banks endorsed him in March. Max Engling, an aide to Banks, filed to run for secretary of state in the upcoming June GOP convention just one day before the May 21 deadline to do so. His entry into the race set off a swarm of social media posts from prominent Republicans sharing their plans to back him instead of Morales. Banks didn't go as far as calling for the suspension of Morales' campaign, but he emphasized his support for Engling in a statement. 'Max Engling is a key member of my team and will make a great Secretary of State,' Banks said. 'Max is a strong conservative who will keep our elections safe and secure, support Indiana small businesses and farmers, and he will win in November. He has my full and total support!'" [Indianapolis Star, 5/21/26]

- **Sen. Banks on Engling: "Max is a strong conservative who will keep our elections safe and secure, support Indiana small businesses and farmers, and he will win in November. He has my full and total support!"** "Banks didn't go as far as calling for the suspension of Morales' campaign, but he emphasized his support for Engling in a statement. 'Max Engling is a key member of my team and will make a great Secretary of State,' Banks said. 'Max is a strong conservative who will keep our elections safe and secure, support Indiana small businesses and farmers, and he will win in November. He has my full and total support!'" [Indianapolis Star, 5/21/26]
- **Engling was endorsed by U.S. Reps. Victoria Spartz, Rudy Yakym, Jim Baird and Erin Houchin.** "Other party leaders continued to pile on: U.S. Reps. Victoria Spartz, Rudy Yakym, Jim Baird and Erin Houchin have all endorsed Engling, urging the delegates to unify behind him. Spartz and Baird made clear the stakes, that November's race is, as Baird put it, 'too important to risk.'" [Indianapolis Star, 5/21/26]
- **Engling said he started to get asked about running for Secretary of State as concerns spread among Republicans about the reelection prospects of Morales.** "As concerns spread this spring among Republican activists about the reelection prospects for Indiana Secretary of State Diego Morales, Max Engling says he started to be asked about jumping into the race." [Daily Journal, 6/3/26]
- **Banks told Engling "...if you're ready to go I'm fully behind you."** "Engling said in an interview with the Indiana Capital Chronicle that he talked again with Banks as the senator decided to withdraw his Morales endorsement following controversy over the 2023 hiring of a noncitizen as the secretary of state office's chief of staff. 'He said to me, 'Well, if you are prepared to go, we can't do this anymore as far as the current secretary of state, and if you're ready to go I'm fully behind you. Let's go,' Engling said.'" [Daily Journal, 6/3/26]
- **Engling implied he entered the race due to concerns that a Democrat could win the general election.** "Engling said concerns about Bayh potentially becoming the first Democrat to win a statewide race since 2012 weighed in his decision. 'If I thought that there was another candidate that was going to surely win in the general election, I would have not stepped forward to say 'Let's do a really hard thing in a really short timeframe,' and potentially become the face of what the other party disagrees with in a general election,' Engling said.'" [Daily Journal, 6/3/26]
- **Engling said Banks asked him if he would consider running after allegedly finding out Morales lied about his chief of staff's citizenship.** "Banks, Engling's boss, previously endorsed

Morales, the incumbent. However, recent scrutiny and a lost sense of trust has driven Banks to pivot, Engling said Friday at Kolkin Coffee in New Albany. “He came to me and he said ... ‘Would you consider running?’” Engling said. “[He said] you have to want it, because it’s not going to be fun or easy, and if you do, then we’re going to pull back our endorsement. We’re going to get behind you and push.” Banks changed his mind about Morales, Engling said, after Morales allegedly lied to Banks about Morales’ chief of staff, Elina Kupce, having been registered to vote despite not being a U.S. citizen.” [The Evening News and the Tribune, 6/5/26]

Criminal History

Engling said he was charged with a misdemeanor in 2007 for damaging a street sweeper by “throwing eggs and/or egg cartons,” but the charges were dropped. “But Engling's leg-up in the race has also prompted others to attempt to smear him. A text sent to delegates, which purported to be paid for by Olorin Consulting, calls Engling ‘unvetted,’ alleging that the candidate has ‘court records’ and other concerning records tied to him. Engling shared with IndyStar columnist Jacob Stewart that in 2007, he was charged with a misdemeanor for damaging a street sweeper by ‘throwing eggs and/or egg cartons,’ but said the charges were dropped.” [Indianapolis Star, 6/16/26]

ELECTIONS & VOTING ISSUES

Closed Primaries

Engling’s campaign website advocated for closing primaries. “Close the Primaries Indiana Republican primaries should be decided by Indiana Republicans – not forcing winners who don't match the district.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

Engling said his major campaign focuses include closing primary elections and safeguarding elections to make sure only citizens are allowed to cast ballots. “Like Morales, Engling said his major campaign focuses include closing primary elections and safeguarding elections to make sure only citizens are allowed to cast ballots.” [Daily Reporter, 6/3/26]

Engling blamed Democrats voting in Republican primaries to elect a person who “doesn't actually fit the district that they're running for and is a much more moderate person in that position.” “Engling also advocates for closing Indiana's primaries, blaming Democrats voting in Republican primaries to elect a person who ‘doesn't actually fit the district that they're running for and is a much more moderate person in that position.’” [Daily Journal, 6/10/26]

Election Integrity

In his campaign announcement, Engling said he would “fight to keep our elections secure, support Indiana small businesses, and make sure our state government is working the way Hoosiers expect it to.” “Engling said in a campaign announcement statement Wednesday that he would ‘fight to keep our elections secure, support Indiana small businesses, and make sure our state government is working the way Hoosiers expect it to.’” [Daily Journal, 5/21/26]

Proof of Citizenship

Engling’s campaign website called for ballots to be cast by only “verified” U.S. citizens, with “no exceptions, no loopholes.” “Citizen-Only Voting Every ballot cast in Indiana must come from a verified U.S. citizen. No exceptions, no loopholes.” [maxforindiana.com, accessed [6/16/26](#)]

Engling also said he was in support of putting a marker on non-citizens’ identification documents so that people who are not citizens of the U.S. are rendered unable to register to vote. “Engling also said he was in support of putting a marker on non-citizens’ identification documents so that people who are not citizens of the U.S. are rendered unable to register to vote. ‘I think the biggest loophole is, if you don’t register to vote when you’re getting your license, and you, instead, later, do it when it’s just your attestation,’ he said. ‘It’s a problem.’” [The Evening News and the Tribune, 6/5/26]

Engling said his major campaign focuses include closing primary elections and safeguarding elections to make sure only citizens are allowed to cast ballots. “Like Morales, Engling said his major campaign focuses include closing primary elections and safeguarding elections to make sure only citizens are allowed to cast ballots.” [Daily Reporter, 6/3/26]

OTHER NOTABLE STANCES

Data Centers

Engling said data centers aren’t under the purview of the secretary of state, but he commented that Indiana needs “a plan” when it comes to data centers “taking advantage” of communities. “Engling said data centers aren’t under the purview of the secretary of state, but he commented that Indiana needs ‘a plan’ when it comes to data centers ‘taking advantage’ of communities. However, he stipulated that he does not think the federal government should have control over whether data centers can be built.” [The Evening News and the Tribune, 6/5/26]

Guns

2024: Engling said encroaching on Second Amendment rights inevitably weakens the First Amendment guaranteeing the right to free speech. “Engling said encroaching on Second Amendment rights inevitably weakens the First Amendment guaranteeing the right to free speech. ‘We need to enforce the current laws,’ he said.” [Herald Bulletin, 4/5/24]

Immigration

2024: Engling said cartels operating in Mexico are better at getting people across the border than the U.S. is at protecting the border, and called for finishing the border wall. “Engling said cartels operating in Mexico are better at getting people across the border than the U.S. is at protecting the border. ‘We have to finish building the wall and make sure our border agents are doing the job,’ he said.” [Herald Bulletin, 4/4/24]

LGBTQ

Engling on election integrity: “It’s a little bit like when you talk about the boys going into girls’ bathrooms. We shouldn’t have to say that, right? But that’s what is happening. And we have to make sure that we are not reactive to that.” “‘This is something you shouldn’t even have to say,’ Engling said regarding election integrity. ‘It’s a little bit like when you talk about the boys going into

girls' bathrooms. We shouldn't have to say that, right? But that's what is happening. And we have to make sure that we are not reactive to that.'” [Daily Journal, 5/21/26]