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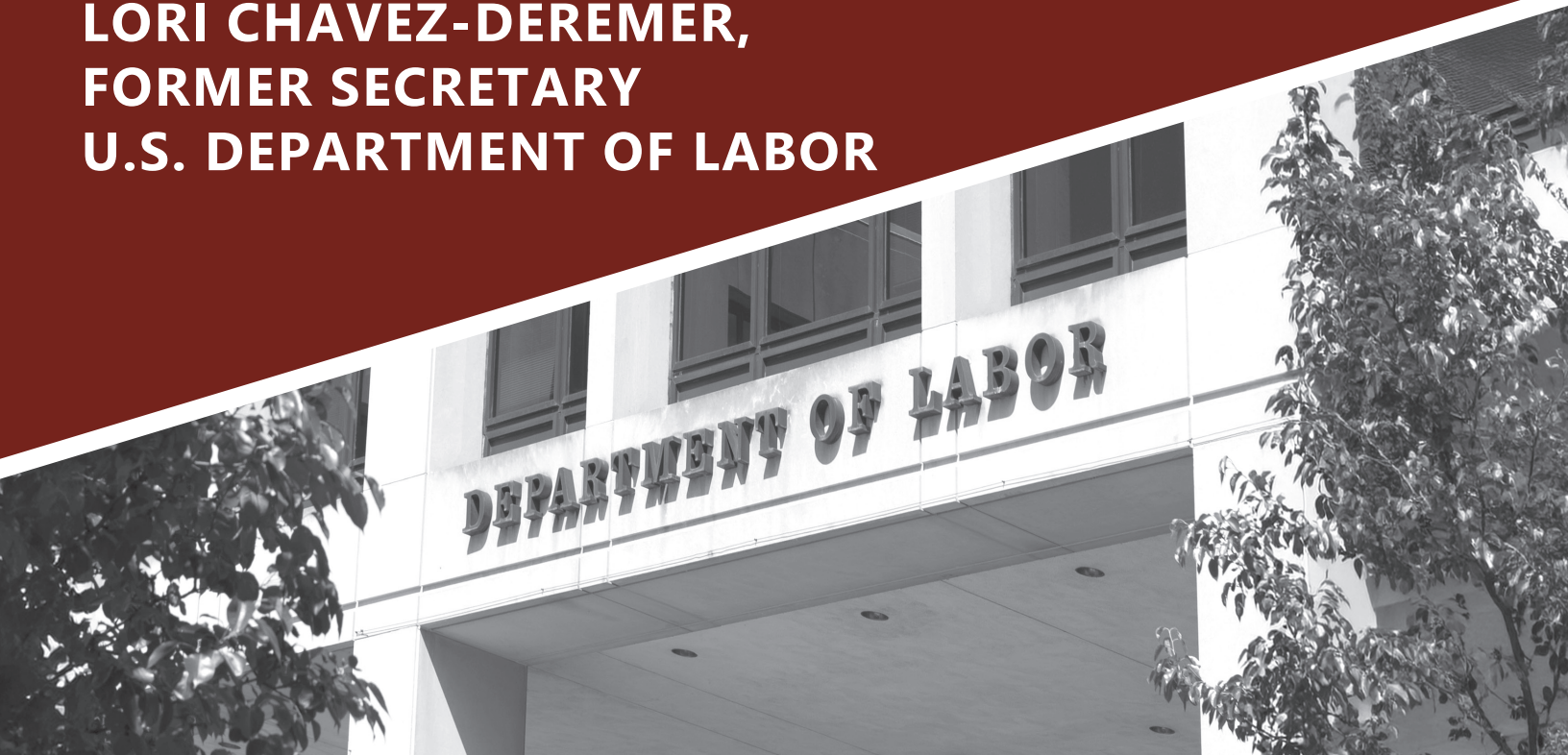
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION:
LORI CHAVEZ-DEREMER, FORMER SECRETARY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASAIC	Assistant Special Agent in Charge
CIGIE	Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency
COS	Chief of Staff
DCOS	Deputy Chief of Staff
DLMS	Department of Labor Manual Series
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
DPO	Division of Protective Operations
FTR	Federal Travel Regulations
MAGA	Make America Great Again
M&IE	Meals and Incidentals Expenses
OASAM	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management
OCFO	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
OES	Office of Executive Secretariat
OIG	Office of Inspector General
ONSPO	Office of National Security and Protective Operations
OSEC	Office of the Secretary
RON	Remain overnight
SAIC	Special Agent-in-Charge
SOL	Office of the Solicitor
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Anonymous Complaint

On January 6, 2026, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiated an investigation into an anonymous complaint alleging misconduct by the following former DOL officials (hereafter, collectively referred to as "subjects"): Secretary of Labor Lori Chavez-DeRemer, Office of the Secretary (OSEC) Chief of Staff Jihun Han, OSEC Deputy Chief of Staff Rebecca Wright, and DOL Division of Protective Operations (DPO) Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge (ASAIC) [name withheld] (hereafter "ASAIC 1"). The OIG later expanded that investigation after receiving additional complaints concerning OSEC Director of Advance [name withheld] (hereafter "Director 1").[1]

The anonymous complaint submitted to the OIG alleged that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright, contributed to a hostile work environment; that Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 were engaged in an inappropriate relationship; that Chavez-DeRemer failed to comply with established travel regulations; that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright regularly consumed alcohol within DOL offices and/or during duty hours; that Chavez-DeRemer directed subordinates to perform tasks for her personal benefit; and that Chavez-DeRemer accepted gifts without reporting them through appropriate ethics channels.

Scope and Methodology of the Investigation

The anonymous complaint's allegations formed the basis for the investigative steps described in the following sections. Where witnesses are referenced, they were interviewed directly by OIG. Except where otherwise indicated, the named subjects of this report declined to be interviewed as part of this investigation. The circumstances of, or reasons for, each subject's non-participation are addressed in the subject-specific sections below.

The OIG evaluated the alleged conduct as it related to applicable policies, statutes, regulations, and directives identified throughout this report. Our conclusions

[1] The OIG has withheld the names of the two subjects who were not political appointees.

documented in this report were made based on application of a preponderance of the evidence standard.[2]

This report is not intended to be an exhaustive recitation or disposition of every allegation, complaint, or matter received or reviewed by the OIG concerning former Secretary of Labor, Lori Chavez-DeRemer, and/or other subject former Department officials. Rather, it provides a high-level summary of the matters that, based on the scope of the investigation and the evidence obtained and evaluated by the OIG, were determined to warrant particular investigative attention or were otherwise significant to the OIG's assessment. Conclusions regarding individual allegations are based on the applicable evidence and investigative standards and are reflected accordingly throughout the report.

To investigate the allegations summarized above, the OIG interviewed 53 current and former DOL employees and one employee from another federal agency.[3] Consistent with the Inspector General Act and OIG policy, the identities of DOL employees and witnesses who provided evidence to the OIG are protected from disclosure and not disclosed in this report.

The OIG also reviewed more than 500 documents, images, and videos, including official emails, personnel records electronic contents recovered from Government-furnished devices, video surveillance, time and attendance records, leave records, and official travel documentation. The OIG conducted the investigation in accordance with OIG policy and the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) Quality Standards for Investigations. All five subjects separated from federal service before the OIG completed its investigation. Their separations did not result from the findings in this report.

Summary of Conclusions

The OIG concluded that a preponderance of the evidence substantiated multiple violations of DOL policy by all five former DOL officials who were subjects of this investigation: then-Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer, then-Chief of Staff Jihun Han, then-Deputy Chief of Staff Rebecca Wright, then-Director of Advance (Director 1), and then-ASAIC (ASAIC 1).

The OIG concluded that Chavez-DeRemer's conduct was inconsistent with applicable standards across six areas: she failed to comply with DOL policy prohibiting harassment in the workplace; developed and maintained an inappropriately close and unprofessional relationship with ASAIC 1 while he exercised supervisory and operational authority over her protective detail that was inconsistent with federal

[2] We based our findings on a preponderance of the evidence, consistent with the law and our normal process in administrative investigations. As applied in this report, our findings are based on conclusions that, considering the totality of evidence supporting and refuting the material elements of an allegation, the alleged conduct is more likely than not to be true.
[3] Many witnesses had relevant knowledge of more than one subject or allegation, and their testimony is recounted below in different sections as it relates to the different allegations pertaining to each subject.

impartiality and preferential-treatment standards. 2635.101(b)(8) and (14); combined personal and official travel in a manner inconsistent with DOL policy and the Federal Travel Regulation, 41 C.F.R. Chapters 300-304; possessed and consumed alcohol on federal property without proper authorization required by DOL policy and Federal Property Management Regulations; directed government employees to perform personal tasks using official time and resources, inconsistent with 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.704 and 2635.705(b); and failed to report gifts through required channels, inconsistent with 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.202-204.

OIG concluded that Han's, Wright's, and Director 1's conduct was independently established across overlapping categories, including failure to comply with DOL policy prohibiting harassment in the workplace; on-duty alcohol possession without proper authorization required by DOL policy and Federal Property Management Regulations; improper combination of personal and official travel inconsistent with the Federal Travel Regulation (as to Wright and Director 1); misuse of government resources inconsistent with 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.704 and 2635.705(b), including Director 1's unauthorized rental-vehicle practices inconsistent with DOL policy and FTR 301-10.45; and failure to report gifts through required channels, inconsistent with 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.202-204 (as to Director 1).

OIG concluded that ASAIC 1 developed and maintained an inappropriately close and unprofessional relationship with Chavez-DeRemer while he exercised supervisory and operational authority over her protective detail. ASAIC 1's actions violated DPO staffing, coordination, and protective-operation requirements through his repeated releasing or repositioning assigned agents, failure to communicate changes in protective coverage or the Secretary's location, and actions to assume sole responsibility for the Secretary under circumstances inconsistent with DPO's Standard Operating Procedures and 5 C.F.R. §2635.101(b)(8) and (b)(14). The OIG did not conclude that the direct evidence reviewed as part of this investigation was sufficient to establish that Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 engaged in a romantic or sexual relationship.

Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 resigned from federal service; Han, Wright, and Director 1 were terminated from federal service. These separations occurred between March and April 2026 (FY 2026, Q2–Q3). Accordingly, OIG will provide a copy of our report to the Acting Secretary for such action as he deems appropriate.

BACKGROUND – DOL OFFICES AND OFFICIALS

Office of the Secretary (OSEC) – OSEC is responsible for advancing the interests of workers, job seekers, and retirees. The Office oversees the enforcement of workplace laws related to safety, fair compensation, and employee benefits, and provides advice to the President on labor policy matters. OSEC also coordinates Departmental policy, operations, communications, and programs related to workplace protections, worker benefits, and workforce development.

Division of Protective Operations (DPO) – DOL DPO is a specialized security unit, statutorily authorized, within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM). DPO Special Agents provide executive protective detail for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary of Labor, and other designated officials. DPO personnel manage security risks and operational safety during domestic and international travel and events.

Secretary of Labor – The Secretary of Labor is a Presidential appointee confirmed by the Senate who leads the DOL and advises the President on national labor policy and the administration and enforcement of laws affecting wage earners, working conditions, and employment opportunities.

- **Lori Chavez-DeRemer** – On March 11, 2025, Chavez-DeRemer was sworn in as the 30th Secretary of Labor. On April 21, 2026, the OIG was scheduled to interview Chavez-DeRemer as part of this investigation. However, on April 20, 2026, Chavez-DeRemer resigned from her position, and her attorney subsequently declined to make her available for the interview. As a result, the OIG did not interview Chavez-DeRemer.

Chief of Staff (COS) – The Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Labor is a senior official in OSEC and serves as the top advisor and operational manager for DOL. The COS runs the Secretary's office, sets priorities, manages staff, and handles communication flow to ensure the Agency meets its goals regarding workplace safety, wages, and workers' rights.

- **Jihun Han** – Han served as Chavez-DeRemer's Chief of Staff beginning January 21, 2025. DOL placed Han on administrative leave on January 11, 2026, and Han was terminated on March 2, 2026. On March 9, 2026, OIG requested an interview of Han through his attorney. Han's attorney declined to make him available for interview. As a result, the OIG did not interview Han.

Deputy Chief of Staff (DCOS) – The DCOS to the Secretary of Labor is a senior OSEC official and serves as a top-level aide, assisting the Chief of Staff and Secretary in managing the DOL. The DCOS helps set policy, manage staff, handle operational challenges, and ensure the Secretary's priorities are carried out efficiently.

- **Rebecca Wright** – Wright served as the DCOS to Chavez-DeRemer beginning February 26, 2025. She was placed on administrative leave on January 11, 2026, and was terminated on March 2, 2026. On March 9, 2026, the OIG requested an interview of Wright through her attorney. Wright's attorney declined to make her available for interview. As a result, the OIG did not interview Wright.

Director of Advance – The Director of Advance to the Secretary of Labor serves in OSEC as the lead planner for the Secretary's public appearances, events, and travel. The position is responsible for coordinating logistics, scheduling, and site visits, including working with executive protection personnel to ensure events run smoothly

and align with Departmental priorities. The Director of Advance oversees the operational preparation necessary for the Secretary's official trips and engagements.

- **Director 1** – Director 1 served as the Director of Advance to Chavez-DeRemer from March 31, 2025, and was terminated on March 24, 2026. The OIG interviewed Director 1 on March 23, 2026, with her attorney present. The relevant sections of this report summarize her responses.

Assistant Special Agent-In-Charge (ASAIC), DPO – The ASAIC for DPO reports to the Special Agent in Charge (SAIC) and supervises assigned DPO personnel and protective operations. The ASAIC also supports protective planning, security logistics, conducts threat assessments, and coordinates with federal, state, and local law enforcement partners.

- **ASAIC 1** – ASAIC 1 joined DOL on January 7, 2018, as a DPO Special Agent. He was promoted to Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge (ASAIC) within DPO on May 8, 2022. On January 16, 2026, DOL placed ASAIC 1 on administrative leave. His duty status was converted to unpaid investigative leave effective February 4, 2026, and he remained on investigative leave until he resigned on March 13, 2026. On April 29, 2026, OIG requested an interview with ASAIC 1 through his attorney, who declined to make him available. As result, the OIG did not interview ASAIC 1.

ALLEGATIONS

Hostile Work Environment

The OIG initiated its investigation on January 6, 2026, following an anonymous DOL OIG Hotline complaint which included numerous allegations, including that Secretary Chavez-DeRemer created a hostile work environment for OSEC employees. During the investigation, the OIG interviewed dozens of witnesses who provided evidence of possible harassment, hostile work environment, employment discrimination, and retaliation. The OIG addresses its conclusions regarding this evidence at the end of this section.

Investigation

Harassment and Hostile Work Environment

Thirty-eight witnesses interviewed by the OIG consistently described the OSEC work environment as toxic, intimidating and humiliating. Witnesses stated that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright openly discussed employee performance matters in the presence of other staff, including details of performance-related meetings and whether those employees had cried during the meetings. Twenty-one witnesses consistently described Wright as condescending and hostile toward OSEC personnel and reported

that the workplace environment deteriorated following her arrival on February 26, 2025, and continued to worsen through the summer of 2025.

Several witnesses described widespread fear and job insecurity within the organization. At least three witnesses reported Han threatened employees with termination, emphasized how easily he could terminate them, and appeared to take satisfaction in doing so. Witnesses also reported that Han cycled through seven assistants during approximately nine months as Chief of Staff because of repeated conflicts with employees serving in the role.

Multiple witnesses stated that Wright demonstrably treated junior staff worse than senior officials. One witness reported that Wright demeaned Chavez-DeRemer's personal assistant by stating that the employee's role was to provide Chavez-DeRemer with "lip gloss and make-up". Witnesses also alleged that Wright selected staff based on physical appearance rather than professional qualifications.

Five witnesses described meetings that Han and Wright conducted in Han's office as "beatdowns," during which Han and Wright berated employees for perceived performance deficiencies. Witnesses stated that Han and Wright sometimes required employees to wait in the lobby for extended periods before these meetings, which employees perceived as an additional form of intimidation.

During the 43-day government shutdown from October 1 through November 12, 2025, Han directed one furloughed employee to report to the office for a meeting even though employees had been directed not to work or come into the office. Han delayed the start of the meeting for nearly an hour before verbally admonishing the employee for alleged unprofessional conduct. Specifically, the employee was admonished for posting photographs taken at a bar and posting them to the employee's personal social media while on furlough. Witnesses stated that Han directed the employee to draft a letter apologizing to Chavez-DeRemer and requesting Chavez-DeRemer's permission to retain their position. Wright reviewed and edited the letter before sending it to Chavez-DeRemer. The employee retained the position but reported feeling humiliated by the experience.

Three witnesses reported that after the *New York Post* published an article on January 9, 2026, Chavez-DeRemer directed Han and Wright to identify employees they believed had provided information to the media. Witnesses reported that Han and Wright subsequently openly investigated, questioned employees they believed were involved, and informed employees that they had advised Chavez-DeRemer to terminate three employees whom they believed provided information to the media[4]

[4] On January 11, 2026, Han and Wright were placed on administrative leave and remained in that status until they were terminated on March 2, 2026. Because Han and Wright were themselves placed on leave before the three planned terminations were carried out, no employees were in fact terminated as a result of this incident.

Witnesses stated that the work environment under Han and Wright had already become toxic before media coverage concerning Chavez-DeRemer intensified the situation. Following publication of media articles concerning Chavez-DeRemer, witnesses stated that Han and Wright assured Chavez-DeRemer that they would terminate three employees following the first article. After spending several days focused almost exclusively on reviewing political appointees to identify a possible source of the leaks, they attempted to narrow down potential sources by identifying individuals with access to Chavez-DeRemer's personal calendar. Witnesses stated that Han eventually reduced his list of suspected leakers to the scheduler, Chavez-DeRemer's spouse, and either her personal or executive assistant working in conjunction with the DPO SAIC or the Director of Office of National Security and Protective Operations (ONSPO).

According to multiple witnesses, Han and Wright later convened OSEC political staff in Chavez-DeRemer's conference room and warned employees that speaking to the press would result in termination. Han and Wright urged senior political officials, including the Chief Counsel to the Secretary of Labor, the Head of Public Affairs, and the DOL White House Liaison, to reinforce that message through their official positions. Those officials declined and alternatively cautioned staff against spreading rumors and offered to address employees' concerns.

The complaint alleged that Director 1 fostered and perpetuated a hostile and intimidating work environment within OSEC through aggressive management practices, targeted bullying, intimidation of subordinate personnel, and interference with the duties of other offices and career staff. Multiple witnesses corroborated this, describing Director 1 as hostile, volatile, and difficult to work with. The witnesses characterized the office environment under Director 1's leadership as toxic and stated that her conduct negatively affected morale within OSEC, the Office of Public Affairs, Advance, Scheduling, and among career support staff. Three witnesses described an incident in which Director 1 confronted a career employee regarding unpaid travel vouchers and physically backed them into a cubicle while admonishing the employee.

The complaint further alleged that ASAIC 1's personal relationship with Chavez-DeRemer contributed to a tense and hostile work environment within DPO. Witnesses stated that ASAIC 1 routinely complied with Chavez-DeRemer's requests, even when those requests deviated from established protective practices. For example, during Chavez-DeRemer's April 15–20, 2025 personal travel to Oregon, she requested an off-the-record stop at an establishment that was determined upon entry to feature partially nude dancers. ASAIC 1, who served as Detail Leader and ASAIC, complied with Chavez-DeRemer's request to reassign the limousine driver so he could enter with her. Chavez-DeRemer subsequently took money from her purse, gave the money to the driver, and directed him to give it to the performer. When the agent resisted and sought guidance from ASAIC 1, ASAIC 1 instructed him to comply with Chavez-DeRemer's requests. Chavez-DeRemer then took additional money from her purse and asked the agent to drop the bills one by one onto the partially nude woman. The agent again hesitated and sought intervention from ASAIC 1, who told him to follow Chavez-DeRemer's instructions. The agent complied against his wishes. According to witness

testimony, ASAIC 1 then instructed the agent not to discuss the incident with anyone, including the SAIC. However, ASAIC 1 reported the matter to the SAIC first, on the following day.

Retaliation

According to employee witness statements, Wright, at Chavez-DeRemer's direction, removed career employees from their travel preparation duties after they raised concerns regarding Chavez-DeRemer's potential non-compliance with Federal Travel Regulations (FTR),[5] and limited their duties to voucher processing. Wright also subsequently reassigned three career employees to workstations outside of the Secretary's suite, leaving only political appointees in Chavez-DeRemer's immediate work area.

Witnesses stated that Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 attributed the anonymous complaint to DPO. The complaint reached news media. Witnesses described Chavez-DeRemer as threatening to replace DPO personnel and restructure the unit under ASAIC 1's leadership in response to the leaking. To prevent interference and maintain protocol, particularly in light of the OIG having just launched its investigation, DOL Inspector General Anthony D'Esposito assumed direct oversight of DPO management responsibilities on January 6, 2026, to ensure operational security and adherence to best practices. D'Esposito continues in that role as of this writing.

Witnesses further stated that Han and Wright convened a meeting with OSEC political appointees during which Han informed attendees that their access to the OSEC suite had been revoked and directed employees to stop gossiping and communicating with the media. According to witnesses, Han stated that he was not "going to tolerate this shit." Witnesses also reported that Han and Wright began investigating individuals they believed were cooperating with OIG or maintaining contact with the media, contributing to a pervasive atmosphere of fear and retaliation within OSEC.

Wright restricted certain employees' access to Chavez-DeRemer and attempted to remove employees from official travel. Witnesses stated that Wright maintained a list of approximately 15 to 20 employees she wanted to remove and she requested recurring meetings with the DOL White House Liaison seeking their approval for potential terminations. In one instance, Wright attempted to justify an employee's termination based on her unsubstantiated belief that the employee was aligned with individuals associated with prior congressional investigations involving Chavez-DeRemer. Three witnesses similarly stated that Han maintained a running list of employees he wanted terminated, often for reasons witnesses considered arbitrary or unsupported.

One witness reported that during official travel to Hawaii, Director 1 publicly berated and dismissed an employee in front of other personnel and subsequently threatened to

[5] The Federal Travel Regulation summarizes the travel and relocation policy for all federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at the government's expense. See https://www.gsa.gov/policy-regulations/regulations/federal-travel-regulation.

remove the employee from travel assignments. Witnesses stated that concerns regarding Director 1's treatment of the employee were subsequently reported to Chavez-DeRemer. Witnesses expressed concern that Director 1 would retaliate against employees she perceived as having cooperated with OIG's investigation into these allegations.

Employment Discrimination

The OIG reviewed witness testimony regarding actions and statements that could potentially be attributed to employees' protected characteristics. As part of their assigned responsibilities on Chavez-DeRemer's detail, the ASAICs operated as her Detail Lead during travel and would be the primary contact for Chavez-DeRemer. During a June 9, 2025, meeting, Wright provided the SAIC and an ASAIC with lists of agents to include and exclude on Chavez-DeRemer's security detail. Four individuals were specifically excluded from Chavez-DeRemer's security detail: one ASAIC who is black and three agents who are white. The excluded ASAIC is the only one of the four originally assigned ASAICs who is black. An official reason for the ASAIC's or the agents' exclusion from Chavez-DeRemer's detail was not provided to those individuals. Wright reassigned the excluded black ASAIC and white agents to the Deputy Secretary's detail. Wright often demanded changes without the knowledge or input of Chavez-DeRemer, despite having no experience in executive protection, law enforcement or security management.

Multiple interviewed witnesses stated that Chavez-DeRemer in consultation with Wright chose to exclude agents from her detail based on her perception that they were too old, physically unfit, overly rule-bound, or "too MAGA." Witnesses did not provide evidence that the excluded ASAIC and agents' race was a reason for their exclusion. The SAIC stated Chavez-DeRemer's increasing number of exclusions of agents from her detail complicated DPO's ability to provide sufficient staffing coverage to protect her.

Witnesses attributed several comments to Wright related to employees' appearance, race, and sexual orientation. Witnesses stated that during a period of turnover among OSEC assistants, Wright reportedly evaluated applicants in part by appearance and weight, including Wright relocating an employee's desk because she did not want a "fat person" visible in the front office and making derogatory comments regarding another employee's appearance and hygiene. Witnesses further stated that Wright advised an employee not to cut her hair above her shoulders to avoid "turning into a lesbian." During a conversation with an employee and Chavez-DeRemer, Wright discouraged this employee from using the DOL daycare center based on the race of the daycare staff differing from that of the employee's children. Chavez-DeRemer did not address Wright's comments or acknowledge that they were inappropriate.

Applicable Standards

DOL policy expressly prohibits harassing behavior by anyone in the workplace under DOL Manual Series (DLMS) 6-300, *Policy & Procedures for Preventing & Eliminating*

Harassing Conduct in the Workplace. Under this policy, DOL seeks to "maintain a work environment free from harassing conduct" and to take prompt and appropriate corrective action, including proportionate disciplinary action, before such conduct becomes sufficiently "severe or pervasive" to violate federal EEO law. DLMS 6-303. DOL therefore may treat harassing conduct as misconduct even when it does not independently violate Title VII or other federal EEO laws.

Harassment and Hostile Work Environment

DOL policy defines harassing conduct as unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct based on a protected characteristic, including race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, or genetic information, when the conduct can reasonably adversely affect the work environment. (DLMS 6-302(A)). The Policy also covers circumstances in which an official bases an employment decision on an employee's acceptance or rejection of such conduct.

Consistent with federal EEO law, DOL defines a hostile work environment as unwelcome workplace conduct based on one or more protected characteristics that is objectively severe or pervasive and can reasonably adversely affect the work environment. In assessing whether conduct meets this standard, DOL considers the totality of the circumstances, including the conduct's frequency and severity; whether it was physically threatening or humiliating rather than merely offensive; whether it unreasonably interfered with work performance; its effect on the employee's psychological well-being; and whether the alleged harasser held supervisory or other authority over the employee. Employees need not be the direct targets of the conduct, as the Policy states that witnessing or overhearing inappropriate conduct may also contribute to a hostile work environment.

The Harassing Conduct Policy operates separately from the federal-sector EEO complaint process under 29 C.F.R. Part 1614 and does not replace or limit an employee's rights under federal EEO statutes and regulations. Rather, it provides a preventive mechanism for identifying, stopping, and correcting inappropriate conduct before it escalates to unlawful harassment.

Employee and Management Responsibilities

DOL policy requires DOL employees to refrain from harassing conduct and encourages employees to take appropriate steps to discourage it. Employees are strongly encouraged to report harassing conduct they experience, witness, or credibly learn about and, when appropriate, to interrupt or diffuse inappropriate behavior, document what occurred, support affected employees, and reinforce protections against retaliation or reprisal. (DLMS 6-305(A)).

DOL policy imposes additional, affirmative responsibilities on supervisors and managers. Supervisors and managers are required to model appropriate workplace conduct; recognize potentially harassing behavior; act promptly and appropriately to prevent and stop harassment and retaliation; and respond appropriately when they

witness or learn of potential harassing conduct. Where misconduct is established, DOL policy calls for appropriate and proportionate corrective or disciplinary action consistent with applicable personnel authorities and the Department's Table of Penalties. Agency heads have the further responsibility under DLMS 6-305(F) to ensure that the Policy is implemented and enforced. (DLMS 6-305(B)).

Discrimination and Retaliation

DOL policy does not clearly define discrimination or retaliation but expressly prohibits discrimination and retaliation or reprisal for protected activity like reporting harassing conduct or participating in the EEO process. While the EEO process addresses conduct that violates federal EEO law, DOL policy permits and encourages DOL officials to correct inappropriate protected-basis conduct before it becomes unlawful.

Findings

The OIG concluded, based on a preponderance of the witness testimony reviewed by the OIG, that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, Wright, Director 1, and ASAIC 1 failed to adhere to DOL policy prohibiting engaging in harassing and otherwise hostile conduct at work. Additionally, these individuals failed to follow the same policy's requirement to intervene, discourage, report, or discipline harassing and other hostile work conduct. The evidence showed a recurring pattern of workplace conduct that DLMS 6-300 is designed to prevent and address, including demeaning or intimidating treatment of employees, concerns about retaliation, and reluctance among employees to raise concerns or challenge senior officials.

The OIG did not determine whether the conduct described in the evidence above was sufficient to constitute unlawful discrimination, retaliation, or a hostile work environment under federal EEO law. Instead, consistent with OIG standards, the OIG assessed whether Chavez-DeRemer, Han, Wright, Director 1 and ASAIC 1 acted consistently with DOL's internal policies. DOL policy does not require management to determine that conduct violates federal EEO law before taking action. The Policy specifically seeks to identify and address inappropriate conduct before it becomes sufficiently severe or pervasive to constitute unlawful harassment. DLMS 6-300 requires supervisors and managers to recognize potentially harassing conduct, model appropriate workplace behavior, act when they witness or learn of such conduct, and support an environment in which employees can report concerns without fear of retaliation or reprisal. The Policy also establishes an internal process, separate from the EEO complaint process, for reporting and addressing allegations of harassing conduct and provides for proportionate corrective or disciplinary action, when warranted, consistent with applicable merit system requirements and the Department's Table of Penalties.

Testimony from numerous witnesses corroborated that Han and Wright routinely engaged in threatening, demeaning, and abusive verbal and written communication with OSEC employees, and that Chavez-DeRemer was seemingly aware of this behavior and failed to take action to stop this behavior or take appropriate disciplinary action

against Han or Wright as DOL policy requires. Witnesses told the OIG that media reporting on the allegations in the anonymous complaint appeared to worsen Han and Wright's hostility toward and distrust of OSEC personnel, and that Chavez-DeRemer was aware of their actions. We therefore concluded that Han and Wright failed to follow DOL policy by actively engaging in prohibited harassing behavior, and that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright all failed to comply with the policy's requirements to report, discipline, and prevent further workplace harassment.

Witnesses also reported Director 1 engaged in intimidating, toxic, and otherwise hostile verbal communication with OSEC employees. According to three witnesses, in one instance, unwanted physical intimidation by backing an employee into a cubicle while admonishing them. Witnesses also reported that Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 engaged in unwelcome verbal and physical conduct by requiring Chavez-DeRemer's security detail driver to enter an establishment featuring nude dancers with them where Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 both ordered the driver over their own protestations to give money from Chavez-DeRemer to one of the performers and to drop bills one-by-one on the performer's body. We concluded that based on a preponderance of the evidence, Director 1, Chavez-DeRemer, and ASAIC 1 failed to follow DOL policy by actively engaging in harassing behavior and that all three failed to comply with the policy's requirements to report, discipline, and prevent further workplace harassment. ASAIC 1 also engaged in conduct directly oppositional to the policy's reporting requirements by instructing the driver not to report the harassment to anyone, although ASAIC 1 did report the incident the following day.

Inappropriate Relationship

The initial anonymous complaint alleged that Chavez-DeRemer and DPO ASAIC 1, who was assigned to her protective detail, were engaged in an inappropriate relationship. Examples referred to in the complaint and statements from witnesses interviewed are included below.

During the OIG investigation, additional allegations were raised that ASAIC 1's inappropriate personal relationship with Chavez-DeRemer affected his performance of protective duties. Specifically, ASAIC 1 allegedly focused on his interactions with Chavez-DeRemer, monitored her interactions with other agents, and reduced the presence of other DPO personnel to create opportunities to be alone with her, resulting in reduced protective coverage for the Secretary.

Investigation

OIG interviewed 35 witnesses regarding ASAIC 1's leadership, relationship with OSEC leadership, and management of DPO personnel. Witnesses described ASAIC 1 as an experienced agent and supervisor but reported that, following Chavez-DeRemer's appointment, ASAIC 1 became less engaged with DPO personnel and increasingly aligned himself with OSEC leadership.

Witnesses also reported concerns regarding the relationship between Secretary Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1. Witnesses described interactions they viewed as inconsistent with the professional boundaries ordinarily expected between a Cabinet-level protectee and a protective-detail agent.

Witnesses stated that Chavez-DeRemer developed a closer relationship with ASAIC 1 than with other DPO agents after her arrival in March 2025. ASAIC 1 frequently served as Detail Leader during her travel. Witnesses reported that Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 communicated regularly through the Signal private messaging application on their personal phones, including outside duty hours and regarding non-operational matters.

Eight witnesses reported observing Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 exchange text messages during limousine transportation and official events. During an Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) event, one agent observed repeated text exchanges between Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 throughout the evening. Witnesses stated that they did not observe communication of similar volume and frequency between Chavez-DeRemer and other DPO agents.

Witnesses also described Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1's verbal interactions as informal. ASAIC 1 frequently addressed Chavez-DeRemer by her first name rather than 'Ma'am' or 'Madam Secretary,' as other agents did, and witnesses reported that both used profanity when speaking with each other. In one instance, Chavez-DeRemer made a joking remark to ASAIC 1 in the DPO control room, and ASAIC 1 responded, "Fuck you." Witnesses reported that the exchange prompted silence among the personnel present. During another control room interaction, Chavez-DeRemer interrupted ASAIC 1 while agents discussed sports. ASAIC 1 responded, "Would you let me finish." Witnesses stated that Chavez-DeRemer did not respond.

During travel in Michigan, a witness observed Chavez-DeRemer massage ASAIC 1's shoulders while seated behind him in a vehicle after he completed a driving shift. She asked whether he was tired, and ASAIC 1 responded that he was "solid as a rock," after which both laughed. The witness interpreted the comment as sexual innuendo. Witnesses did not observe Chavez-DeRemer engage in similar conduct with other agents who shared driving responsibilities.

Witnesses reported additional interactions between Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 that they considered inconsistent with typical professional boundaries. During a GOP gathering at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary's residence, witnesses observed Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 leave the event walking arm-in-arm and described their interactions as unusually familiar, consistent with the pattern of conduct discussed above.

Evidence of Overnight Interactions

During Travel

The OIG obtained electronic hotel door lock records from two instances where Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 traveled together to Las Vegas, Nevada, that reflected activity that appeared to indicate the two subjects spending at least portions overnight in the other's room, including on:

- October 24–28, 2025 – Chavez-DeRemer's and ASAIC 1's rooms were located on the same floor, two rooms apart. Records reflected contemporaneous activity at both doors at approximately the same time, including at approximately 5:53–5:54 a.m.
- December 4–7, 2025 – On December 4, ASAIC 1's room, separated by one hotel room between his and Chavez-DeRemer's room, reflected his departure at approximately 9:15 p.m., followed by entry and locking activity at Chavez-DeRemer's room. Subsequent records reflected activity consistent with ASAIC 1 remaining absent from his room until the following day. On December 5, records reflected ASAIC 1 leaving his room at approximately 10:23 p.m., followed by an entry activity at Chavez-DeRemer's room. Activity at her room was next recorded at approximately 7:32 a.m. on December 6, followed by entry to ASAIC 1's room approximately one minute later. On December 6, comparable activity began in the evening and continued until approximately 9:49 a.m. on December 7.

While the door-lock system identifies which credential was used to open a given door, it does not, by itself, establish who was physically present in a room during a given period. DPO agents assigned to the Las Vegas trip were interviewed by the OIG. They could not recall witnessing the specified room movements. No video evidence was available for review.

At Chavez-DeRemer's Personal Residence

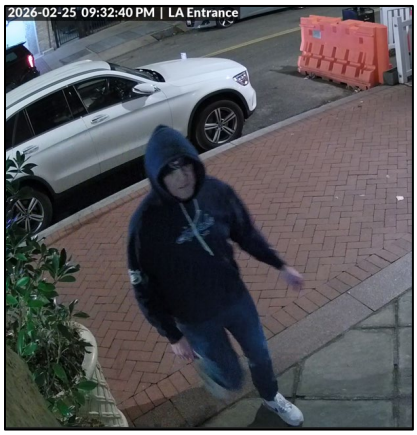
Effective January 16, 2026, ASAIC 1 was placed on 10-day temporary paid administrative leave while under investigation for potential misconduct, during which he was prohibited from performing official government duties. ASAIC 1's duty status was converted to unpaid investigative leave effective February 4, 2026, to ensure his absence from the workplace for the duration of the OIG's ongoing investigation. ASAIC 1 remained on investigative leave until he resigned on March 13, 2026. Chavez-DeRemer's duties as Secretary of Labor continued throughout this period until her resignation on April 20, 2026.

On February 25, 2026, the OIG conducted surveillance at Chavez-DeRemer's Washington, D.C., residence from approximately 8:50 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The secured residential building required key-fob access and maintained a 24-hour concierge. At approximately 9:32 p.m., an OIG agent observed an individual matching ASAIC 1's description enter the building through a rear entrance and proceed toward an elevator. The individual was not observed exiting before surveillance concluded.

The OIG obtained key-fob records and corresponding surveillance footage for the residence. Eight key fobs were registered to Chavez-DeRemer's unit, five of which were used between February 25 and March 2, 2026. The OIG confirmed that two fobs were assigned to DPO and remained in DPO custody until Chavez-DeRemer's resignation.

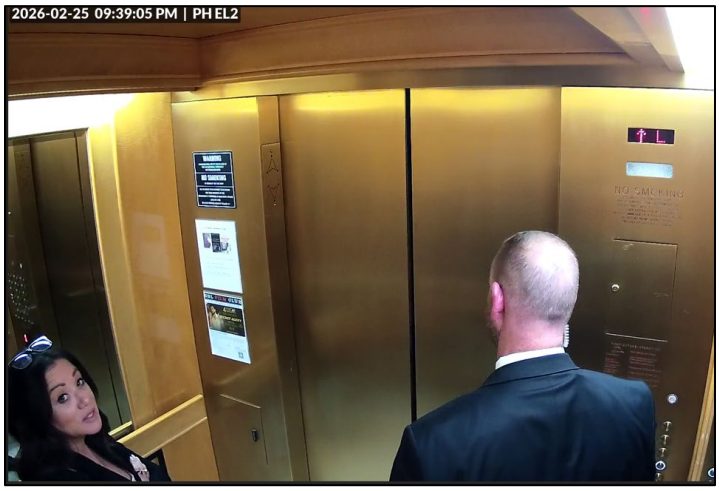
Records showed that a key fob assigned to Chavez-DeRemer's residence was used at approximately 9:32 p.m. on February 25. Corresponding video showed ASAIC 1 using the key fob to enter the building and proceed to the fourth-floor elevator lobby of Chavez-DeRemer's residence (see Figure 1). The OIG was able to confirm ASAIC 1's identity by comparing the video with his driver's license photograph.

Figure 1: ASAIC 1 Entering Chavez-DeRemer's Residence on February 25, 2026 at 9:32pm



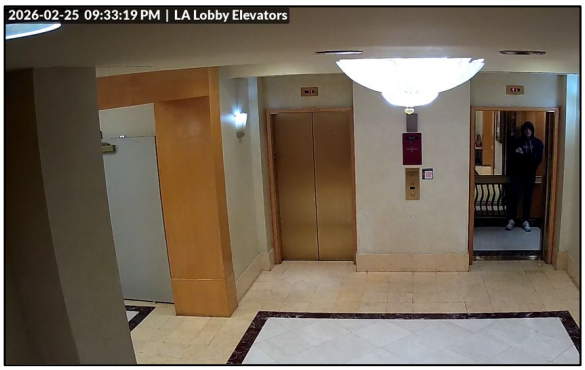
Approximately 6 minutes later at approximately 9:38 p.m., video showed Chavez-DeRemer returning through the underground garage accompanied by DPO agents who escorted her to her residence (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Chavez-DeRemer in the Elevator on February 25, 2026 at 9:39pm



The OIG identified no video showing ASAIC 1 or Chavez-DeRemer leaving the building before ASAIC 1 was recorded exiting the next day, February 26, at approximately 11:29 a.m. ASAIC 1 was seen in video wearing the same clothing as when he entered approximately 14 hours earlier (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3: ASAIC 1 Using the Rear Lobby Elevator to Go to the 4th Floor to Secretary Chavez-DeRemer's Residence on February 25, 2026, at 9:33 pm (Left) and ASAIC 1 Exiting the Rear Elevator at Chavez-DeRemer's Residence on February 26, 2026, at 11:28 am (Right)



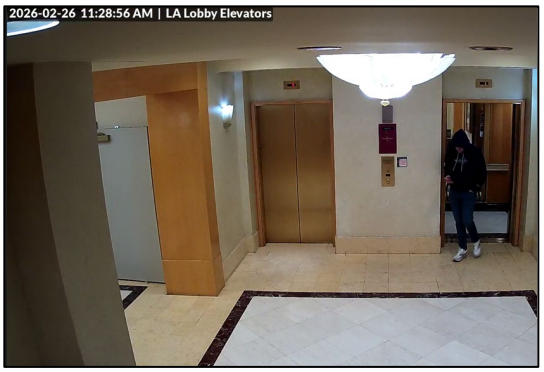
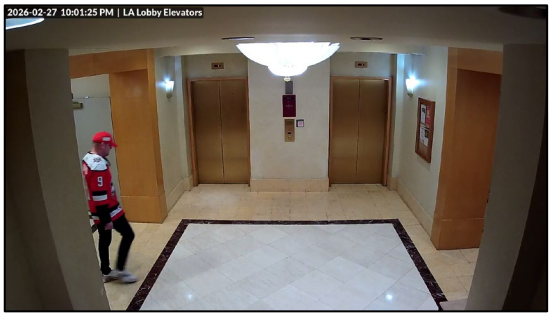


Figure 4: ASAIC 1 Exiting the Rear Entrance at Chavez-DeRemer's Residence on February 26, 2026, at 11:29 am

Video evidence showed that on February 27, 2026, at approximately 10:01 p.m., ASAIC 1 used a key fob assigned to Chavez-DeRemer's residence to enter the building's rear entrance. It also showed that at approximately 11:22 p.m., Chavez-DeRemer returned through the garage accompanied by two DPO agents and was escorted to her unit (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: ASAIC 1 Entering Chavez-DeRemer's Rear Entrance on February 27, 2026 (Left) and ASAIC 1 Approaching the Elevator in Chavez-DeRemer's Building on February 27, 2026 (Right)



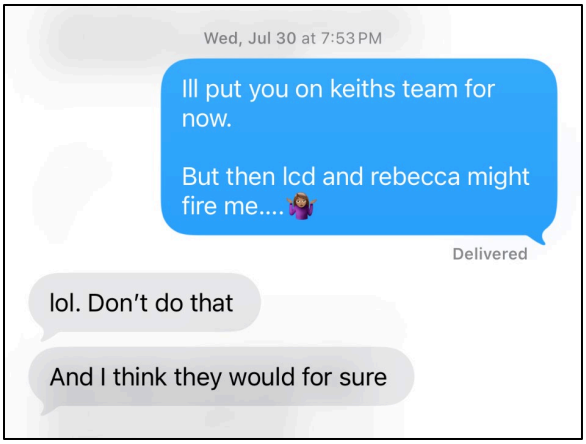
Dereliction of Protective Duties

Subversion of Chain of Command

Witnesses stated that ASAIC 1 bypassed the established DPO chain of command by attending meetings with the Secretary's Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff without the SAIC's knowledge and acting as a primary liaison between DPO and OSEC, despite holding a position not intended to serve that role. Witnesses further reported that ASAIC 1 sought the SAIC position, criticized DPO personnel to OSEC leadership, questioned the SAIC's decisions to others, and routinely shared internal DPO information with OSEC without any identified operational purpose.

Supervisors and employees raised concerns to the DPO SAIC regarding ASAIC 1's relationship with Chavez-DeRemer. On July 30, 2025, the SAIC addressed those concerns with ASAIC 1 and recommended that ASAIC 1 take leave because of what she viewed as his overly-familiar relationship with Chavez-DeRemer. The SAIC stated, however, that she hesitated to take further action because she feared it might prompt Chavez-DeRemer and Wright to terminate her (see Figure 6). ASAIC 1 declined the suggestion to take leave and agreed that the SAIC taking action to limit his travel with Chavez-DeRemer could result in the SAIC's removal. The SAIC stated that, in light of ASAIC 1's statements and recent personnel terminations by OSEC leadership, she took no further action.

Figure 6: Text Conversation between DPO SAIC and ASAIC 1 on July 30, 2025



Witnesses reported that, as media coverage involving Chavez-DeRemer and her staff increased, Han became increasingly focused on internal DPO operations and his interactions with the SAIC became openly hostile. After DPO provided executive protection to Deputy Secretary Keith Sonderling during an international trip to Geneva, Switzerland from June 9–13, 2025, witnesses stated that ASAIC 1 proposed creating separate protective teams for Chavez-DeRemer and Deputy Secretary instead of using pooled personnel.

Witnesses further stated that Han supported the proposal, and that Han's support was based, at least in part, on a shared belief between Chavez-DeRemer and Han that they could no longer trust Sonderling and his staff and suspected them of contributing to the media reporting. At one point, Han openly challenged DPO staff on the necessity of providing protection for Sonderling, even though both Han and Chavez-DeRemer had been briefed on the threat assessments detailing the specific risks arising from his government position.[6]

Failure to Adhere to Protective Operation Standards

Witnesses further reported that, in addition to observing inappropriately close contact between Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1, Chavez-DeRemer encouraged ASAIC 1 on more than one occasion to participate in activities outside the scope of, and often in direct conflict with, his protective duties. Specific incidents witnesses reported occurred during travel to:

- Atlantic City, New Jersey (July 14 – 15, 2025) – Witnesses observed frequent private conversations and joking between Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1, with one witness observing ASAIC 1 place his hand on Chavez-DeRemer's lower back. Following the trip, OSEC and DPO personnel began reporting concerns regarding their interactions to supervisors.

[6] Consistent with federal practice as documented by GAO, protective details are generally assigned based on threat assessments identifying the level of risk to the protectee (GAO/GGD-OSI-00-139).

- Osaka, Japan (July 17–20, 2025) – Witnesses observed ASAIC 1 enter Chavez-DeRemer's hotel room to retrieve her luggage and subsequently began regularly carrying her bags during travel. This conflicts with protective protocols by rendering agents unable to respond quickly to threats.
- Fairbanks, Alaska (September 18–20, 2025) – During a visit to an ice museum, Chavez-DeRemer directed her protective detail agents to ride down a two-story slide carved from ice. ASAIC 1 was the only agent to slide. The other agent declined to participate believing it would jeopardize operational security. Per DPO SOP 2-4 Section D on General Conduct, DPO agents are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner, to not bring embarrassment upon DOL/DPO, and to avoid injury to the agent.
- Charlottesville, Virginia (September 28–29, 2025) – Witnesses observed that ASAIC 1 played several holes of golf alone with Chavez-DeRemer while armed and serving in a protective capacity. This was not a prearranged operation intended to minimize the presence of Chavez-DeRemer's protection detail, and conflicts with established executive protective protocols designed to ensure agents are free to respond to any threat.
- Fountain Hills, Arizona (December 27, 2025 – January 3, 2026) – Witnesses observed ASAIC 1 playing approximately three to four holes of golf with Chavez-DeRemer. Three witnesses also observed ASAIC 1 gambling with Chavez-DeRemer during the trip. Once again, ASAIC 1's actions were not in line with standard operating protective procedures.

Witnesses further stated that ASAIC 1 advocated separating the protective teams assigned to Chavez-DeRemer and the Deputy Secretary and recommended assigning specific agents to Chavez-DeRemer's detail. Witnesses attributed these personnel decisions to ASAIC 1's desire to remove agents ASAIC 1 believed were observing his interactions with Chavez-DeRemer. Witnesses noted that these decisions occurred at a time when some in OSEC leadership believed the DPO agents may have been sources of media leaks. ASAIC 1 additionally advocated for 24-hour protection for Chavez-DeRemer, notwithstanding the absence of any known significant threat against her at the time.

Witnesses described multiple occasions during Chavez-DeRemer's official and personal travel when ASAIC 1 released or repositioned agents, creating repeated extended periods where ASAIC 1 would be alone with Chavez-DeRemer without other DPO personnel present and sometimes without other DPO personnel even being informed of Chavez-DeRemer's location.

- Las Vegas, Nevada (April 12–15, 2025) – Witnesses stated that ASAIC 1 accompanied Chavez-DeRemer to the casino floor without other DPO personnel and did not notify the detail when she returned to her room.
- Washington, D.C. (May 2025) – While Chavez-DeRemer attended a cigar bar, ASAIC 1, acting as Detail Leader, released the Advance agent before the assignment concluded. Chavez-DeRemer and Han later became involved in a confrontation with an intoxicated patron, prompting ASAIC 1 to escort Chavez-

DeRemer from the establishment. However, the only other available agent was assigned as the limousine driver and had to remain with the vehicle, delaying the DPO team's response time to the confrontation.

- Bozeman, Montana (June 22–23, 2025) – Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 stayed at the same hotel while the other DPO agents stayed approximately ten minutes away. ASAIC 1 also retained the limousine and keys overnight, requiring the assigned agent driver to retrieve the keys the following morning. Witnesses identified this as the first trip during which ASAIC 1 and Chavez-DeRemer stayed at a location without any other personnel present.
- Bridgehampton, New York (July 11–13, 2025) – ASAIC 1 was the only DPO agent lodged at Chavez-DeRemer's location, while two other agents stayed elsewhere.
- Washington, D.C. (September 1, 2025) – After returning from official travel ASAIC 1 transferred Chavez-DeRemer's protection to local DPO agents for dinner and transportation to her residence. A late media interview was added to Chavez-DeRemer's schedule, prompting DPO personnel to develop a staffing plan and notify ASAIC 1 of the coverage. ASAIC 1 subsequently returned to the residence and released the other agents, leaving himself as the sole DPO agent assigned to Chavez-DeRemer. The SAIC stated that she learned of the staffing change the following day and later advised ASAIC 1 that sufficient personnel and funding had been available to maintain coverage and not to make changes like that in the future.
- Charlottesville, Virginia (September 28–29, 2025) – Witnesses observed that ASAIC 1 played several holes of golf alone with Chavez-DeRemer while armed and serving in a protective capacity. Later that evening, ASAIC 1 released the two remaining agents and assumed sole responsibility for Chavez-DeRemer's protection.
- Las Vegas, Nevada (December 4–7, 2025) – ASAIC 1 accompanied Chavez-DeRemer to a casino floor and instructed agents to remove their earpieces to avoid attracting attention, interrupting radio communications. ASAIC 1 then dismissed the accompanying agent and remained alone with Chavez-DeRemer for approximately three hours without providing location or status updates to the remaining detail.
- During the same Las Vegas trip, ASAIC 1 and three agents were assigned to Chavez-DeRemer while she attended an outdoor bar with Wright. Two unvetted males approached Chavez-DeRemer and Wright and engaged them in conversation. Witnesses stated that ASAIC 1 appeared bothered by their interactions with Chavez-DeRemer and subsequently left his post. Initially, ASAIC 1 advised an agent that he was going inside the casino to play slot machines and was absent for approximately 20 minutes without assigning a replacement. After returning, the unvetted men were still present with Chavez-DeRemer and Wright. ASAIC 1 subsequently departed to the limo, parked on the street outside the bar area, to switch positions with the driver. He returned to his post shortly before Chavez-DeRemer was scheduled to depart to her next location.

Eight witnesses also identified four incidents in which ASAIC 1 inexplicably physically intervened in interactions between Chavez-DeRemer and DPO agents to keep DPO agents physically separate from Chavez-DeRemer, often while ignoring direct objections from Chavez-DeRemer.

- Tokyo and Osaka, Japan (July 17–20, 2025) – ASAIC 1 interrupted a private conversation initiated by Chavez-DeRemer with an agent and directed the agent to move away and return to his position. In another incident, ASAIC 1 approached an agent from behind, placed a hand on the agent's chest, and moved him away from Chavez-DeRemer. The agent subsequently reported these incidents to management.
- Las Vegas, Nevada (December 4–7, 2025) – ASAIC 1 again positioned himself between Chavez-DeRemer and an agent she had requested to speak with and physically pushed the agent away.
- Washington, D.C. (December 13, 2025) – During a WWE event ASAIC 1 placed his arm between Chavez-DeRemer and an agent and moved the agent away despite Chavez-DeRemer stating that she wanted the agent to remain.

Applicable Standards

Division of Protective Operations (DPO) Standard Operating Procedures

DOL's DPO Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual governs the conduct and operations of Special Agents assigned to DPO and identifies the protection of the Secretary of Labor as its primary mission. DPO directs its operations toward detecting, deterring, and defending against attacks directed at the Secretary. DPO also requires its personnel to operate in a manner that minimizes the possibility and potential impact of an attack. DPO SOP §§ 1-3, 1-4.

Chain of Command and Supervisory Responsibilities: The SAIC exercises overall operational command of DPO and directly supervises the DSAIC and ASAICs. The DSAIC and ASAICs report directly to the SAIC. When the SAIC is unavailable, the DSAIC assumes operational command. When both the SAIC and DSAIC are unavailable, an available ASAIC assumes operational command until either the SAIC or DSAIC becomes available. DPO SOP §§ 2-1, 2-2.

DPO assigns ASAICs direct supervisory responsibility over Special Agents assigned to the working shifts. DPO also assigns the DSAIC and ASAICs supervisory oversight of the Secretary's protection and responsibility for designated program areas, including administration, property, equipment, training, transportation, and protective-intelligence investigative functions. DPO SOP § 2-2.

Special Agent Protective Duties: DPO requires Special Agents serving on the working shift to provide physical protection to the Secretary. Special Agents may also serve as Detail Leader, lead advance agent, site advance agent, protective-intelligence or

transportation advance agent, driver, post stander, control-room agent, or in other assigned protective roles. DPO SOP § 2-3(A).

DPO requires Special Agents, "[u]nder all circumstances," to conduct themselves "in a professional manner when on-duty and conducting official business." DPO also requires Special Agents to conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring embarrassment upon DOL, OASAM, or DPO. DPO SOP § 2-4(D).

Trip Staffing: For official travel, the SOP assigns trip-staffing responsibility to the DSAIC and requires DPO to base personnel allocations on operational factors, including the complexity of the trip, logistics, duration, and protective intelligence. DPO bases advance-team staffing selections on the experience, skill, capability, and availability of individual Special Agents. DPO SOP § 7-3(A)(6), p. 37. The SOP also requires DPO to clearly define trip responsibilities so that assigned Special Agents understand their duties. It requires the lead advance Special Agent to provide additional direction as needed and identifies coordination and communication among key stakeholders as critically important to the overall advance effort. DPO SOP § 7-4(C)(1).

Assignments, Coordination, and Communication: DPO requires personnel to clearly define trip responsibilities before the advance team arrives so that each Special Agent understands the agent's responsibilities during each phase of the trip. The lead advance Special Agent must provide additional specific direction to advance-team members when necessary. The SOP identifies coordination and communication among key stakeholders as critically important to the overall advance effort. DPO SOP § 7-4(C)(1).

Overnight Lodging and Reside-Over-Night (RON) Protective Coverage: For overnight, or RON, locations, DPO directs personnel to make "every effort" to secure accommodations for all DPO personnel at the Secretary's RON hotel. When DPO selects hotel rooms, Special Agents should consider a block of rooms and the number of rooms used by the official party and DPO personnel to optimize the Secretary's security. The SOP states that, ideally, DPO should situate the Secretary's room so that known persons occupy adjacent rooms and rooms above and below the Secretary's room. DPO SOP § 7-5(E)(2). The SOP further directs DPO to arrange for a key to the Secretary's suite to be provided to the SAIC or the ASAIC in charge of the trip. DPO SOP § 7-5(E)(4).

Federal and DOL Ethical Standards: DOL policy tracks the government-wide Standards for Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch set forth in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.101(b), which establish standards of ethical conduct for executive branch employees. Section 2635.101(b)(8) requires employees to act impartially and prohibits them from giving preferential treatment to any private organization or individual. Section 2635.101(b)(14) requires employees to avoid conduct that could make a reasonable person, aware of the relevant facts, believe that the employee violated the law or applicable ethics standards.

DOL policy and Section 2635.702 prohibits employees from using public office for private gain. The regulation prohibits an employee from using or permitting the use of a

government position, title, or authority associated with public office in a manner intended to coerce or induce another person, including a subordinate, to provide any financial or other benefit to the employee or to specified persons with whom the employee has a private affiliation. Violations of statutory requirements can lead to removal from federal office and/or criminal penalties, such as fines and imprisonment.

In accordance with Section 2635.705, DOL ethical policy prohibits an employee from encouraging, directing, coercing, or requesting a subordinate to use official time for activities other than those required in the performance of official duties or otherwise authorized by law or regulation

DOL assigns a heightened ethical obligation to supervisors.[7] The Department requires supervisors to serve as models for subordinates, ensure that subordinates understand their ethical obligations, and work with ethics officials to resolve conflicts of interest and enforce Government ethics laws and regulations. DOL also identifies agency heads as officials with responsibilities under the Federal ethics framework.

The Department requires supervisors to serve as models for their subordinates, ensure that subordinates understand their ethical obligations, and work with ethics officials to resolve conflicts of interest and enforce Government ethics laws and regulations. DOL also expressly identifies agency heads as officials who carry responsibilities under the Federal ethics framework.[8]

Findings

The OIG concluded, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 developed and maintained an inappropriately close and unprofessional relationship while ASAIC 1 actively served on Chavez-DeRemer's protective detail, which appeared to continue even after he was placed on administrative leave and was suspended from his official duties. Multiple witnesses described frequent private and non-operational communications, unusually informal verbal exchanges, and physical familiarity they did not observe between Chavez-DeRemer and other DPO agents. OIG surveillance as well as electronic hotel and residential access records further corroborated the unusually close nature of the relationship. The OIG did not, however, obtain sufficient direct evidence to establish that the relationship was romantic or sexual.

Chavez-DeRemer’s Relationship

We concluded, based on a preponderance of all witness testimony and documentary (including photographic and video) evidence, that Chavez-DeRemer developed and maintained an inappropriately close and unprofessional relationship with ASAIC 1 while he exercised supervisory and operational authority over her protective detail that was inconsistent with federal impartiality and preferential-treatment standards. We did not

[7] 2025 - How to Keep Out Of Trouble
[8] 2025 - How to Keep Out Of Trouble (p. 2)

conclude that the direct evidence reviewed by the OIG was sufficient to establish that Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 engaged in a romantic or sexual relationship.

Witnesses described frequent private communications, physical familiarity, and unusually informal interactions between the two. At the same time, ASAIC 1 repeatedly reduced the presence of other agents, separated agents from Chavez-DeRemer, or placed himself in circumstances in which he alone provided her protection. This pattern created an appearance that ASAIC 1 received access to and treatment from Chavez-DeRemer different from that afforded to other DPO personnel. 5 C.F.R. § 2635.101(b)(8),(14).

Moreover, we concluded, based on a preponderance of evidence gathered directly through OIG surveillance combined with electronic hotel and residential access records combined with witness observations of Chavez-DeRemer's and ASAIC 1's unusually close relationship, that Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 interacted with each other after official duties hours concluded on more than one occasion, including after ASAIC 1 was placed on administrative leave and suspended from his official protective responsibilities over Chavez-DeRemer. No legitimate professional reason existed for Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 to continue interacting while ASAIC 1 was suspended, yet their contact continued.

ASAIC 1's Relationship

We concluded, based on a preponderance of all witness testimony and documentary (including photographic and video) evidence, that ASAIC 1 developed and maintained an inappropriately close and unprofessional relationship with Chavez-DeRemer while he exercised supervisory and operational authority over her protective detail that violated DPO staffing, coordination, and protective-operation requirements when he repeatedly released or repositioned assigned agents, failed to communicate changes in protective coverage or the Secretary's location, and assumed sole responsibility for the Secretary under circumstances inconsistent with established DPO practice. These actions needlessly reduced protective coverage for Chavez-DeRemer and, on multiple occasions, left other agents unaware of the Secretary's location or protective status. DPO SOP §§ 2-2, 2-3(A), 7-3(A)(6), 7-4(C)(1).

This included instances where ASAIC 1 directed agents to remove their earpieces, dismissed an accompanying agent, and remained alone with Chavez-DeRemer for approximately three hours without providing location or status updates. In another instance, ASAIC 1 left his protective post for approximately 20 minutes while two unvetted individuals interacted with Chavez-DeRemer and Wright.

We also concluded that ASAIC 1 violated DPO requirements governing the performance of protective duties and professional conduct when he participated in activities that interfered with or were unrelated to his assigned protective responsibilities. Witnesses observed ASAIC 1 carrying Chavez-DeRemer's luggage, using an ice slide while assigned to her protection, playing golf with her while armed and serving in a protective

capacity, and gambling with her during travel. Witnesses further described multiple occasions when ASAIC 1 physically intervened to separate other DPO agents from Chavez-DeRemer, including when Chavez-DeRemer indicated that she wanted to speak with those agents. DPO SOP §§ 2-3(A), 2-4(D).

The OIG further found that ASAIC 1 violated DPO chain-of-command and supervisory requirements when he bypassed the SAIC, communicated directly with OSEC leadership regarding DPO matters, criticized DPO personnel and SAIC decisions to OSEC, and shared internal DPO information without an identified operational purpose. The SAIC specifically raised concerns with ASAIC 1 regarding his overly familiar relationship with Chavez-DeRemer and recommended that he take leave. ASAIC 1 declined and acknowledged that restricting his travel with Chavez-DeRemer could jeopardize the SAIC's position. DPO SOP §§ 2-1, 2-2.

Taken together, the evidence established that ASAIC 1 allowed his personal relationship with Chavez-DeRemer to impair his professional judgment and contributed to repeated violations of DPO staffing, command, communication, professional-conduct, and protective-operation requirements. His conduct was also inconsistent with the executive branch ethical principles requiring employees to act impartially, avoid preferential treatment, and avoid conduct that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question their compliance with applicable ethical standards. 5 C.F.R. § 2635.101(b)(8),(14).

Additional Allegations and Findings

During the course of the OIG's investigation, the OIG investigated allegations and other evidence of possible misconduct either raised in the anonymous complaint or by information obtained during the course of the investigation. The results of the OIG's investigations into these allegations revealed DOL policy and ethical standard violations that we determined were significant enough to address in this report but not as severe or extensive as the allegations discussed in greater detail above.

1. Combining Personal and Official Travel and Improper Use of Rental Vehicles

The initial anonymous complaint included allegations that Chavez-DeRemer and Wright were committing travel fraud. While investigating this allegation, the OIG interviewed witnesses and reviewed other evidence and allegations received that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, Wright, and Director 1 may have inappropriately combined personal and official travel to obtain government-funded transportation and lodging. Witnesses reported that official engagements were added to itineraries involving personal destinations and that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright unilaterally made travel decisions that were otherwise subject to Office of the Solicitor (SOL) review and approval. Other witnesses alleged Director 1 to have violated travel regulation requirements for use of rental

vehicles. Our conclusions drawn from this evidence are presented at the end of this section.

Investigation

DOL records reviewed by the OIG documented that Chavez-DeRemer, Wright, and Director 1 completed training between April 1, 2025, and May 1, 2025, addressing permissible and impermissible activities associated with official government travel.

Combining Personal and Official Travel & Per Diem Expense Reimbursement

In April 2025, Chavez-DeRemer announced a nationwide listening tour to visit businesses and obtain input from workers, employers, and union members from diverse backgrounds across the country. Wright and Han managed much of the travel planning with Chavez-DeRemer's input, and Wright traveled with Chavez-DeRemer to 19 locations as the tour supervisor. Witnesses stated that Han or Wright frequently determined whether travel was official or personal, and that itineraries typically contained between one and three official engagements per day with substantial periods of downtime between scheduled events.

Witnesses reported that Chavez-DeRemer required Wright to ensure that tour locations be within approximately one hour of a commercial airport, while Wright and Han generally limited site visits to 60–90 minutes and speaking engagements to less than five minutes. As a result of this requirement, some trips consisted of one or two official engagements totaling less than two hours over two days. Three career employees advised Chavez-DeRemer and Wright that combining personal and official travel could create regulatory compliance issues. In response, Wright and Han removed career staff from travel-planning responsibilities and reassigned those duties to a political appointee.

Eleven witnesses stated that Wright added official engagements to itineraries for destinations that she and Chavez-DeRemer intended to visit for personal reasons in order to use DOL funds for the travel. Witnesses identified at least thirteen trips to destinations where Chavez-DeRemer visited family or her other personal residences and five trips to Las Vegas, Nevada.

The OIG compared witness statements, DPO trip logistics, DOL travel vouchers and other official records, and OSEC Advance briefing materials and identified discrepancies differences between planned official activities and the records of actual official travel. Examples include:

- Multi-destination travel (July 22–31, 2025) – a visit to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility was added to provide official business during Chavez-DeRemer's planned personal travel to Portland, where she maintained a residence. The OIG did not identify OSEC Advance briefing materials detailing the location as a planned official stop.
- Multi-destination travel (August 3–11, 2025) – with a day between official travel stops, Chavez-DeRemer scheduled a virtual meeting which she attended from

her hotel room. Instead of remaining at her previous hotel, or going early to her next destination, Chavez-DeRemer booked a hotel at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane, Washington for August 5, 2025, located 50 minutes from the Circling Raven Golf Club. DPO Trip Logistics identified no official events; only the airport, hotel, and a golf course. However, Chavez-DeRemer claimed and received $227.48 for lodging, exceeding the $126 allowable lodging rate set by the General Services Administration and in effect at the time, as well as $86 in per diem for that period.[9]

- Palm Beach, Florida (November 19–21, 2025) – Chavez-DeRemer and Wright attended an America First Policy Institute gala, during which Chavez-DeRemer stayed three nights at a luxury hotel and spa with a nightly rate of $529, excluding taxes.[10]
- Chavez-DeRemer's, Wright's, and Director 1's lodging costs all exceeded the federal actual expense reimbursement rate by approximately 300%. Chavez-DeRemer received $2,092.63 in reimbursement for airfare, lodging, taxes, and meals & incidentals (M&IE) from DOL based on the voucher she submitted for the trip. No Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) approval or other justification was located in DOL records.
- Chavez-DeRemer purchased the airfare on November 6, 2025, during the government shutdown, while official travel was halted. The trip was initially listed as personal travel. However upon the reopening of the government, the travel was subsequently designated as official after a single meeting between Chavez-DeRemer and Wright was added to the itinerary.
- Las Vegas, Nevada (December 2025) – the initial itinerary contained no DOL engagements. After Wright and Chavez-DeRemer received complimentary tickets from a lobbyist to attend a rodeo, a previously scheduled Western Caucus speaking engagement assigned to Sonderling was reassigned to Chavez-DeRemer, apparently to provide an official business justification for Chavez-DeRemer's personal travel.

Improper Use of Rental Vehicles

During the investigation, five witnesses alleged that Director 1 directed the Office of Advance to utilize full-sized SUVs for official travel without mission-based justification or compliance with federal travel regulations. Beginning in April 2025, travel records and witness statements reflected that Director 1 used compact rental vehicles. However, around July 2025, she directed Advance Office personnel to begin renting full-sized SUVs for official travel based on safety and comfort concerns rather than documented,

[9] For August 2025, the applicable lodging rate for ZIP Code 99201 was $126. Under DOL policy, lodging costs up to 300 percent of that rate, or $378, required advance OCFO approval and justification. OIG identified no records showing that Chavez-DeRemer obtained the required approval or provided the required justification.

[10] The November 2025 lodging rate for ZIP Code 33462 was $171. Under DOL policy, lodging costs up to 300 percent of that rate, or $513, required advance OCFO approval and justification. OIG identified no records showing that Chavez-DeRemer obtained the required approval or provided the required justification.

trip-specific requirements or approved exceptions. Witnesses stated that full-sized SUVs were unnecessary on most trips and that multiple large premium vehicles were rented without documented justification. Director 1 stated that Han and Wright had authorized the change in rental vehicle practices but could not recall how the authorization was provided or produce supporting documentation.

The OIG identified a government-funded rental vehicle that Director 1 retained for two days after the conclusion of her official travel. According to Director 1's itinerary, she returned from travel with Chavez-DeRemer to the National Capitol Region on September 9, 2025, but did not return her premium large SUV rental until September 11, 2025, two days after the completion of the official events and at a total cost of $827.64. Additionally, Director 1 rented the vehicle at a weekly rate despite having access to Chavez-DeRemer's calendar, which showed that her official business in the area ended on September 9, 2025. When questioned why the vehicle was not returned at the conclusion of her official duties, Director 1 stated that she could not recall the circumstances.

Witnesses recounted that on February 24, 2026, the Director of ONSPO informed Director 1 that premium and full-sized SUVs required pre-approval and written justification based on mission necessity. They also recalled that administrative staff advised her that she was not adhering to federal travel regulations when renting premium large SUVs while on travel with DeRemer-Chavez. Director 1 responded via email on February 24 and 25, 2026, stating that the practice would continue and insisted that no rules were being broken and that she would elevate the issue to Chavez-DeRemer. Director 1 told the OIG that she never ultimately reported these actions to Chavez-DeRemer. The practice ceased after Director 1 was placed on administrative leave.

Applicable Standards

Combining Personal and Official Travel

DOL policy, DLMS 2-1600, *General Travel Regulations*, prohibits employees from using Government resources to support personal portions of a trip and limits reimbursement to necessary expenses incurred for authorized official travel, consistent with 5 U.S.C. § 5702 and the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR). Under DMLS 2-1601(E), DOL does not reimburse additional costs resulting from personal portion of a trip when an employee combines personal and official travel or deviates from an authorized itinerary for personal preference or convenience. (FTR Part 301).

Per Diem and Actual-Expense Reimbursement

Per diem allowances for all official travel must be computed under the Lodging Plus Per Diem system (DLMS 2-1609). Daily per diem consists of the cost of lodging (up to the maximum lodging amount) plus the daily allowance for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE rate). When lodging is not available at or below the maximum per diem lodging rate, DOL Travel Authorizers may authorize up to 150% over the maximum rate.

Authorization must be requested in advance, when possible and must not be granted due to the traveler's preference to stay at a specific lodging establishment. Any charge of a per diem rate from 150% to 300% of the maximum rate must be approved in advance by OCFO and only in extraordinary, mission critical situations. The FTR prohibits approving a per diem that exceeds 300% of the maximum prescribed rate. (FTR 301-11.30).

Rental Vehicles

DLMS 2-1605(E) permits an employee to rent a vehicle exclusively for official travel only when the Travel Authorizer determines in advance that the rental is advantageous to the Government. Employees must pay for additional costs for unauthorized use of a rental vehicle using personal funds.

DOL policy and the FTR also require employees to rent the least expensive compact vehicle available unless one or more limited authorized exceptions justifies a different class of vehicle and a Travel Authorizer approves the upgrade. (DLMS 2-1605(E); FTR 301-10.45). A Travel Authorizer may approve a larger vehicle when circumstances warrant, such as when three or more Government travelers share the vehicle, the traveler must transport voluminous Government equipment, a documented medical or physical need requires a larger vehicle, or mission requirements involve extremely rough terrain or challenging weather conditions.

Findings

Combining Personal and Official Travel & Per Diem Expense Reimbursement

We concluded, based on a preponderance of the witness testimony and documentary evidence reviewed by the OIG, that Chavez-DeRemer and Wright improperly combined personal and official travel in violation of DOL policy and the Federal Travel Regulation. The OIG compared DPO trip logistics, DOL travel vouchers and other official records, and OSEC Advance briefing materials and identified discrepancies differences between planned official activities and the actual travel recorded.

Eleven witnesses stated that Wright added official engagements to itineraries involving destinations Chavez-DeRemer intended to visit for personal reasons, allowing associated travel costs to be paid by DOL. Witnesses identified repeated travel involving to destinations where Chavez-DeRemer's family and residences were located, as well as multiple trips to Las Vegas. Witnesses also stated that Wright used official travel to facilitate visits with her own family and exercised substantial authority over travel destinations and whether travel was designated as official or personal.

We did not conclude that personal activity during official travel, standing alone, violated travel requirements. Rather, the repeated pattern of personal destinations or activities preceding the addition or reassignment of official engagements, together with corroborating witness testimony and travel records, established that official travel authorities were used on multiple occasions to support travel that also served personal

interests. Chavez-DeRemer and Wright had also received travel training and were warned by career employees that combining personal and official travel presented compliance concerns.

After reviewing the documentary evidence, OIG found that Chavez-DeRemer, Wright, and Director 1 violated DOL travel policy in connection with their travel to Palm Beach, Florida. Their lodging costs exceeded the applicable GSA lodging rate, with some costs approaching or exceeding 300 percent of that rate. DOL policy required advance OCFO approval and extraordinary, mission-critical justification for lodging at those levels. OIG found no documentation showing that the required approval or justification was obtained. In addition to a violation of DOL policy, these instances also demonstrate weaknesses in DOL's controls for approving excess lodging costs and documenting the official purpose of senior officials' travel before reimbursement.

Improper Use of Rental Vehicles

We concluded, based on a preponderance of the witness testimony and documentary evidence reviewed by the OIG, that Director 1 repeatedly violated DOL policy and FTR requirements governing use of government-funded rental vehicles. Director 1 directed Advance personnel to rent full-sized SUVs rather than compact vehicles based on what she cited as generalized safety and comfort concerns rather than documented, trip-specific mission requirements or approved exceptions. Director 1 continued the practice after OSEC management advised her in February 2026 that premium and full-sized SUVs required preapproval and written justification. She challenged that guidance and stated that the practice would continue. We also concluded that Director 1 retained a government-funded premium SUV for two days after official travel ended and was unable to provide an explanation for doing so.

2. Unauthorized Consumption and Storage of Alcohol on Federal Property

The initial anonymous complaint alleged that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright consumed alcohol during official duty hours in Chavez-DeRemer's office and that they maintained a supply of alcoholic beverages in there for personal use.

Investigation

The OIG interviewed witnesses, reviewed documentary and video surveillance evidence, and directly observed bottles of alcohol within the offices and spaces used or controlled by Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright in the course of investigating allegations of alcohol consumption and possession by OSEC leadership during duty hours on DOL premises. Interviewed witnesses attested that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright, regularly drank alcohol in Chavez-DeRemer's study during official duty hours. Witnesses reported that when other employees attending these meetings declined alcohol, Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright pressured them to participate or ridiculed them for abstaining.

Applicable Standards

DOL policy aligns with Federal Property Management Regulations (41 C.F.R. 101-20.307; 6 C.F.R. § 139.50(a); and 41 C.F.R. § 102-74.405) and prohibits alcohol consumption on the premises except upon occasions and on property upon which the head of the responsible agency, or his or her designee, has for appropriate official uses granted an exception, in writing. DOL policy requires that advance written approval of the agency head (i.e., Secretary Chavez-DeRemer or her designee) be documented using an official form called DL1-6054, *Alcoholic Beverage Exemption Request/Authorization*, which includes a requirement to notify the DOL Security Center.

Findings

We concluded, based on a preponderance of witness testimony, documentary, and physical evidence reviewed by the OIG, that Chavez-DeRemer, Han, and Wright failed to follow DOL policy on alcohol consumption on federal property by regularly consuming and storing alcohol while on federal property without documenting the required advance written approval of Chavez-DeRemer (the then-agency head) or Chavez-DeRemer's designee. The OIG searched OASAM Security Center records for the period spanning Chavez-DeRemer's tenure as Secretary and found no records of any written approval authorizing alcohol consumption on the premises of the Francis Perkins Building. The OIG also confirmed with the head of the DOL Security Center that no such written approvals were on file.

3. Abuse of Position and Misuse of Government Resources

The initial anonymous complaint included allegations that Chavez-DeRemer was abusing her official position that she used government resources to attend to her personal appointments. While investigating this allegation, the OIG interviewed witnesses and reviewed documentary (including photographic and video) evidence regarding Chavez-DeRemer directing her subordinates to perform personal errands for her during official duty hours. Our conclusions drawn from this evidence are presented at the end of this subsection.

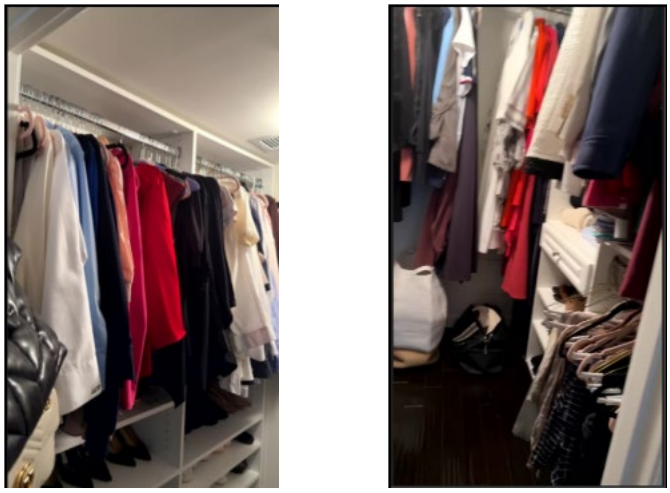
Investigation

Witness statements, photographic and video evidence, and text messages reviewed by the OIG established that Chavez-DeRemer repeatedly directed subordinate employees to perform personal tasks for her during official duty hour. Specific instances of Chavez-DeRemer issuing such directives include:

- Directing her Personal Aide and Executive Assistant to commute, using DOL motor-pool transportation, to her personal residence to organize her bedroom closet during the workday. Chavez-DeRemer authorized their access to her residence and directed them to hang her laundry and dry cleaning and organize her clothing, shoes, and purses. After completing the task, the employees provided Chavez-DeRemer a video documenting their work (see Figure 7).

- On October 29, 2025, during the 43-day government shutdown, directing a government employee to retrieve approximately eight personal packages from Chavez-DeRemer's residential mailroom and deliver them to her unit.
- Directing three OSEC employees to purchase personal items on Chavez-DeRemer's behalf, including picture frames, holiday ornaments, gifts, and alcohol using Chavez-DeRemer's personal funds. Directing an aide during official travel to purchase wine for her at her hotel. One employee stated that Chavez-DeRemer's directed personal purchases were not always reimbursed.
- Directing a Hispanic federal employee to translate during interactions with Spanish-speaking workers at her personal residence and additionally directed this employee to oversee movers at her residence and communicate Chavez-DeRemer's instructions to the moving crew.
- Providing that same Hispanic federal employee on a separate occasion with Chavez-DeRemer's personal house cleaner's contact information and directing the employee via text message to arrange for cleaning services at Chavez-DeRemer's personal residence before her husband arrived there.

Figure 7: Still Shots from the Video Chavez-DeRemer's Employee Provided to Chavez-DeRemer Showing that Her Clothing Had Been Organized



Applicable Standards

The Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch ("Ethical Standards") (codified at 5 C.F.R. Part 2635), apply to all executive branch agency employees, including the head of the agency. The Ethical Standards expressly prohibit misuse of a subordinate employee's time for anything other than official duties (Subpart G, § 2635.705(b)).

Specifically, employees may not encourage, direct, coerce, or request a subordinate to use official time to perform activities other than those required in the performance of official duties or authorized in accordance with law or regulation. Employees are also required to abide by general ethical principles in the Ethical Standards, including to

endeavoring to avoid any actions that would appear to a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to be a violation of law or ethical standards (see 5 C.F.R. § 2635.101(b)(14)).

Findings

We concluded, based on a preponderance of the witness testimony, text communications, and photographic and video evidence reviewed by the OIG that Chavez-DeRemer violated these Ethical Standards through her repeated directions to her subordinate employees to perform various personal tasks for her during official duty hours, including at her personal residence. These tasks were outside the scope of these employee's official duties and included having employees organize Chavez-DeRemer's personal belongings, retrieve her packages, make personal purchases for her, oversee her movers, and communicate with household service providers during official duty time.

4. Accepting Gifts Without Proper Ethics Reporting

The initial anonymous complaint included allegations that Chavez-DeRemer was accepting expensive gifts without reporting them to DOL ethics officials. While investigating this allegation, the OIG interviewed witnesses and reviewed documentary evidence (including travel and ethics records). Our conclusions drawn from this evidence are presented at the end of this subsection.

Investigation

The OIG reviewed travel records and contacted entities visited by Chavez-DeRemer to identify gifts given to her during official travel. As Director of Advance, Director 1 was responsible for transferring gifts received by or for Secretary Chavez-DeRemer to the Office of Executive Secretariat (OES) for processing. Witnesses reported that gifts Chavez-DeRemer received during travel were routinely provided to Director 1 or Wright for handling and that Director 1 did not consistently follow established gift-processing procedures.

The OIG's review of witness testimony and DOL records identified multiple gifts that were not documented in DOL gift-processing records, including, but not limited to:

- Tickets to attend a rodeo gifted from a lobbyist during travel to Las Vegas in December 2025 valued at a market rate of approximately $100 each.
- An alligator-hide wallet gifted from an alligator farm during travel to Springfield, Louisiana on August 14, 2025. The business gifting the wallet confirmed to the OIG the wallet was valued at approximately $200. Director 1 acknowledged receiving an alligator wallet on behalf of Chavez-DeRemer, which she gave to Wright.
- Two cowboy hats gifted to Chavez-DeRemer and her husband during an America First Policy Institute event in Palm Beach, Florida, on November 19–21, 2025, which two witnesses recalled Chavez-DeRemer taking her hat to her hotel room. The OIG was unable to verify the value nor the final disposition of each hat.

Director 1 admitted she received emails from SOL and OES directing her to deliver the gifts received on behalf of Chavez-DeRemer for official recording and disposition review. Director 1 also admitted she did not bring certain items forward for processing. She stated that she instead independently tracked gifts on her computer and had sought verbal guidance from SOL attorneys regarding disposition through her email communications. OIG identified no evidence that Director 1 corrected the known record deficiencies nor completed the required processing submitting the gifts to OES.

According to DOL records reviewed by the OIG, Chavez-DeRemer and Director 1 both completed DOL ethics training on April 7, 2025, and June 9, 2025, respectively.

Applicable Standards

DOL Ethics Policy regarding acceptance and reporting of gifts from non-federal sources aligns with the Ethical Standards for Executive Branch employees (5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.202–204), which prohibit employees from accepting gifts because of their government positions; or from prohibited sources, including persons or organizations: that do or seek business with DOL, that DOL regulates, or whose interests DOL employees may substantially affect through their official duties.

Departmental procedures require gifts received by, for, or on behalf of the Secretary of Labor to be recorded by the OES and referred to SOL for review and disposition. Federal Ethics Standards require all DOL employees receive annual ethics training that includes a section on applicable federal gift and reporting requirements.

Federal regulations permit employees to accept certain gifts, including non-cash gifts valued at $20 or less per occasion, with only up to $50 cumulatively per year from the same source. Other exceptions include gifts based on personal relationships, approved attendance at widely attended gatherings, and items of little intrinsic value (see 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.203–204). However, even when an exception to general prohibitions or limits applies, employees should decline a gift when the circumstances would cause a reasonable person to question their integrity or impartiality. 5 C.F.R. § 2635.201(b).

Findings

The OIG concluded, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that Chavez-DeRemer and Director 1 failed to comply with applicable DOL ethics policy governing requirements for accepting and documenting gifts. The OIG identified at least five gifts received by or for Chavez-DeRemer that did not appear in DOL's gift-tracking records, including a scarf, work boots, an alligator-hide wallet, baby gifts, and cowboy hats. Several of these gifts exceeded the $20 regulatory exception for gifts from a single source and Chavez-DeRemer had recently completed DOL ethics training explaining this policy prior to accepting these items.

The evidence also established that Director 1 did not consistently submit gifts for required ethics review and disposition. As Director of Advance, Director 1 was responsible for transferring gifts received by or for the Secretary to OES.

Notwithstanding this requirement, Director 1 acknowledged that she did not submit certain gifts through the required process, such as the wallet, which she transferred to Wright rather than OES. Director 1 also maintained her own personal gift-tracking system rather than consistently using the Department's officially established process. Moreover, despite SOL and OES instructing Director 1 to submit these gifts for official recording and disposition, the OIG found no evidence that she corrected these deficiencies. As of April 9, 2026, DOL's Correspondence Tracking System still did not include documentation for the specific gifts identified above.

CONCLUSIONS

OIG concluded that Chavez-DeRemer's conduct was inconsistent with applicable standards across six areas: she failed to comply with DOL policy prohibiting harassment in the workplace; developed and maintained an inappropriately close and unprofessional relationship with ASAIC 1 while he exercised supervisory and operational authority over her protective detail that was inconsistent with federal impartiality and preferential-treatment standards. 2635.101(b)(8) and (14); combined personal and official travel in a manner inconsistent with DOL policy and the Federal Travel Regulation, 41 C.F.R. Chapters 300-304; possessed and consumed alcohol on federal property without proper authorization required by DOL policy and Federal Property Management Regulations; directed government employees to perform personal tasks using official time and resources, inconsistent with 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.704 and 2635.705(b); and failed to report gifts through required channels, inconsistent with 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.202-204.

OIG concluded that Han's, Wright's, and Director 1's conduct was independently established across overlapping categories, including failure to comply with DOL policy prohibiting harassment in the workplace; on-duty alcohol possession without proper authorization required by DOL policy and Federal Property Management Regulations; improper combination of personal and official travel inconsistent with the Federal Travel Regulation (as to Wright and Director 1); misuse of government resources inconsistent with 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.704 and 2635.705(b), including Director 1's unauthorized rental-vehicle practices inconsistent with DOL policy and FTR 301-10.45; and failure to report gifts through required channels, inconsistent with 5 C.F.R. §§ 2635.202-204 (as to Director 1).

OIG concluded that ASAIC 1 developed and maintained an inappropriately close and unprofessional relationship with Chavez-DeRemer while he exercised supervisory and operational authority over her protective detail. ASAIC 1's actions violated DPO staffing, coordination, and protective-operation requirements through his repeated releasing or repositioning assigned agents, failure to communicate changes in protective coverage or the Secretary's location, and actions to assume sole responsibility for the Secretary under circumstances inconsistent with DPOs Standard Operating Procedures and 5 C.F.R. §2635.101(b)(8) and (b)(14). The OIG did not conclude that the direct evidence reviewed as part of this investigation was sufficient to establish that Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 engaged in a romantic or sexual relationship.

Chavez-DeRemer and ASAIC 1 resigned from federal service; Han, Wright, and Director 1 were terminated from federal service. These separations occurred between March and April 2026 (FY 2026, Q2–Q3). Accordingly, OIG will provide a copy of our report to the Acting Secretary for such action as he deems appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the deficiencies identified in this review and strengthen the accountability and internal controls governing the matters examined, the OIG recommends that DOL take the following actions:

1. Establish structural independence for the DPO.

   Remove DPO from the operational, supervisory, administrative and political influence of OSEC and place it under the authority of the Office of Inspector General, a neutral organization with a reporting line independent of OSEC and empowered with statutory law enforcement authority.

2. Establish independent and recurring oversight of official travel by DOL senior officials.

   Establish a recurring independent audit process for reviewing official travel by DOL senior executives and political appointees, including OSEC personnel and the OIG. Ensure that OIG has timely access to the records necessary to conduct periodic, risk-based audits or reviews at OIG's discretion, and that independent oversight is applied consistently across the Department.

   This audit function should include:

   a. A comparison of the Secretary’s and accompanying staff’s official schedule against submitted travel vouchers, to confirm that claimed official engagements correspond to documented, contemporaneous advance engagement materials;

   b. Verification that official travel is constrained to confirmed, scheduled events, supported by a documented official purpose and was necessary to accomplish the Department's mission, consistent with the Federal Travel Regulation, including 41 C.F.R. § 301-70.1 and other applicable provisions of 41 C.F.R. Chapters 300-304;

   c. Review of travel vouchers and lodging claims by an appropriately senior DOL compliance official, independent of OSEC, before reimbursement is issued; and

   d. Review of travel and voucher practices as close in time to the travel event as practicable, to allow discrepancies to be flagged and operational

practices corrected before a pattern develops, rather than identified only after the fact through a broader investigation.

3. Establish and enforce a Department-wide policy governing personal relationships between supervisors and subordinates.

   OIG did not identify a DOL policy specifically addressing personal or romantic relationships between supervisors and subordinates, apart from DOL's Anti-Harassment Policy and the government-wide Standards of Ethical Conduct, 5 C.F.R. Part 2635.

   a. **If no such policy exists:** the OIG recommends DOL's Office of the Solicitor and Human Resources Center develop one, modeled on comparable federal agency policies (e.g., 227 FW 8, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's policy on personal relationships between supervisors and subordinates), and ensure that all OSEC and DPO personnel receive training on it.

   b. **If a policy does exist**: the OIG recommends that DOL determine why it did not prevent or apply to the conduct described in this report and revise the policy, its implementation, or related training as necessary.

4. Mandate annual training for DOL senior leadership, managers, and staff on inappropriate workplace relationships and fraternization.

5. Strengthen whistleblower protections and controls over nondisclosure requirements.

   Review and, as necessary, revise DOL's Department-wide and component-level whistleblower and nondisclosure policies, forms, agreements, directives, memoranda, and practices to ensure compliance with 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(13), 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(8), 2302(b)(9), and 2302(c), as well as 5 U.S.C.§ 407(c).

   At a minimum, DOL should:

   a. **Ensure required language is included in nondisclosure instruments.** Confirm that every covered nondisclosure policy, form, or agreement contains the statement required by 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(13)(A) which preserves an employee's right to disclose information to Congress, an Inspector General, or another agency component responsible for internal investigation or review.

b. **Preserve protected reporting channels.** Ensure that no nondisclosure or confidentiality requirement prohibits or restricts an employee or applicant from lawfully communicating information concerning potential violations of law, rule, or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety to Congress, the Office of Special Counsel, an Inspector General, or another agency component responsible for internal investigation or review, as provided by 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(13)(B).

c. **Prohibit retaliation and interference with protected disclosures.** Ensure that Department policies expressly prohibit taking, failing to take, or threatening a personnel action because of a protected disclosure under 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(8), and prohibit retaliation for cooperating with or providing information to OIG, the Office of Special Counsel, or another component responsible for internal investigation or review, consistent with 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(9)(C) and 5 U.S.C. § 407(c).

d. **Review implementation, not merely written policy.** Determine whether any written or oral confidentiality instruction, management practice, or threatened consequence identified during this review could reasonably have been understood by employees as restricting lawful communications with the OIG, Congress, the Office of Special Counsel, or other authorized recipients, and take appropriate corrective action.

e. **Reinforce employee notice and management training.** Ensure that employees receive the whistleblower-rights information required by 5 U.S.C. § 2302(c) and provide recurring training to managers and supervisors concerning protected disclosures, prohibited personnel practices, nondisclosure restrictions, and employees' right to communicate with OIG and other authorized recipients.

Whistleblower Protection
U.S. Department of Labor

Whistleblower Protection safeguards DOL employees against retaliation for protected disclosures that expose possible fraud, waste, and abuse in Government programs. DOL employees or applicants for employment may file whistleblower retaliation complaints with the OIG Hotline, please visit the Whistleblower webpage at https://www.oig.dol.gov/hotline.htm or contact the Whistleblower Protection Coordinator at OIGWhistleblower@oig.dol.gov.

For more information about DOL OIG reports or activities, please contact:

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