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## COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

March 29, 2017

ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the Chairwoman and Ranking Member of the House Armed Service Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, we are writing to urge that you nominate a full slate of capable, independent individuals to fill the existing vacancies at the Department of Defense's Office of the Inspector General (DOD IG) and at the Office of Special Counsel (OSC). Offices such as DOD IG and OSC perform a crucial function, conducting oversight and helping to ensure that the American people know about and have a means to address instances of waste, fraud, and abuse in their government.

The benefits to governance are substantial, as are the concrete savings for taxpayers. In 2015, the Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs) across the government identified an estimated \$14 in savings for every dollar invested in OIGs, which would add up to a total of \$36.6 billion in savings during Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 alone.

We understand that you have recently withdrawn several nominations for these positions. We strongly encourage you to expeditiously put forth new nominees and move them through the confirmation process so that these offices can fully exercise their statutory duty to be effective and independent watchdogs. The acting officials currently in place, due to the nature of their temporary status, have less leeway to pursue investigations to their fullest extent. They do not have the ability to set long-term strategic plans, including investigative and audit priorities, for their offices. For these reasons, the notably high rate of Inspectors General (IGs) vacancies throughout the government is alarming and should be remedied as soon as possible. Because

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<sup>1</sup> Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, *Progress Report to President Fiscal Year 2015*.

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OSC provides an important backstop to ensure the independence of all IGs, including DOD IG, it is essential that OSC vacancies be filled as well.

We also urge you to take steps to ensure your nominees are highly competent and independent. IGs are to be appointed “without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in accounting, auditing, financial analysis, law, management analysis, public administration, or investigations.”<sup>2</sup> These skills are important because, by statute, the OIGs are required to “keep Congress fully and currently informed ... concerning fraud and other serious problems, abuses, and deficiencies” in their related programs, and “to recommend corrective action concerning such problems, abuses, and deficiencies, and to report on the progress made in implementing such corrective action.”<sup>3</sup> The Federal Government’s Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) is tasked with maintaining standards, policies, and practices for IGs, and it can also serve as an effective vetting organization for potential nominees. By coordinating with CIGIE and working closely with Congress to determine who you nominate, you should be able to identify a number of capable nominees who are trained to the proper standards and possess qualities necessary to perform this job.

Once in place, we urge you to give the fullest respect to their statutory independence and ensure that they have full access to Department of Defense (DOD) information as required by law. Congress recently passed the IG Empowerment Act to clarify that “all means all” when it comes to interpreting the statutory right of IGs to access “all” information in their respective agencies. Furthermore, as you develop the DOD’s budget request for FY 2018, we urge you to request full funding for the DOD OIG so that they are able to do their work.

Independent oversight of DOD’s activities is essential if we want to maintain a government of, by, and for the people. We encourage you to name qualified appointees so that we can accomplish that goal.

Sincerely,



Vicky Hartzler  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and  
Investigations



Seth Moulton  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and  
Investigations

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<sup>2</sup> Inspector General Act of 1978 Section 3(a).

<sup>3</sup> Inspector General Act of 1978 Section 4(a)(5).