

October 3, 2025
Mr. Loren J. Sciurba
Deputy Inspector General
U.S. Department of the Treasury
Office of Inspector General (OIG)
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Deputy Inspector General Sciurba:

I am writing to formally complain about a violation of the Anti-Lobbying Act (18 U.S.C. § 1913) by officials at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. This complaint requests that the Treasury 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 that began on September 30, 2025, the U.S. Department of the Treasury—under Secretary Scott Bessent's leadership—displayed explicitly partisan messaging on its official website that served no legitimate economic policy purpose. These communications violated federal restrictions on using government resources for partisan political activity. Instead of providing neutral information about how the shutdown affected Treasury operations or economic services, the Department's homepage prominently featured the following message:

The radical left has chosen to shut down the United States government in the name of reckless spending and obstructionism. As a result, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's websites will only be sporadically updated until this shutdown concludes.

This partisan statement was displayed on the Treasury's official taxpayer-funded website, using federal resources to assign political blame to the "radical left" for the appropriations lapse while promoting the Administration's narrative about "reckless spending and obstructionism." Rather than informing the public about which Treasury functions would continue during the shutdown or how citizens could access essential financial services, the message served purely partisan political purposes.

Additionally, according to widespread news reporting, the Treasury distributed similar partisan messaging internally to employees, framing the shutdown as solely the fault of Democrats and the "radical left" through official government communication channels.

The Treasury Department's website serves as a vital resource for Americans and international partners seeking information on economic policy, financial sanctions, tax guidance, and other key Treasury functions. Using this official platform to disseminate inflammatory partisan political messaging undermines the Department's economic mission and violates federal restrictions on the use of government resources for political purposes.

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 Treasury's partisan messaging violated this prohibition by using government resources—including the Department's official website infrastructure, government web servers, email systems, and federal employee time—to advance political positions that served no legitimate economic policy function.

Specific Violations

The Treasury'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 both the Treasury website and through internal employee communications required the use of federal employee time, government web infrastructure, email systems, 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 characterizing it as driven by "reckless spending and obstructionism," the messages were designed to influence public opinion about political matters rather than provide neutral information about Treasury operations during the shutdown.
3. **Exceeding Authorized Appropriations:** The Treasury 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 Bessent bears ultimate responsibility for the content published on the Department of the Treasury's official website and distributed through the agency's communication systems. As the senior official overseeing the Department, he has authority over and responsibility for ensuring that Treasury 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 Treasury website and distributed through internal communications.

Request for Investigation

I respectfully request that the Treasury 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 both the Treasury website and through internal employee communications;



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 Treasury 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 the Treasury that uses taxpayer resources for legitimate economic purposes—maintaining a strong economy and creating economic opportunities—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



The Hill, *Federal employees told Democrats to blame for shutdown in 'highly inappropriate' email*, (September 30, 2025): <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5530094-federal-emails-shutdown-democrats/>

