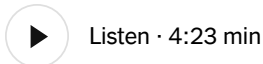


# *Labor Dept. Investigates Texts Among Secretary's Family and Staff*

Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer asked staff members to bring wine to her hotel room, and to keep in touch with her husband and father.



By **Rebecca Davis O'Brien**

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Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer and her top aides and family members routinely sent personal messages and requests to young staff members that are now under review by the department's inspector general.

Ms. Chavez-DeRemer and her former deputy chief of staff sent texts asking employees to bring wine to them during trips for the department. Sometimes the requests came in the middle of the workday.

Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's husband exchanged text messages with young female staff members, as did her father. Some of the young women were instructed by Ms. Chavez-DeRemer and the former deputy chief of staff to "pay attention" to the men, according to people familiar with the investigation.

The text messages have been reviewed by The New York Times.

The messages were gathered as part of a monthslong investigation into Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's leadership of the department, which began with a complaint filed to the inspector general's office claiming widespread misconduct. The inquiry has revealed deep frustration in the department with Ms. Chavez-DeRemer, who took office in March 2025. Staff members across the political spectrum have described her as disconnected from the work of the department.

The internal investigation is in its final stages. Four people have been forced out of their jobs, including Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's former chief of staff and deputy chief of staff, her director of advance and a member of the secretary's security detail with whom she was accused of having an affair. Three staff members have filed civil rights complaints against her and the department, describing a hostile work environment.

In an April 2025 exchange provided to investigators, Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's father, Richard Chavez, wrote to a young female staff member: "Hearing u/r in town. Wishing you would let me know. I could have made some excuses to get out and show u around. Please keep this private."

The staff member responded: "Will do, no need to worry!" She apologized for not reaching out, and said she would be back in Oregon soon. Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's family is based in Oregon, and she served one term in the House for the state's Fifth Congressional District.

"When are u leaving an where u staying," he responded.

Mr. Chavez has not been accused of wrongdoing. Representatives for Ms. Chavez-DeRemer and her husband did not immediately provide comment.

A few weeks later, the same staff member messaged Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's husband, Dr. Shawn DeRemer, and apologized for not being in touch. "I've been having so much fun traveling with LCD and being in the moment for everything!! I promise from now on I'll check in."

He responded: "You better. I was feeling forgotten. I figured you were still in church repenting after your exposure to the demon state of Oregon."

Dr. DeRemer, an anesthesiologist, was barred from the department headquarters this year after several women told the inspector general's investigators that he was making unwanted advances at them. One of the women filed a report with Washington's Metropolitan Police Department, which opened a sexual assault investigation. The department and the federal prosecutor's office later said they would not bring charges in the matter.

The original complaint to the inspector general accused Ms. Chavez-DeRemer and her aides of drinking on the job and keeping a stash of liquor at the office, according to The New York Post, which first reported the complaint in January.

In one text message, Ms. Chavez-DeRemer asked a staff member to bring rosé to her hotel room.

"Do they sell by the bottle," she asked. The staff member responded that they did, but were out of rosé. Ms. Chavez-DeRemer responded with another selection: "How about the josh sauvi B."

The messages are undated, but a picture of the menu in the text message exchange suggests it is from a hotel bar in Myrtle Beach, S.C., where Ms. Chavez-DeRemer went on an official visit last July.

Just before 3 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 5, Ms. Chavez-DeRemer's deputy chief of staff at the time, Rebecca Wright, told one of the women to pick up "a bottle or 2" of wine or champagne.

"Lori wants to do a toast when this meeting is over," Ms. Wright said.

Kirsten Noyes contributed research.

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