March 14, 2022

The Honorable Larry D. Turner
Inspector General
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Inspector General Turner:

On October 27, 2021, Secretary of Labor Martin J. Walsh joined members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union on the picket line during their strike activity at Kellogg’s Lancaster, Pennsylvania plant.¹ His participation clearly demonstrated a one-sided view of labor-management relations, harmed the integrity of his office, and called into question the neutrality of the Department of Labor (DOL) under his leadership. We request you conduct a review of the Secretary’s participation in this activity and his participation in additional labor-management disputes.

Secretary Walsh’s interest in participating in labor-management disputes did not end with the Kellogg’s strike and appears to be ongoing. A recent news story highlighted Secretary Walsh’s active participation in a dispute involving striking nurses and his interest in other potential areas of activity, including the West Coast ports.² Additionally, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler has suggested Secretary Walsh has worked “behind the scenes” on labor disputes.³ It is critical that Secretary Walsh’s involvement in labor disputes is transparent and adheres to his obligations under federal ethics laws.

³ Id.
We have previously written to Secretary Walsh seeking information and documents regarding whether he followed ethics advice from DOL’s Office of Legal Counsel prior to participating in the Kellogg’s strike. However, these requests for information have been ignored. We therefore ask you to investigate the propriety of Secretary Walsh’s participation in the Kellogg’s strike and whether DOL performed its proper due diligence in scheduling his appearance at that event. We also request that you investigate Secretary Walsh’s participation in the negotiations between the Massachusetts Nurses’ Association and Tenet Healthcare. Additionally, as Secretary Walsh has expressed interest in participating in other labor-management disputes, we request that you continue to monitor his adherence to ethics laws.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member

Rick W. Allen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions

Cc: Secretary of Labor Martin J. Walsh

---


5 See Nick Niedziadek & Eleanor Mueller, supra note 2.