



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Labor

www.oig.dol.gov

INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

Results of Review of Allegations of Ethics Violations by the Secretary of Labor

The Department of Labor Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiated a review after receiving two letters from Congress questioning whether: (1) the Secretary of Labor's participation in certain labor dispute activities violated the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (SOC); and (2) if he should in the future recuse himself from involvement with the parties involved in those labor disputes should they come before the Department.

On October 27, 2021, Secretary Walsh visited a union picket line, and on December 17, 2021, he served as a mediator of a labor dispute in his personal capacity. After conducting a thorough review of the facts and the totality of the circumstances involving these events, the OIG found no evidence that the Secretary exceeded his authority as Secretary of Labor or that he violated applicable ethics regulations.

As Secretary of Labor, Secretary Walsh has implicit statutory authority to intervene and become involved in labor disputes. The SOC provisions requiring impartiality were not violated because Secretary Walsh did not have any financial interests or pre-existing personal or business relationships with the parties involved in these engagements. Moreover, his personal involvement as mediator of a labor dispute in his personal capacity did not violate applicable ethics regulations.

Finally, it is the Solicitor of Labor's role as Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO) to advise the Secretary and other DOL officials on ethics regulations and to evaluate future actual or apparent potential conflicts. The OIG provided its findings to the Solicitor of Labor for her review and any action deemed appropriate.

Posted to www.oig.dol.gov on December 20, 2022