

One of the most powerful watchdog officials in the federal government has waged a years-long campaign to derail and discredit investigations into allegations of his misconduct, which include claims he retaliated against whistleblowers, the Project On Government Oversight (POGO) found after reviewing court filings, documents sent to Congress, records obtained through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, and other information, and after interviewing federal insiders and experts.

This campaign, whose scope is previously unreported, has heated up as a significant investigation into allegations of reprisal by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Inspector General Joseph Cuffari is nearing completion. In early June, a draft report on the investigation by a little-known federal panel called the Integrity Committee was sent to Cuffari and others accused of wrongdoing for their response – garnering congressional attention and a new round of attacks on the panel and its probe.

“The elephant in the room is the expectation of an upcoming Integrity Committee report on the investigation of the current Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security, Joseph Cuffari,” said Representative Pete Sessions (R-TX) during [a hearing](#) in July. This August, the chairman of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee, James Comer (R-KY), [requested Cuffari’s comments](#) on the draft report.

The Integrity Committee is the linchpin of the system for investigating claims of wrongdoing against top watchdog officials and has been the focus of reforms in recent years to address long-standing congressional concerns. (POGO has also spotlighted problems and [recommended changes](#).) It is one of several committees that are part of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, a group of more than 70 inspectors general from across the federal government.

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