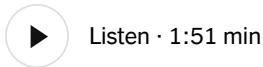


Top Aide to Labor Secretary Is Placed on Leave

Several of Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer's employees are under investigation for official misconduct under her leadership.



By **Rebecca Davis O'Brien**

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A top aide to Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer was placed on administrative leave on Wednesday, people familiar with the matter said, the latest employee to draw scrutiny amid an internal investigation into claims of official misconduct in the department.

Melissa Robey, Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's director of advance, is on leave while the department's inspector general reviews evidence and testimony that she, the secretary and others in her office may have committed travel fraud by arranging official trips for the secretary to cover for personal excursions, the people said.

A spokeswoman for the department did not respond to a request for comment.

Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's former chief of staff, Jihun Han, and deputy chief of staff, Rebecca Wright, were forced out earlier this week. Mr. Han and Ms. Wright, who came to the department after working with Ms. Chavez-DeRemer while she was a member of the House of Representatives, had been named in a whistle-blower complaint alleging a range of misconduct by the secretary and her close aides.

A member of Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's security detail, with whom she has been accused of having an affair, was also placed on leave pending the investigation. Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's husband is barred from the department's headquarters in

Washington after he was accused of making unwanted physical advances on staff members. Prosecutors and the Metropolitan Police Department have said they will not bring charges and have closed the criminal investigation.

Politico reported earlier this week that Ms. Robey, who has been in the secretary's office for a year, had taken on a more prominent role in Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's office in recent weeks, with Mr. Han and Ms. Wright on leave.

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