

October 3, 2025
Mr. William M. Blier
Acting Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Acting Inspector General Blier:

I am writing to formally complain about a violation of the Anti-Lobbying Act (18 U.S.C. § 1913) by officials at the Department of Justice. This complaint requests that the DOJ Office of the Inspector General investigate the Department's use of appropriated federal funds to disseminate partisan political messaging during the government shutdown on September 30, 2025.

Background and Factual Allegations

During the government shutdown that commenced on September 30, 2025, the Department of Justice displayed a partisan political message on its official website banner that served no legitimate law enforcement purpose. These communications violated federal restrictions on using government resources for partisan political activity. Instead of providing neutral information about the shutdown's impact on DOJ services, the Department's homepage prominently featured the following message:

Democrats have shut down the government. Department of Justice websites are not currently regularly updated. Please refer to the Department of Justice's contingency plan for more information.

This banner message was displayed at the top of the DOJ's official website, using taxpayer-funded government platforms to assign partisan blame for the shutdown. Rather than informing the public about which Justice Department functions would continue or how to access essential services, the message served purely partisan purposes by disparaging one political party while echoing the Administration's political messaging.

The Justice Department's website serves as a critical resource for Americans seeking information about federal law enforcement, civil rights enforcement, and other essential DOJ functions. Using this platform for partisan political messaging undermines the Department's role as an impartial enforcer of federal law.

Legal Violation

The Anti-Lobbying Act, codified at 18 U.S.C. § 1913, prohibits federal agencies from using appropriated funds for activities designed to influence members of Congress or to encourage the public to contact Congress about pending legislation. The statute specifically provides:

No part of the money appropriated by any enactment of Congress shall, in the absence of express authorization by Congress, be used directly or indirectly to pay for any personal service, advertisement,

telegram, telephone, letter, printed or written matter, or other device, intended or designed to influence in any manner a Member of Congress, a jurisdiction, or an official of any government, to favor, adopt, or oppose, by vote or otherwise, any legislation, law, rule, regulation, policy, or appropriation.

The DOJ's partisan messaging violated this prohibition by using government resources—including the Department's official website, government servers, and federal employee time—to advance political positions that served no official law enforcement function.

Specific Violations

The DOJ's actions violated the Anti-Lobbying Act in the following ways:

1. **Use of Appropriated Funds for Political Messaging:** The creation, approval, and display of partisan political content on the DOJ website required the use of federal employee time, government web infrastructure, and other taxpayer-funded resources in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1913.
2. **Grassroots Lobbying Activity:** By explicitly stating "Democrats have shut down the government," the message was designed to influence public opinion about political matters rather than provide neutral information about DOJ operations during the shutdown.
3. **Exceeding Authorized Appropriations:** DOJ has no congressional authorization to use appropriated funds for partisan political communications. Such expenditures exceed the Department's authorized appropriations and constitute improper obligations of federal funds.

Responsible Officials

Attorney General Pamela Bondi bears ultimate responsibility for the content published on the Department of Justice's official website. As the senior official overseeing the Department, she has authority over and responsibility for ensuring that DOJ communications comply with federal law, including the Anti-Lobbying Act.

Evidence

I have attached supporting documentation that details the partisan political messaging displayed on the DOJ website.

Request for Investigation

I respectfully request that the DOJ Office of Inspector General conduct a thorough investigation into this apparent violation of the Anti-Lobbying Act, including:

1. Determining who authorized the creation and publication of the partisan political messaging on the DOJ website;
2. Identifying what federal resources were used to create, approve, and maintain this content;
3. Calculating the cost to taxpayers of the government resources used for partisan political purposes;
4. Reviewing DOJ policies and procedures to determine how such violations occurred; and
5. Recommending appropriate remedial actions and disciplinary measures.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter. The American people deserve a Department of Justice that uses taxpayer resources for legitimate law enforcement functions, not partisan political messaging that undermines the Department's mission to uphold the rule of law impartially.



Respectfully,
Omar H. Nouredin
Senior Vice President, Policy & Litigation
Common Cause

Exhibit A

