

October 3, 2025
Mr. Brian D. Harrison
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of the Inspector General
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Acting Inspector General Harrison:

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 Housing and Urban Development. This complaint requests that the HUD Office of 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 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 served no legitimate housing-related purpose. These communications violated federal restrictions on using government resources for partisan political activity.

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 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.

HUD's partisan messaging violated this prohibition by using government resources—including the Department's official website infrastructure, government web servers, and federal employee time—to advance political positions that served no legitimate housing-related function.

Specific Violations

HUD'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 HUD 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 blaming the "Radical Left" for the shutdown and their "\$1.5 trillion wish list of demands," the messages were designed to influence public opinion about political matters rather than provide neutral information about HUD operations during the shutdown.
3. **Exceeding Authorized Appropriations:** HUD 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

Secretary Scott Turner bears ultimate responsibility for the content published on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's official website. As the senior official overseeing the Department, he has authority over and responsibility for ensuring that HUD 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 HUD website.

Request for Investigation

I respectfully request that the HUD 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 HUD 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 HUD 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 Housing and Urban Development that uses taxpayer resources for legitimate housing functions—providing safe and affordable housing for American families—not advancing partisan political messaging at taxpayer expense.

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

Exhibit A

