

July 21, 2026

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Robert Garcia
Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2106 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Garcia, and Members of the Committee:

I write to express opposition to the Restoring Integrity and Efficiency to Inspector General Oversight Act of 2025.¹ I was the Inspector General for the Department of Homeland Security from 2014 to 2017. In that capacity, I conducted audits and reviews of a number of matters of interest to this Committee, and I testified before you on a number of occasions.² I know from personal experience that this Committee, on a bipartisan basis, has relied on and appreciated the unvarnished, unbiased conclusions and recommendations of the inspector general (IG) community.

This legislation proposes abolishing the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) — the independent body that regulates and coordinates the inspector general system — and transferring many of its core responsibilities to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This would substantially weaken the independence of inspectors general and

¹ To Amend Title 5, United States Code, to Abolish the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and for Other Purposes, H.R. 9725, 119th Cong., (2026), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/9725>.

² *U.S. Secret Service: Accountability for March 4, 2015 Misconduct: Hearing before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee*, 114th Cong. (May 14, 2015) (testimony of John Roth, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Homeland Security), https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/TM/2015/OIGtm_JR_051415.pdf; *Empowering the Inspectors General: Hearing before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee*, 115th Cong. (February 1, 2017) (Testimony of John Roth, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Homeland Security), <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Roth-DHS-IG-Statement-Empowering-IGs-2-1.pdf>.

undermine their critical work. In my experience, CIGIE provides an independent forum for IGs to share concerns and develop best practices. It is also the keeper of the flame for IG standards — critical standards that are central to the mission of the IG system, like independence, objectivity, and effectiveness — and it conducts reviews of IG offices to ensure that they maintain those standards. CIGIE also investigates IGs themselves when they are accused of misconduct. In effect, the organization serves as the watchdog of the watchdogs. Congress created and provided for funding for CIGIE to increase IG community effectiveness.³ But CIGIE’s effectiveness in this area stems from its independence.

For example, in 2015 the Department of Justice’s Office of Legal Counsel issued a legal opinion that cut back on the authority of IGs to get information from their agencies to conduct audits.⁴ CIGIE discussed the situation and its impact on oversight. Ultimately, CIGIE sponsored a letter signed by more than 45 inspectors general that notified this Committee and other congressional committees of the issue.⁵ This ultimately resulted in this Committee sponsoring and Congress passing the *Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2016*, to clarify and reinstate the authority of IGs to receive information.⁶ The Chair and Ranking Member of this Committee stated: “We’re pleased to see this bill become a reality. This bipartisan legislation will help inspectors general root out waste, fraud, and abuse, and it will pave the way toward greater openness and transparency in government.”⁷

A number of other IGs and I advocated for this legislation before this Committee, other members of Congress, and the public at large. This effort was organized and effectuated by CIGIE. Only CIGIE could have marshalled the resources and conducted the coordination necessary to get this done. Notably, because we were opposing an administration policy, none of what we wrote or said was vetted or cleared by anyone in the Obama administration. I believe that this Committee benefited from our unvarnished views on the matter.

³ Inspector General Reform Act of 2008, Pub. Law No 110-09, 121 Stat. 2304; 122 Stat. 4302-4317 (2008).

⁴ Memorandum from Karl R. Thompson, principal deputy assistant attorney general, for Sally Quillian Yates, deputy attorney general, about The Department of Justice Inspector General’s Access to Information Protected by the Federal Wiretap Act (July 20, 2015), <https://embed.documentcloud.org/documents/2178545-ig-act-opinion/>.

⁵ Letter from the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform regarding the OLC’s opinion on IG access, (August 3, 2015), <https://www.oig.dot.gov/sites/default/files/CIGIE%20Letter%20to%20HSGAC%20%20HOCR%20-%20208-3-15%20with%20Enclosures.pdf>.

⁶ Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2016, Pub. Law No. 114-317, 122 Stat. 4312, 4313; 123 Stat. 693; 130 Stat. 1595-1607.

⁷ House Committee on Oversight and Government Affairs, “Chaffetz, Cummings, Meadows Legislation Empowering Inspectors General Signed into Law,” Press Release, December 19, 2016, <https://oversight.house.gov/release/chaffetz-cummings-meadows-legislation-empowering-inspectors-general-signed-law/>.

Transferring CIGIE's functions to OMB will eliminate that independence, and it will stifle IGs' ability to keep this Committee and the rest of Congress "fully and currently informed," as required by the Inspector General Act of 1978.⁸ The Act requires that IGs report to both the heads of their departments and to Congress. This dual reporting requirement allows IGs to give Congress the unfettered and candid information it needs to conduct effective oversight. If that reporting and communication is subject to the supervision of OMB, Congress will lose access to this information, and it will be hampered in its ability to conduct oversight. This, in my view, is a step backward — not only for the inspector general community but for the interests of effective congressional oversight.

Sincerely,

John Roth

Former Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security (2014-2017)

⁸ Inspector General Act of 1978, Pub. Law No. 95-452, 92 Stat. 1101-1109 (1978).