

November 15, 2021

The Honorable Gary Peters
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Peters and Ranking Member Portman:

We write to enthusiastically thank you for your work to advance legislation to improve the federal inspectors general (IG) system through the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Because of your work, the committee unanimously passed the IG Independence and Empowerment Act (H.R. 2662), which contains provisions to equip federal inspectors general with the independence and authority necessary to do their jobs effectively.¹ As a coalition of organizations representing a diverse range of ideological viewpoints, we strongly believe that these reforms are integral to a more accountable federal government, and we commend the committee for its leadership in advancing this piece of critical legislation.

As reported out of committee, the IG Independence and Empowerment Act contains a number of priorities we are eager to have passed into law. If enacted, these reforms would enhance the current presidential notification requirement for removing an inspector general, grant inspectors general temporary testimonial subpoena authority, and place reasonable limits on who can serve as an acting inspector general in the event of a vacancy. Insulating inspectors general from political interference by bolstering their independence is crucial to tackling corruption, waste, and abuse of power at the highest levels.

We are encouraged to see the committee engage so thoughtfully on strengthening the inspectors general system, and are hopeful that similarly critical efforts to make our nation's democratic institutions stronger and more resilient receive the same level of attention. Rooting out corruption, reining in executive privilege, and recalibrating our system of checks and balances are all vital in ensuring that the federal government works in the best interests of the American people. Now is the time to build on the hard work

¹ IG Independence and Empowerment Act, H.R. 2662, 117th Cong., (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2662>.

this committee just completed by taking up such commonsense and good government efforts to preserve the guardrails of our democracy.

Thank you again for your leadership on these critical matters, and we stand ready to support you in these efforts.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Common Cause
Demand Progress
Empower Oversight Whistleblowers & Research
Fix the Court
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
Issue One
National Center for Health Research
National Security Counselors
National Taxpayers Union
Niskanen Center
Open The Government
Oxfam America
Project On Government Oversight
Protect Democracy
Public Citizen
R Street Institute
Stand Up America
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Transparency International – U.S. Office
Union of Concerned Scientists
Whistleblowers of America