

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-3641
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February 19, 2025

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gary Palmer
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Guthrie and Palmer:

We write today to demand that the full Committee on Energy and Commerce or the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations immediately hold a hearing to investigate the attempted termination of Inspectors General on January 24, 2025, by President Trump.¹ To date, the Trump Administration has attempted to remove at least 19 Inspectors General from their posts, including from our jurisdiction, the Inspectors General from the Departments of Energy (DOE), Health and Human Services, and Commerce (HHS), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Purging government watchdogs without notice to Congress is a violation of the law and is an alarming attack on the transparency and accountability of federal agencies under the Trump Administration.

The Committee should be outraged by these brazenly unlawful actions jeopardizing the effective and efficient execution of our federal laws and programs across agencies. As Chair Guthrie has recognized, Inspectors General play critical roles in our government by providing

¹ At least eight of the affected Inspectors General have since filed suit, properly alleging that their terminations were ineffective because the President did not follow the law. *See* Plaintiffs Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief (Feb. 12, 2025), *Storch v. Hegseth*, D.D.C. (No. 1:25 CV 00415).

independent and objective oversight of our federal agencies.² They are empowered by law to identify any waste, fraud, or abuse, ensuring through their audits, investigations, and inspections that our federal tax dollars are spent in accordance with Congressional intent. In Fiscal Year 2023 alone, it was estimated that the work of Inspectors General saved the government \$100 billion.³

The Committee and all its subcommittees regularly rely on Inspectors General to conduct effective oversight work and to better understand where reform might be needed. Inspectors General often testify at our hearings and issue valuable reports with their findings and recommendations that routinely form the basis for congressional action.

Committee Republicans are engaging in a tremendous amount of lip-service about the need to ensure spending accountability through audits and oversight⁴ when they have been silent about the fact that the very individuals tasked with doing that work were illegally removed from office. House Republicans have also been silent about Elon Musk and his minions instituting layoffs and funding freezes government-wide without any regard for whether the chaos they are creating is actually addressing waste, fraud, and abuse. By scheduling a hearing next week with the Offices of Inspector General for both the DOE and EPA without first investigating the illegal purges of the actual Inspectors General, Republicans show that they are more interested in playing politics than protecting taxpayer dollars.

Our Members deserve an opportunity to question why the Trump Administration has attempted to eliminate these Inspectors General and whether and to what extent internal agency oversight will continue in this Administration. We deserve to know how the transparency and accountability that Inspectors General offer will be afforded to our Members and to the public. We should hear immediately from the Inspectors General within our jurisdiction who were illegally terminated from their Congressionally-approved positions; a representative from the Council on Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency; and a representative from the Trump Administration to justify why this attempt to terminate Inspectors General was made, why the law was not followed, and whether and how the Administration intends to remedy its failure to follow the law.

² Letter from Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chair, Energy and Commerce Committee, Rep. Morgan Griffith, Chair, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Rep. Guthrie, Chair, Subcommittee on Health to Christi Grimm, Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services (Oct. 18, 2024).

³ Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, *Annual Report to the President and Congress Fiscal Year 2023* (March 2024).

⁴ See, e.g., E&E News, *GOP Plans Hearings Soon on Biden Climate, Energy Spending* (Jan. 7, 2025) (<https://www.eenews.net/articles/gop-plans-hearings-soon-on-biden-climate-energy-spending/>).

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Political interference in the proper functioning of federal agency oversight cannot be tolerated. At a minimum, a hearing before our Committee is urgently needed to explore these important concerns.

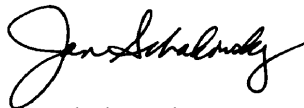
Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member



Diana DeGette
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health



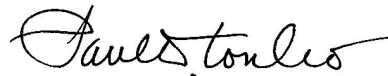
Jan Schakowsky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing,
and Trade



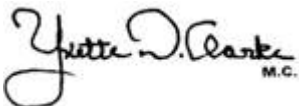
Doris Matsui
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications and
Technology



Kathy Castor
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy



Paul D. Tonko
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment



Yvette D. Clarke
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations