

The four men accused of making illegal contributions last year to Gov. Chet Culver's re-election campaign are pleading not guilty to the charges, court records and interviews have disclosed.

M. Brent Stevens, CEO of Peninsula Gaming, and Jonathan Swain, Peninsula's chief operating officer, both filed their pleas Friday in Polk County District Court. Guy

Cook, Stevens' and Swain's lawyer, also filed a not guilty plea for Peninsula Gaming.

Leon Spies, attorney for Davenport lawyer Curtis Beason, and Monty Fisher, attorney for Fort Dodge businessman Steven Daniel and Webster County Gaming, said they also would be filing written not guilty pleas for their clients before a scheduled arraignment on Monday morning.

The charges were filed in Polk County District Court by Lawrence Scalise, a special prosecutor appointed to investigate \$25,000 in contributions to Culver's campaign in 2009. The contributions were made at a time when the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission was considering a casino license application for Fort Dodge.

The Des Moines Register first reported in April that the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation was looking into whether Dubuque-based Peninsula Gaming Partners had aligned with supporters of the proposed Fort Dodge casino to make improper contributions to Culver.

In Iowa, it is illegal to make, or knowingly receive, a political contribution in another's name.

The defendants also were charged with willful failure to disclose a campaign contribution.

No charges were filed against Culver or anyone involved with his campaign. Culver campaign officials said last summer that the campaign had donated \$25,000 to charity, one of the methods allowed by law to dispose of questionable campaign contributions.

Beason also was charged with one count of obstruction for allegedly providing investigators with

altered documents that contained false statements. The charge also alleges Beason provided false statements to law enforcement officials.

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