

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

Majority (202) 225-5051
Minority (202) 225-5074

June 16, 2009

The Honorable Gregory Craig
Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Craig:

I am writing regarding the President's removal of Gerald Walpin from the office of Inspector General of the Corporation for National and Community Service. I have reviewed the letter from the President to the Speaker of the House notifying Congress of the removal on June 11, 2009, along with the letter from the Ranking Member of the Committee to you dated June 15, 2009 expressing concerns about the removal.

Ensuring the independence and accountability of Inspectors General is a priority for this Committee and the Congress. Last year, I worked extensively on the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008, which clarified the procedures through which the President may remove an Inspector General. Section 3 of that measure was the result of extensive negotiation. It required that the President provide 30 days notice to Congress before removing an Inspector General from office. However, the bill also expressly permitted the President to suspend an Inspector General from duty during that 30 day period. Therefore, I do not agree with the Ranking Member that the President's actions in this case are inconsistent with the law that was enacted last year.

Nonetheless, I believe a more thorough explanation for this Inspector General's removal is necessary for Congress to exercise its oversight responsibilities over Inspectors General, who by statute report to both the President and the Congress. Regrettably, the lack of information has prompted uninformed speculation in the media and by Members of Congress. Your office has offered to brief the Committee, and I

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believe such a briefing would be productive. Although I understand your office's desire to avoid an unnecessary invasion of the Inspector General's privacy regarding a personnel matter, an important stated goal of last year's reform legislation is that Inspectors General must be held accountable for their actions in office. Therefore, I believe disclosure of the investigations of Mr. Walpin's conduct that prompted his removal is necessary in the interests of transparency and accountability. Accordingly, I request that your office arrange a briefing for the Committee on these investigations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edolphus Towns". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "T".

Edolphus Towns
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Darrell Issa
Ranking Minority Member