



Council of the
INSPECTORS GENERAL
on INTEGRITY and EFFICIENCY

August 2, 2016

Joint Statement on National Whistleblower Appreciation Day

On Saturday, the U.S. Senate recognized “National Whistleblower Appreciation Day.” Today’s Congress follows in the footsteps of our nation’s founders, who saw the wisdom of encouraging tips about wrongdoing in government. On July 30, 1778, the Continental Congress unanimously adopted the first whistleblower legislation in the United States, declaring it was “the duty of all persons in the service of the United States” to report misconduct or fraud. Over the next 238 years, we have seen tremendous change, but one thing that has endured is the recognition that people who come forward with information about waste, fraud, abuse, and misconduct perform an important service, and they should never be punished for doing the right thing.

As the leaders of federal offices that promote more accountable, effective, and efficient government, we heartily join in this celebration of whistleblowers. Our work with whistleblowers saves taxpayer dollars, uncovers wrongdoing, and makes the country safer. At the Department of Veterans Affairs, whistleblowers alerted the country to the widespread manipulation of scheduling data that masked true wait times for veterans seeking health care. At the Department of Homeland Security, employees came forward to put an end to unlawful overtime practices, saving taxpayers \$100 million a year. A tipster complained about wasteful spending by the Drug Enforcement Administration’s (DEA) aviation operations in Afghanistan. Inspector General auditors followed up and found that more than \$86 million in taxpayer dollars was spent to purchase and modify an aircraft that, after more than 7 years, is inoperable and has yet to fly a single mission in Afghanistan. The Inspector General community, working with the Department of Justice and whistleblowers, annually recovers over \$3 billion for the Treasury in cases of contractor fraud alone.

Courageous employees deserve our appreciation but all too often they face harassment, demotion or firing. Such retaliation is unlawful, and we are working together to make sure that it is stopped and that those who retaliate are held accountable. The good news is that, with recognition through events like National Whistleblower Appreciation Day, we continue to advance a culture within the federal government that thanks whistleblowers for their service rather than retaliates against them.

Carolyn Lerner is the Special Counsel at the U.S. Office of Special Counsel.

Michael Horowitz is the Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Justice and Chair of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

The Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) addresses integrity, economy, and effectiveness issues that transcend individual Government agencies; and to increase the professionalism and effectiveness of personnel by developing policies, standards, and approaches to aid in the establishment of a well-trained and highly skilled workforce in the Offices of Inspectors General (OIG). For more information, please visit www.ignet.gov.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: The Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC’s primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and to serve as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing. For more information, please visit www.osc.gov.