

Former Trump HUD official fined, barred from government employment



BY KATY O'DONNELL | 04/06/2021 12:29 PM EDT



Former Trump administration HUD official Lynne Patton speaks to residents of the Queensbridge Houses on March 7, 2019, in New York. | Kathy Willens/AP Photo

A federal watchdog on Tuesday said it fined former Trump housing official Lynne Patton \$1,000 and barred her from federal employment for four years after she violated a law prohibiting executive branch employees from engaging in political activities while on duty.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel [penalized Patton](#), who served as Housing and Urban Development regional administrator for New York and New Jersey, over a video she produced with New York City Housing Authority residents to air at the 2020 Republican National Convention.

The office investigated whether the political project violated the Hatch Act following a complaint filed by the group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington.

Patton had been the vice president of the Eric Trump Foundation and reportedly planned Eric Trump's wedding before her appointment to a top post at HUD, where she regularly drew criticism for making political statements on the job.

She had tangled with Hatch Act complaints before. The same [Office of Special Counsel reprimanded her in 2019](#) for using her official government Twitter account to promote political tweets and displaying a red "USA" hat sold by the Trump campaign in her office.

Earlier in 2019 she had [posted to Facebook](#) that she "honestly [didn't] care anymore" whether she was violating the Hatch Act with her tweets.

Noah Bookbinder, president of the ethics group that brought the complaint, called the employment ban "gratifying."

"Even in an administration marked by a callous disregard for ethics laws, Lynne Patton stood out," Bookbinder said in an emailed statement Tuesday. "What made her behavior particularly egregious was that she not only used her position for political purposes, she misled and exploited public housing residents for political gain, showing little regard for the people she was supposed to be helping and the ethics rules she was supposed to be following."

Patton did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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