

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 26, 2014

The Honorable Darrell E. Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Issa:

I write in response to your March 18, 2014 letter to White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough in which you inquire about the Office of Political Strategy and Outreach and compliance with the Hatch Act.

The White House is aware of its obligations under the Hatch Act, and the Office of Political Strategy and Outreach was created in compliance with those obligations. The Office of Special Counsel's (OSC's) 2011 report, which you reference in your letter, specifically recognized the need for and appropriateness of an office in the White House to provide the President with information about the current political environment and political issues at the national and state levels. Consistent with the OSC's analysis, the Office of Political Strategy and Outreach is responsible for gathering information from constituents and political groups for the purposes of planning and developing strategies to achieve the President's priorities. The office also helps coordinate requests from political committees and candidate campaigns for the President to attend political events or send communications on their behalf, requests that inherently must be coordinated with the White House.

Moreover, the White House Counsel's Office has issued guidance to White House staff on the rules governing political activity by employees and on the proper allocation of costs involving political activity. We provide Hatch Act training to new White House employees as well as periodic training for existing employees. The White House Counsel's Office is also in regular contact with the OSC, and we have obtained from OSC its latest guidance on Hatch Act compliance.

I trust that this addresses your interest in the new office. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,



Kathryn H. Ruemmler
Counsel to the President

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Minority Member

The Honorable Carolyn Lerner, Special Counsel
U.S. Office of Special Counsel