

Bill Introduction:

Protect Our Watchdogs Act

Defend the Independent, Nonpartisan Inspectors General

Why Is This Necessary?

- Inspectors general (IGs) play a critical role in independently and objectively holding federal agencies accountable by rooting out fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in government operations.
- The **Protect Our Watchdogs Act**, led by Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, would require that any attempt to terminate an inspector general (IG) must be done “for cause”—for instance, due to a neglect of duty, malfeasance, or gross management.
- Late in the evening on January 24, 2025, President Trump attempted to fire 17 IGs across 18 agencies by sending them a Friday night email stating they were “terminated, effective immediately [...] due to changing priorities.”[1]
- The Inspector General Act of 1978, amended in 2022 with broad bipartisan support, requires the President to notify Congress 30 days prior to removal of an IG and to provide a “substantive rationale, including detailed and case-specific reasons” for such removal.
- The emails sent to the IGs attempting to terminate them immediately failed to provide the required notice or a legitimate rationale for termination, as required by law.[2]
- To date, 18 IGs across 19 agencies have been terminated by President Trump and another 11 presidentially appointed IG positions are vacant.
- The **Protect Our Watchdogs Act** would serve as a formal rebuke by Congress against President Trump’s contempt for lawful protections of IGs, and would further guard independent IGs against political interference and intimidation.

[1] Letter from Hannibal “Mike” Ware, Chairperson, Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, to Sergio Gor, Director of Presidential Personnel, The White House (Jan. 24, 2025).

[2] 5 U.S.C. 403(b) as amended by the section 5202(a) of the Securing Inspector General Independence Act of 2022 (Title LII, Subtitle A, of P.L. 117-263, 136 Stat. 2395, 3222).