



CITIZENS FOR
RESPONSIBILITY &
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

February 3, 2026

The Hon. Joseph V. Cuffari Ph.D.
Office of Inspector General/MAIL STOP 0305
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, DC 20528-0305

Re: Request for Investigation into Sale of Trump Branded Products by the Coast Guard Exchange System Due to Possible Violations of the Domestic Emoluments Clause

Dear Inspector General Cuffari,

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (“CREW”) respectfully requests that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General (“DHS OIG”) investigate whether the Coast Guard Exchange System (“CGES”) unlawfully procured and sold Trump-branded wine and cider in violation of the Constitution's Domestic Emoluments Clause.¹

To determine the full extent of any unlawful benefit conferred to the president and his family, CREW requests that the DHS OIG investigate and account for all transactions that resulted from these procurements and sales across the CGES or any other DHS programs or facilities that procure goods or services for sale to federal employees.

CREW's request comes in response to recent news reports that indicate at least two CGES stores procured Trump-branded wine and cider and made them available for sale to DHS employees. It remains unclear for how long and in what volume these CGES stores procured Trump-branded wine and cider, how many of these products were sold and whether other military exchanges or DHS facilities also sell Trump-branded products. An investigation by your office would uncover whether and to what extent President Trump benefited from these procurements and sales in potential violation of the Constitution's Domestic Emoluments Clause.

¹ Zach Everson, *Trump Wine Hits Government Shelves*, Forbes (Nov. 7, 2025), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/zacheverson/2025/11/06/trump-wine-coast-guard-exchanges-stores-federal-property-government/>.

I. Background: CGES stores in Washington, D.C. and Virginia procured and offered for sale Trump-branded wine and cider to federal employees.

According to recent reporting, CGES stores at the Coast Guard's headquarters in Washington, D.C. and in Centreville, Virginia recently stocked and sold Trump-branded wine and cider for sale to federal employees.² DHS Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Tricia McLaughlin reportedly confirmed their availability, telling *Forbes*, "The brave men and women of the USCG are pleased to be able to buy Trump wine and cider tax free."³ The White House, the Coast Guard and the Trump Organization have declined to provide additional information on the sale of Trump-branded products at CGES stores.⁴

According to President Trump's latest financial disclosures, the Donald J. Trump Revocable Trust owns 100% of the winery's land and an LLC holding wine-related trademarks.⁵ President Trump is the sole donor and beneficiary of the trust, while his son Donald Trump Jr. serves as the trustee.⁶ Revenues generated by businesses administered by the trust may result in Trump personally earning income during his term.⁷

II. The Domestic Emoluments Clause prohibits a president from receiving profits from the federal government beyond their congressionally-established salary and benefits.

The Domestic Emoluments Clause prevents a president from receiving any profits, gains or advantages from the federal government, or from the individual states, outside of the president's government salary and benefits established by Congress.⁸ It is an outright ban, reflecting the Framers' particular concern that the nation's chief executive remains free from distorting and corrupting influences that might hinder their ability to faithfully execute their office. Congress cannot authorize a president's receipt of a domestic emolument.

² See *id.*; see also Joe Sommerlad, *Military members offered Trump wine as First Family's latest cash grab hits shelves*, *The Independent* (Nov. 7, 2025), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-wine-cider-coast-guard-exchanges-b2860989.html>.

³ Everson, *supra* note 1.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report, OGE Form 278e (June 6, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/President-Donald-J.-Trump.pdf>.

⁶ Everson, *supra* note 1.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ U.S. Const. Art. II, Sec. 1, Cl. 7; *The Federalist* No. 73 ("The legislature . . . is once for all to declare what shall be the compensation for his services during the time for which he shall have been elected . . . Neither the Union, nor any of its members, will be at liberty to give, nor will he be at liberty to receive, any other emolument than that which may have been determined by the first act. He can, of course, have no pecuniary inducement to renounce or desert the independence intended for him by the Constitution.").

III. Potential violations

Any profit, gain or advantage earned by President Trump or his businesses from the procurement and sale of Trump-branded wine and cider at CGES stores would violate the Constitution's Domestic Emoluments Clause. The clause is drafted broadly because the framers of our Constitution were concerned about the many ways a president's loyalty could be compromised by their personal financial interest.

IV. Areas for investigation

Based on information uncovered by the news reports above, CREW requests that the DHS OIG use its authority to investigate potential violations of the Domestic Emoluments Clause that resulted from the sale of Trump-branded beverages by DHS, CGES and their agents or contractors, and investigate the roles of DHS officials in facilitating these potential violations. The requested investigation will shed light on the nature of the sales and to what extent President Trump, the Donald J. Trump Revocable Trust, Trump Winery or any other Trump-related business benefited from these sales.

Areas for investigation include:

1. The process by which Trump-branded wine and cider came to be procured and sold by CGES stores in Washington, D.C. and Centerville, Virginia.
2. Whether there is an internal protocol within DHS, the Coast Guard, or CGES that considers potential emolument violations related to the procurement or sale of goods or services from a President of the United States, including President Trump or his businesses.
3. How Trump-branded wine and cider was approved for procurement and sale by CGES.
4. How much revenue was generated from the sale of Trump-branded wine and cider by CGES.
5. The cost to CGES and the source of procuring Trump-branded wine and cider. If President Trump, the Donald J. Trump Revocable Trust, Trump Winery, or any other Trump-related business did not receive revenue from the sale, then what other intermediary or merchandiser benefitted from the sale of Trump-branded wine and cider, and how much revenue was generated.

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V. Conclusion

DHS OIG must investigate the procurement and sale of Trump-branded products by CGES. These transactions may constitute violations of the Constitution's Domestic Emoluments Clause, which was designed to insulate a sitting president from financial conflicts of interest. CREW greatly appreciates your prompt attention to this urgent matter of national importance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Sherman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Donald Sherman
President and Chief Executive Officer