

MEDIA MENTION

# Bloomberg Reports FEC Approves Microsoft Plan to Enhance Cybersecurity for Political Candidates in Response to Wiley Rein Request

*Bloomberg Government*

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Jan Witold Baran, co-chair of Wiley Rein’s Election Law & Government Ethics Practice, was noted in *Bloomberg Government’s* coverage of a Federal Election Commission (FEC) ruling that Microsoft Corp.’s plan to offer free cybersecurity enhancements in its products sold to political candidates would not violate a prohibition on corporate in-kind contributions.

On September 6, the FEC voted 4-0 and approved Advisory Opinion 2018-11. The Commission concluded it is permissible for Microsoft to offer enhanced online account security services at no additional cost, on a nonpartisan basis, to “election-sensitive customers” as part of the company’s new “AccountGuard” initiative. The opt-in program would help protect political candidates’ online Microsoft accounts from cyberthreats amid ongoing concerns about foreign attempts to interfere in U.S. elections.

The Advisory Opinion was a response to a Wiley Rein request, which noted that “With more than 60 million users of its paid 365 cloud-based productivity software and unpaid Outlook.com and Hotmail.com web-based email services, Microsoft is in a unique position to protect election-sensitive users of its products against such hacking.” The request was submitted by Mr. Baran and Wiley Rein special counsel Eric Wang.

## Practice Areas

Election Law & Government Ethics

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