



ACTION ALERT:

Speak out Against Taxpayer-Funded Political Ads

In a matter of days, the Trump Administration [has reportedly](#) spent nearly \$12 million in taxpayer funds on television ads promoting the President. One ad featured the President walking down a dark hallway, with his voice warning about the final battle, listing the “Deep State,” Marxists, warmongers, the fake news media, and globalists among those that need to be defeated. [This ad first appeared](#) in Trump’s 2024 campaign; the only difference now is that the campaign logo was [replaced](#) with the tagline: “Paid for by the U.S. Government.”

The other government-funded ads also contained language that [legal and ethics experts](#) have characterized as political propaganda. These ads are part of a [\\$20 million contract](#) with a private ad agency, using funds from [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#). The President is [reportedly selecting ads to run](#) in the critical final weeks before the midterm elections.

The White House responded to the widespread criticism that followed by trying to characterize the ads as “public service announcements.” When that justification failed to quell complaints, the President [announced](#) that he would stop using taxpayer funds for these ads and instead pay for them himself or with money from his MAGA Inc. Super PAC.

This announcement, however, simply complicates the many questions already raised. The [White House has said](#) that the federal government will not be reimbursed for the millions already spent on the ads. In addition, since Super PACs are required to operate independently of candidates and campaigns, questions remain about whether and how the President can direct a Super PAC's spending.

WHY THIS MATTERS

→ **The significant taxpayer funds already spent on these ads raise serious questions under federal law.** Federal law restricts the use of appropriated funds for unauthorized publicity or propaganda. Among other relevant provisions, Section 718 of Division E of the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026](#) states that: “No part of any appropriation contained in this or any other Act shall be used directly or indirectly, including by private contractor, for publicity or propaganda purposes within the United States not heretofore authorized by Congress.” (Page 323)

In addition, [the Hatch Act](#) prohibits covered federal employees from using their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election. [Complaints](#) have been filed with federal oversight agencies and [bipartisan members](#) of Congress have expressed concern about the legality of the spending.



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- **Calling political advertising a “public service announcement” does not make it one.** Political promotion should not be disguised as public service. Congress has long restricted the use of appropriated funds for unauthorized government publicity and propaganda, including communications that are purely partisan or self-aggrandizing. Those restrictions are intended to protect the public from the misuse of government resources for political purposes. Characterizing these political advertisements as “public service announcements” should not be a way to circumvent Congressional restrictions on the use of appropriated funds.
- **The switch to private funding through the President’s Super PAC does not resolve the questions surrounding these ads.** Super PACs are independent-expenditure-only political committees that may accept unlimited contributions to finance independent expenditures. However, under federal law including the Federal Election Commission [regulations](#), such expenditures cannot be coordinated with a candidate or campaign.

In addition, federal law restricts federal officeholders from directing funds in connection with federal elections unless those funds comply with contribution limits and other restrictions. The President’s [statement](#) that he will “pay for them [him]self and with money [he] raised for MAGA, Inc.” raises questions about whether and to what extent he can direct the Super PAC’s spending on these ads without violating federal campaign finance restrictions. [See, for example, [52 U.S.C. § 30125\(e\)](#)].

- **Broadcast and Cable Networks should not continue accepting and distributing these ads while legitimate questions about their legality remain unresolved.** They should pause their distribution until the legal questions have been addressed. Allowing a sitting President to use public funds to produce self-promoting political ads raises serious questions about compliance with federal law, diverts public resources from their intended purposes, and erodes safeguards that protect the integrity of government. Switching the entity that pays does not eliminate these concerns.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

This use of federal resources for political purposes warrants an immediate response. We should all speak out against it. Specific actions you can take include:

- **Contact Your Representatives in Congress:** Urge them to exercise Congressional oversight authority and seek a full accounting of the nearly \$12 million already spent on these ads. Ask Congress to determine who authorized the expenditures, whether the spending complied with federal law, whether taxpayers should be reimbursed, and what safeguards will prevent the misuse of appropriated funds for political purposes.



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- **Write to the Broadcast and Cable Networks:** When you see one of these ads, contact the network to express your concern. Ask the networks to disclose the legal and compliance standards they apply to advertisements funded with government or political committee money, and to explain how they distinguish legitimate government public-information advertising from political advertising. Consumer feedback addresses are generally available on network websites. For example, NBC Viewer Relations can be reached at nbcshows@nbcuni.com or 212-664-2333. Fox News can be reached via viewersfeedback@foxnews.com or through its Fox News Request Form.
- **Report your concerns to federal oversight agencies:** Report potential Hatch Act violations by filing a complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel through [OSC's online filing portal](#). Express your concerns to the FCC through its consumer complaint system by [clicking here](#). Submit a complaint to the GAO to report concerns about the use or misuse of federal funds via email at fraud@gao.gov or via phone at 800-424-5454.
- **Speak out on multiple platforms about the serious legal concerns raised by these ads:** Write articles and letters to the editor and post on social media. Reach out to local podcasters and radio shows. Use the Talking Points below as well as LDAD's social media messaging. For additional help, see our [Meeting the Moment Tips for Writing and Placing Letters to the Editor and Opinion Pieces](#).

**Thank you for taking action on behalf of American
democracy & the rule of law!**