

October 3, 2025
Hon. Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

Common Cause and I write to request that the Government Accountability Office investigate whether the Department of Housing and Urban Development violated federal appropriations law by using government resources to disseminate partisan political messaging during the government shutdown on September 30, 2025.

Background

During the government shutdown period, the Department of Housing and Urban Development—under Secretary Scott Turner's leadership—used its official taxpayer-funded website to display explicitly partisan political messages that blamed one political party for the lapse in appropriations.

Before the shutdown began, HUD's official website displayed the following message:

The Radical Left are going to shut down the government and inflict massive pain on the American people unless they get their \$1.5 trillion wish list of demands.

After the shutdown commenced, the Department updated its website with additional partisan messaging:

The Radical Left in Congress shut down the government. HUD will use available resources to help Americans in need.

These partisan statements were publicly displayed on HUD's official government website, using federal resources to assign political blame and advance partisan messaging that served no legitimate operational purpose related to the Department's housing mission. Rather than providing neutral information about how the shutdown affected housing assistance programs or community development services, the messages existed solely to disparage one political party while promoting the Administration's political narrative.

Legal Analysis

Federal agencies are prohibited from using appropriated funds for "publicity or propaganda purposes" under annual appropriations acts. GAO has consistently determined that communications serving purely partisan political purposes constitute prohibited propaganda when funded with government resources.

HUD's partisan shutdown messaging violated these restrictions by using the Department's official website infrastructure, government web servers, and employee time to create and display political statements that

served no legitimate housing-related purpose related to the Department's mission of ensuring access to fair and affordable housing.

Using government resources to display partisan political messaging on an official agency website violates the Anti-Deficiency Act by obligating appropriated funds for unauthorized purposes that exceed the Department's appropriated authority for legitimate operational communications about housing services.

Request for Investigation

We respectfully request that GAO investigate whether the Department of Housing and Urban Development violated federal appropriations law by using government resources to create, authorize, and display partisan political messaging during the government shutdown period. This investigation should examine the authorization and implementation of these partisan website messages and determine what federal resources were used for political rather than housing-related purposes.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development should focus on providing safe and affordable housing for American families, not advancing partisan political messaging at taxpayer expense.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully,

Omar H. Nouredin

Senior Vice President, Policy & Litigation

Common Cause

Exhibit A

