

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

October 29, 2026

Arne B. Baker  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20522

Dear Acting Inspector General Baker:

We are writing to request that the Department of State Office of Inspector General (OIG) conduct an immediate review of the State Department's personnel practices related to allegations that senior Department officials are using partisan political loyalty tests, rather than merit, in selection, promotion, and assignment decisions, and that some career Foreign Service Officers have suffered professional consequences as a result. If substantiated, these practices violate federal law and Department regulations and jeopardize the nonpartisan national security expertise on which American diplomacy depends.

On October 22, 2026, the *Washington Sun* reported that career diplomats seeking mid- and senior-level assignments had been asked whether they voted for President Trump in the 2016, 2020, and 2024 elections. According to the report, candidates were told that having voted for President Trump was a prerequisite for certain positions and that contributions to Democratic candidates were disqualifying. The outlet cited six current and former State Department officials familiar with the allegations.<sup>1</sup>

On October 21, the *Washington Sun* also reported that senior career officers were being pushed toward retirement as the Department froze or downgraded positions, blocked experienced officers from assignments, and steered others into positions with limited career prospects. The report also alleged that politically connected individuals, including members of the Ben Franklin Fellowship, were receiving preferential treatment. One interview panelist reportedly was told that a senior job had been promised to a Fellow before interviews even occurred.<sup>2</sup>

An administration can appoint political leadership and expect career employees to carry out its lawful policies. It cannot make a career diplomat's voting history, campaign contributions, or perceived partisan allegiance a condition of advancement.

---

<sup>1</sup> Eric Katz, "State Asked Foreign Service Officers Up for Promotion Whether They Voted for Trump," *The Washington Sun*, October 22, 2026. <https://www.washingtonsun.com/administration/state-foreign-service-officers-voting-history-interview-promotion>

<sup>2</sup> Eric Katz, "The State Department Is Pushing Out Senior Foreign Service Officers," *The Washington Sun*, October 21, 2026. <https://www.washingtonsun.com/administration/state-department-pushing-out-foreign-service-officers>

Section 105 of the Foreign Service Act (22 U.S.C. § 3905) requires that all personnel actions for career members, including appointments, promotions, assignments, separations, and performance evaluations, be made in accordance with merit principles. It also directs the Secretary to ensure that Foreign Service members and applicants are free from discrimination based on political affiliation, as prohibited by 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(1), and free from any personnel practice prohibited by 5 U.S.C. § 2302. Likewise, 3 FAM 1212.1 requires appointments, assignments, and promotions to be based on merit.

OIG must investigate whether Department officials have questioned career personnel about their votes or donations; used that information or an individual's affiliation with politically favored groups to influence selection decisions; manipulated position grades, vacancies, or assignments to force experienced officers out; or used the new "fidelity" standard to reward personal loyalty and penalize candid professional advice. OIG must also review whether the Secretary or other senior leaders ordered or carried out politically motivated personnel actions and, if so, recommend appropriate corrective and disciplinary action.

These allegations are deeply concerning and fall squarely within your office's jurisdiction. Thank you for your prompt attention. We look forward to receiving confirmation of your office's review by November 11, 2026.

Sincerely,



GREGORY W. MEEKS  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs



ROBERT GARCIA  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and  
Government Reform