

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 2026

The Honorable Orice W. Brown
Acting Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

The Honorable Charles N. Baldis
Special Counsel
U.S. Office of Special Counsel
1730 M Street, NW, Suite 218
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Comptroller General Brown and Special Counsel Baldis:

The American people are apparently paying for Donald Trump to create desperate pre-election propaganda. We are assuming you have seen these cringeworthy television campaign commercials, but if not, please be sure to check them out. Both Congress and your agencies have a responsibility to immediately investigate this shameless theft of public funds and violation of multiple federal statutes, including the Hatch Act.

On September 23, 2026, President Donald Trump ran the first new ad on Fox News, broadcasting what the White House is referring to, amazingly, as a “Public Service Announcement” that was “Paid for by the U.S. Government.”¹ In the 30-second ad, a singer implores listeners to “love me,” as dozens of images of Mr. Trump flash across the screen. After touting the Trump Administration’s alleged accomplishments, such as “defeat[ing] ... Marxism,” the voice of Ultimate Fight Championship (UFC) President Dana White calls President Trump the “toughest and most resilient person [he’s] ever met.”²

A few days later, a second wave of advertisements ran on national television. This commercial, also “Paid for by the U.S. Government,” features a close-up of Mr. Trump’s face as he meanders down a hallway.³ Meanwhile, audio from one of Mr. Trump’s political rallies plays in the background, as he rants and raves against the “Deep State” and promises to “expel the warmongers” from government.⁴

This could not be a “public service announcement.” Nearly every claim uttered in these ads is false. One ad states that President Trump has revived American manufacturing. In fact, during President Trump’s second term, the United States has *lost* tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs.⁵ The same spot claims that President Trump is defending law and order, all

¹ Ed O’Keefe & Aaron Navarro, *New Trump-Focused “Love Me” Ad Campaign Paid for by Taxpayers Hits Airwaves*, CBS NEWS (Sept. 25, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-focused-ad-campaign-taxpayers>.

² *Id.*

³ Bayliss Wagner, *A Trump 2024 Campaign Ad Returns, Now Brought to You by the Government*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 27, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/27/us/politics/trump-ad-government-campaign.html>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics Survey (National)*, U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS (data extracted on Sept. 28, 2026), <https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CES3000000001>.

while President Trump's secret police are roaming American streets threatening and killing citizens and non-citizens alike with apparent impunity.⁶ And while an ad claims that Mr. Trump is defeating "communism, socialism, and Marxism," he has showered praise and adulation on North Korean Communist dictator Kim Jong Un; President Xi Jinping, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party; and Russian President Vladimir Putin, a former KGB officer. Donald Trump's actions as President recall the conduct of some of the worst Stalinist regimes in world history, including by trying (and failing) to erect countless monuments to himself, acquiring government stakes in major companies, and promising free money to every U.S. adult to control our elections.⁷ It is also breathtaking that the President would use our tax dollars to denounce "warmongers" while his illegal and catastrophic war with Iran has taken the lives of 22 servicemembers and cost Americans more than \$43 billion.⁸

These ads constitute an illegal use of taxpayer funds, perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that they are virtually identical to the ones Donald Trump used during his 2024 presidential campaign, and in fact use the same footage and the same inept ideological messaging.⁹ The use of public funds to pay for political propaganda violates multiple federal laws, including, but not limited to:

- **The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026: Federal appropriations legislation has longstanding prohibitions on the use of federal money to pay for government propaganda.** Consistent with the foregoing, Section 718 of the Consolidation Appropriations Act of 2026 provides, "**No part of any appropriation contained in this or any other Act shall be used directly or indirectly, including by private contractor, for publicity or propaganda purposes within the United States not heretofore authorized by Congress.**"¹⁰ The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has repeatedly stated that the ban on propaganda is intended to target "self-aggrandizement" or "puffery."¹¹ It is

⁶ Laura Romero, et al., *Federal Immigration Agents Have Shot At Least 21 People During Trump's 2nd Term*, ABC NEWS (Sept. 24, 2026), <https://abcnews.com/Politics/federal-immigration-agents-shot-21-people-trumps-2nd/story?id=136692795>.

⁷ Greg Ip, *The U.S. Marches Toward State Capitalism with American Characteristics*, WALL ST. J. (Aug. 11, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/economy/the-u-s-marches-toward-state-capitalism-with-american-characteristics-f75cfa8>. See also, Morgan Phillips, *Trump Faces Reckoning As GOP Figures Label \$5K Promise a 'Socialist Vote-Buying Scheme'*, FOX NEWS (Sept. 10, 2026), <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-faces-reckoning-gop-figures-label-5k-promise-socialist-vote-buying-scheme>.

⁸ Noah Robertson, et al., *More U.S. Troops Have Died Amid Iran War Than Pentagon Has Disclosed Publicly*, WASH. POST (Sept. 18, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/09/18/more-us-troops-have-died-amid-iran-war-than-pentagon-has-disclosed-publicly>.

⁹ *Trump Administration Begins Airing 2024 Trump Campaign Ad in Latest Taxpayer-Funded Messaging*, ASSOC. PRESS (Sept. 27, 2026), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-election-campaign-advertisements-bfa8e3c1c9e50de03092b4ec27055da9>.

¹⁰ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026, Pub. L. No. 119-75, § 718, 140 Stat. 173, 495 (2026), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-119publ75/pdf/PLAW-119publ75.pdf>.

¹¹ See, e.g., Government Accountability Office, *Environmental Protection Agency—Application of Publicity or Propaganda and Anti-Lobbying Provisions* (Dec. 14, 2015), <https://www.gao.gov/products/b-326944>.

hard to think of a more puffed-up statement than claiming President Trump is tougher than every mixed martial artist that UFC President Dana White has ever met.

- **The Hatch Act of 1939:** The Hatch Act prohibits executive branch employees from engaging in pernicious political activities. Specifically, **employees must not use their “official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with the result of an election.”**¹² Although the President is exempted from the Hatch Act, we find it unlikely that President Trump—who relies on an aide to type out his Truth Social screeds—edited and published these political advertisements without outside help.
- **The Anti-Deficiency Act:** The Anti-Deficiency Act prohibits the U.S. government from “mak[ing] or authoriz[ing] an expenditure or obligation exceeding an amount available in an appropriation or fund for the expenditure or obligation.”¹³ As reflected above, the Consolidated Appropriations Act clearly prohibits the federal government from using appropriated funds to pay for political propaganda. To the extent the notoriously tight Mr. Trump has any intention of reimbursing the federal government for the million-plus dollars incurred to run these ads,¹⁴ that is unlawful.
- **Federal Criminal Statutes:** Federal law prohibits anyone from embezzling, stealing, purloining, or knowingly converting the use of public monies to which they are not entitled.¹⁵ The Trump Administration knows what they are doing is unlawful, as evidenced by their halfhearted attempts to defend their actions. An anonymous White House spokesperson called the ads “educational,” and suggested that they are “clearly not political” because the “president is not on the ballot.”¹⁶ Yet just a few short weeks ago, at his poorly rated Republican National Convention, **President Trump pleaded for his rapidly dwindling ranks of supporters to vote, begging them to “pretend, please, that I’m on the ballot.”**¹⁷ The White House can’t have it both ways.

¹² See 5. U.S.C. § 7323(a)(1).

¹³ See 31 U.S.C. § 1341(a)(1)(A).

¹⁴ Steven Portnoy, et al., *White House Airs More Taxpayer-Funded Ads Promoting Trump*, ABC NEWS (Sept. 28, 2026), <https://abcnews.com/Politics/white-house-air-taxpayer-funded-ads-promoting-trump/story?id=136824779>.

¹⁵ See 18 U.S.C. § 641.

¹⁶ Megan Shannon, et al., *White House Releases New Taxpayer-Funded Ad Describing ‘Final Battle’*, NBC NEWS (updated Sept. 28, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/white-house-releases-new-taxpayer-funded-ad-describing-final-battle-rcna600171>.

¹⁷ Kyla Guilfoil, *Trump Tries New Midterm Message to Supporters: ‘Pretend, Please, That I’m on the Ballot’*, NBC NEWS (Aug. 21, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2026-election/trump-tries-new-midterm-message-pretend-i-am-on-the-ballot-rcna593849>.

Accordingly, we are writing to formally request that the GAO investigate the source, accounts, and total amount of taxpayer funds used by the Executive Office of the President to produce and distribute this advertisement across major television markets and official White House social media channels. In connection with the investigation, we formally request that the GAO issue a legal decision, evaluating whether the ads violate any and all applicable federal laws, including, but not limited to: (1) the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026; (2) the Hatch Act of 1939; (3) the Anti-Deficiency Act; and (4) applicable federal criminal statutes.

We further request that the Office of Special Counsel investigate whether these ads, paid for by millions of dollars of taxpayer funds, constitute a violation of the Hatch Act, and determine who should be held accountable.

President Trump is obviously desperate for the American people to “love” him, a problem that goes beyond your jurisdiction. But stealing taxpayer dollars to pay for Mr. Trump’s narcissistic ego trips is plainly illegal. Your agencies have an important responsibility to hold accountable members of his Administration who violate the laws and policies under your purview. We look forward to working with you as you carry out this important responsibility.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important and urgent matter.

Very truly yours,



Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary



George Whitesides
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman