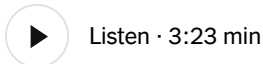


Labor Secretary Faces Civil Rights Complaints From Department Staff

Three employees described a hostile work environment under Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer.



By **Rebecca Davis O'Brien**

April 9, 2026

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Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer is the subject of three civil rights complaints inside her agency, people familiar with the filings said, adding to the pressures on an embattled member of President Trump's cabinet.

The complaints were filed in recent weeks by three women who have worked at the top of the Labor Department, including in the secretary's executive office. They contain a range of allegations and, taken together, describe a hostile work environment under Ms. Chavez-DeRemer, including claims of sexual harassment by her husband, retaliation for taking part in an official investigation and abuse of official resources.

Separately, all three of the women have been interviewed by the department's inspector general's office as part of a wide-ranging fraud and misconduct investigation into Ms. Chavez-DeRemer and her top aides. The investigation is in its final weeks, people briefed on the matter said.

A lawyer representing Ms. Chavez-DeRemer in the inspector general's investigation did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The White House has been briefed about the complaints, a person familiar with the matter said. A spokeswoman for the Labor Department did not immediately provide a comment.

The complaints were filed with the department's Civil Rights Center, which handles internal equal employment opportunity cases. The complaints can be resolved through mediation or a federal lawsuit; they may also involve a financial settlement, which would come from the department budget.

Two of the complaints were described by people directly involved in their filing. The third was described broadly by people who have been briefed on its existence.

One of the complaints, filed last month, said Ms. Chavez-DeRemer had asked executive staff to perform private errands, including picking up dry cleaning and cleaning out the closet in the secretary's apartment.

The complaint described a hostile work environment, saying Ms. Chavez-DeRemer and her top two aides — the former chief of staff, Jihun Han, and former deputy chief of staff, Rebecca Wright — used threats to ensure compliance with inappropriate requests and behavior.

The complaint said the secretary also asked executive staff to run errands for her husband, Dr. Shawn DeRemer.

Dr. DeRemer, an anesthesiologist, was barred from department headquarters after female employees told the inspector general's investigators that he had made unwanted sexual advances toward them. In January, one of the women filed a report with the District of Columbia's Police Department, which opened a sexual assault investigation. The police and prosecutors said they would not bring charges against him in the matter.

Mr. Han and Ms. Wright were placed on administrative leave in January and forced out of their jobs in March. Since then, a member of Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's security detail — with whom she was accused of having an affair — has also left the department, and Ms. Chavez DeRemer's director of advance, Melissa Robey, was fired after sitting for an interview with the inspector general's office.

Ms. Robey said through a representative that she had been wrongfully fired and accused the department of “an internal plan to embarrass and defame me in a failed effort to force me to resign.”

A correction was made on April 9, 2026: An earlier version of this article misstated the circumstances of Melissa Robey's departure from the Labor Department. She was fired, not forced to resign.

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Rebecca Davis O'Brien covers labor and the work force for The Times.

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