



Another Day, Another Blunder: Psaki to 'Choose Words More Carefully' After Ethics Watchdog Complaint

Description

USA: Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), an ethics watchdog, slammed Jen Psaki's comments from the White House podium as appearing to violate the Hatch Act, which forbids officials from using their "official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election".

White House press secretary Jen Psaki, who is no stranger to verbal faux pas while in an official capacity, has promised to "choose my words more carefully". The contrite response was prompted by a Friday complaint from Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW). The non-profit claimed she had violated the 1939 Hatch Act.

https://twitter.com/MatthewFoldi/status/1448746178020057089?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etwtr%5Etweet&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etwtr%5Etweet
day-another-blunder-psaki-to-choose-words-more-carefully-after-ethics-watchdog-complaint-1089965057.html

The Act to Prevent Pernicious Political Activities is a United States federal law that prohibits civil service employees in the executive branch of the federal government, except the president and vice president, from engaging in some forms of political activity.

The nonpartisan US government ethics and accountability watchdog urged the Office of Special Counsel to investigate Psaki for comments made from the White House podium on Thursday.

Psaki was responding to a question about the Virginia gubernatorial race and attempted to play safe at the start, acknowledging she needed "to be a little careful about how much political analysis I do"

But the former State Department spokeswoman under ex-President Barack Obama then proceeded to do exactly the opposite as she blurted out:

“Look, I think the president, of course, wants former Governor McAuliffe to be the future governor of Virginia. There is alignment on a lot of their agenda, whether it is the need to invest in rebuilding our roads, rails, and bridges, or making it easier for women to rejoin the workforce.”

Psaki added:

“We’re going to do everything we can to help former Governor McAuliffe, and we believe in the agenda he’s representing.”

CREW underscored that there was “no question” Psaki was speaking in her official capacity when she weighed in on the tight race for governor among Virginia Democrat Terry McAuliffe, attempting a comeback, and Republican Glenn Youngkin.

“By mixing official government business with support of a candidate for partisan political office in the weeks before the election and engaging in political activity while on duty, Ms. Psaki appears to have used her official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election, political activity that is prohibited by law,” stated CREW in the complaint.

In response, Psaki, who during her tenure as spokesperson for the US State Department became something of a meme-generator due to her perceived geopolitical gaffes during press briefings, was cited by Fox News as saying:

“While the president has publicly expressed his support for McAuliffe, we’ll leave it to the press and the campaign to provide commentary on the race. I take ethics very seriously and will choose my words more carefully moving forward.”

U.S. President Joe Biden participates in a campaign event for Virginia gubernatorial candidate Terry McA

U.S. President Joe Biden participates in a campaign event for Virginia gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe at Lubber Run Park in Arlington, Virginia, U.S., July 23, 2021

© REUTERS / EVELYN HOCKSTEIN

President Joe Biden campaigned for McAuliffe in July, while First Lady Jill Biden hit the campaign trail on Friday, saying, "Virginia needs someone who will work toward progress, not refight the battles of our past," and praising McAuliffe's track record as governor from 2013 to 2017.

The latest CBS News [polling](#) released this week shows McAuliffe leading Youngkin by just three points, feeding into democrats' concerns ahead of the midterms.

Date Created

10/17/2021