



The Office of Secretary of State
Securities and Charities Division

Brian P. Kemp
Secretary of State
Commissioner of Securities

C. Ryan Germany
Asst. Commissioner of Securities

In the matter of	:	
	:	
	:	
Sovereign Investment Advisory, LLC (CRD# 172636) and Cardell Benford, (CRD# 6383591),	:	Case Number: ENSC-170685
	:	
Respondents	:	
	:	
	:	

ORDER

The Securities Division (the "Division") asks that the Commissioner deny the registration applications of Sovereign Investment Advisory, LLC ("Sovereign") as an investment advisor firm and Cardell Bendord as an investment advisor representative. After an administrative hearing on April 20, 2017 where both the Division and Mr. Benford were heard, the Commissioner finds that:

1. In 1998, Mr. Benford was convicted of "Obstruction of U.S. Mail," a felony.
2. In 2000, Mr. Benford was convicted of "Possession of Counterfeit Securities," also a felony.
3. Mr. Benford acknowledged on his 2017 application that he had been convicted of a felony. When asked to provide further detail, he listed the obstruction of U.S. Mail conviction, but he did not disclose the Possession of Counterfeit Securities conviction.
4. Mr. Benford also failed to disclose on his 2017 application that he filed

bankruptcy in 2009.

5. Mr. Benford was previously conditionally registered with the Division pursuant to a letter of understanding issued in 2015. When the conditions of the letter of understanding were violated, Mr. Benford voluntarily withdrew his registration after the Division issued a proposed order revoking the conditional registration.

6. In his 2015 application, Mr. Benford initially failed to disclose his felony convictions until they were discovered by the Division. Mr. Benford also did not disclose his 2009 bankruptcy filing in his 2015 application.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 10-5-41(a), the Commissioner may deny an application for registration if it is in the public interest and is authorized by O.C.G.A. § 10-5-41(d). O.C.G.A. § 10-5-41(d) authorizes discipline when the applicant (among other things):

(1) Has filed an application for registration in this state under this chapter or the predecessor Act within the previous ten years, which, as of the effective date of registration or as of any date after filing in the case of an order denying effectiveness, was incomplete in any material respect or contained a statement that, in light of the circumstances under which it was made, was false or misleading with respect to a material fact;...

(3) Has been convicted of a felony or within the previous ten years has been convicted of a misdemeanor involving a security, a commodity future or option contract, or an aspect of a business involving securities, commodities, investments, franchises, insurance, banking, or finance;

O.C.G.A. §10-5-41(d)(1) and (3).

Mr. Benford has been convicted of multiple felonies, triggering subsection (3), and he filed an application that, in light of the circumstances under which it was made, was false or misleading with respect to a material fact, triggering subsection (1). The false or misleading portions of Mr. Benford's applications include the failure to disclose all felony convictions, particularly a felony conviction regarding a securities matter, and the failure to disclose a

bankruptcy filing.

The only remaining question is whether denying Mr. Benford and Sovereign's applications are in the public interest. The Commissioner finds that denial of the application is in the public interest. Disclosure is the linchpin of securities regulation. Repeated failure to disclose multiple material facts in an application, whether through an attempt to deceive or simply through neglect, is unacceptable.

Therefore, the registration applications of Sovereign Investment Advisory, LLC and Cardell Benford are hereby **DENIED**.

SO ORDERED this 25th day of April, 2018.

BRIAN P. KEMP
SECRETARY OF STATE
COMMISSIONER OF SECURITIES

By:


C. Ryan Germany
Assistant Commissioner of Securities