

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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Opening Statement Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings

Hearing on "Top Management and Performance Challenges Identified Government-wide by the Inspector General Community"

April 18, 2018

I want to start by congratulating the Inspector General community on the 40th anniversary of the Inspector General Act and the 10-year anniversary of establishing the Council on Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE).

In 2008, we here on the Oversight Committee passed the Inspector General Reform Act, which was sponsored by Oversight Committee Member Jim Cooper, to establish CIGIE.

One of our witnesses today, Michael Horowitz, serves as Chair of CIGIE and has overseen significant changes aimed at making IGs and the federal government more accountable and transparent.

One example is the report CIGIE released this morning. For the first time, this report provides a comprehensive review of the top challenges currently being faced by federal agencies.

This report exemplifies CIGIE's critical mission of examining systemic issues across the federal government.

I know my Republican colleagues want to talk about former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe. And that's fine.

But we are now into Year Two of the Trump Administration, and at some point this Committee will have to start conducting serious, credible oversight of the Trump Administration.

For example, CIGIE released a report today finding that one of the most serious issues facing IGs is a culture at agencies that negatively impacts their missions.

The CIGIE report includes information from 61 different reports issued by IGs in 2017, the first year of the Trump Administration.

CIGIE reported:

“Many OIGs reported that their agencies faced challenges related to their agency’s culture, including ethical lapses, lack of accountability, lack of fiscal responsibility, lack of transparency and communication, resistance to change, and low morale.”

The IG for the Department of the Interior reported:

“DOI continues to face challenges in holding its employees, including senior officials, to the highest standards of ethical conduct ensuring that the consequences of wrongdoing are clearly understood, taking decisive actions to address unacceptable behavior, and providing relevant ethics training to all employees.”

These findings are deeply troubling, and they warrant rigorous and sustained oversight from this Committee.

Unfortunately, our Republicans have blocked every single request we have made to issue a subpoena during the Trump Administration—more than 30 in all. For example:

- Republicans blocked us from considering a subpoena to the Agriculture Department for documents relating to a Senior Advisor to the Secretary’s communications with corporate lobbyists.
- They blocked us from debating and voting on a subpoena for documents relating to allegations of sexual assault and harassment by Customs and Border Patrol employees.
- They blocked us from considering subpoenas for documents and testimony related to Senior Advisor to the President Jared Kushner’s alleged conflicts of interest and security clearance issues.

During the entire Trump Administration, this Committee has not issued a single subpoena—not one—to any federal agency or federal official. And that’s not because we have suddenly had a massive increase in transparency and cooperation. Just the opposite. The Trump Administration has withheld documents on dozens of topics—from the hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, to the first class travel of the President’s top aides at taxpayer expense, to the lease for President Trump’s hotel in Washington D.C.

The IGs testifying today—and the staff that support them—do great work. But they cannot do this work in a vacuum. Congress must fulfill its own constitutional duty to conduct oversight of the Executive Branch. The entire system of oversight must work in order for the federal government to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible.

I hope today’s hearing can be a productive step in that direction. Thank you.

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