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Chairman Towns and Subcommittee Chairman Lynch Open Investigation Into Alleged Misconduct by the Office of Management and Budget

OPM IG reports threats by OMB that may violate the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008

WASHINGTON – Chairman Edolphus "Ed" Towns (D-NY) and Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia Subcommittee Chairman Stephen Lynch today announced that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform opened an investigation into a potential violation of the Inspector General (IG) Reform Act of 2008. Earlier today Chairman Towns and Subcommittee Chairman Lynch received information that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) may have taken actions to undermine the budgetary independence that Congress provided to Inspectors General in the IG Reform Act of 2008.

In a letter from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) IG Patrick McFarland, he writes, "I am alerting you about a very serious matter that represents an attempt to thwart an authority provided to us by the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 and that creates a risk of compromising our operational independence."

At issue is a section in the IG Act regarding budgets for Inspectors General. The provision provides that "any comments of [an] affected Inspector General" shall be included in the budget of the United States Government submitted to Congress if the Inspector General concludes that the budget would "substantially inhibit" him from performing his duties.

IG McFarland alleges that OPM received a "not so veiled threat from OMB" that if the IG exercised its statutory authority to advise Congress that the proposed budget was inadequate, OMB "will make life miserable" for the OPM IG.

Both Chairman Towns and Subcommittee Chairman Lynch are strong supporters of the IG Reform Act of 2008, and the independence and authority of Inspectors General. Therefore, they are committed to thoroughly investigating this alleged incident. Today, they sent letters to OMB Director Peter Orszag and Phyllis K. Fong, the chairwoman of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), requesting immediate action to help the Committee in its investigation.

In a letter to OMB Director Orszag, he is asked to conduct an internal review of the allegations involving OPM. The Committee is also reviewing whether the allegations at OPM are isolated or part of a larger pattern. Therefore, Towns and Lynch asked Chairwoman Fong to

survey CIGIE members to determine whether any similar threats have been communicated to them, and report the results of the survey to the Committee. Both letters ask for reports no later than January 22, 2010.

"If such statements were made they were entirely improper and pose a direct threat to the independence and integrity of Inspectors General, and an affront to clear Congressional intent as expressed in statute," said Towns and Lynch.

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Related Documents

[Letter from Chairman Towns and Subcommittee Chairman Lynch to OMB Director Orzag](#)

[Letter from Chairman Towns and Subcommittee Chairman Lynch to Chairwoman Fong](#)

[Letter from OPM Inspector General Patrick McFarland to Subcommittee Chairman Lynch](#)