

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 22, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

Recent reporting and communications suggest that the Department of State has disseminated partisan messages regarding the recent lapse in appropriations, in potential violation of the Hatch Act and federal prohibitions on the use of appropriated funds for propaganda or lobbying purposes.

According to *The New York Times*, on Tuesday, September 29, 2025, “State Department employees received an email from Jason S. Evans, Undersecretary for Management, that began with lines supporting President Trump’s position on the government shutdown and blaming Democrats for the impasse.” The email stated further that President Trump supports the House Republicans’ continuing resolution to keep the government funded. “Unfortunately, Democrats are blocking this continuing resolution in the U.S. Senate due to unrelated policy demands,” the email continued.

Such communications extend well beyond the permissible scope of internal communications regarding contingency planning or operational impacts during a lapse in appropriations. Rather than providing factual information, these statements advance partisan positions, attribute responsibility to one political party, and appear to advocate for specific legislative outcomes.

Moreover, we are greatly concerned that public-facing communications, such as content posted on the Department’s official website, also include partisan language inconsistent with the Department’s obligation to remain nonpartisan in official communications.

These actions may constitute a violation of the Hatch Act, which prohibits executive branch employees from engaging in political activity while on duty or using official authority to influence an election or partisan policy outcomes. Therefore, to assess the scope of these

potential Hatch Act violations, please provide the following information no later than October 31, 2025:

1. A copy of all emails sent to State Department employees regarding the government shutdown that commenced on October 1, 2025, that reference any political party, group, or elected official, including any reference to Democrats or Republicans.
2. A complete record of all website content, press releases, and public statements issued by the Department between September 1 and the date of this correspondence, including any edits or updates made during the period that reference any political party, group, or elected official, including any reference to Democrats or Republicans.
3. The Department officials or offices responsible for drafting, reviewing for clearance, approving, and publishing the September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025, email from Under Secretary Evans and the website content outlined above.
4. Any internal guidance, legal review, or communications regarding the appropriateness of shutdown-related messaging distributed between September 25 and the date of this correspondence.
5. A description of the Department's protocol for ensuring compliance with the Hatch Act and other relevant statutes governing political neutrality in official communications.

This inquiry is part of Congress's mandate to ensure transparency, accountability, and adherence to federal law across all diplomatic and public engagement platforms as well as communications to Federal employees. We await your timely response to these questions. If the timeliness of your response is impacted by the lapse in appropriations, please convey that immediately in writing.

Sincerely,



Gregory W. Meeks  
Ranking Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

CC: Mr. Reed Rubenstein, Legal Advisor