



U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL
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Washington, D.C. 20036-4505
202-804-7000

May 12, 2020

Dr. Rick Bright
c/o Ms. Debra Katz, Esq.
Katz, Marshall & Banks, LLC
1718 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

VIA E-MAIL AT KATZ@KMBLEGAL.COM

Re: OSC File No. DI-20-000743

Dear Dr. Bright:

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) has completed its review of the information you referred to the Disclosure Unit. You alleged that employees at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, Washington, D.C., engaged in conduct that may constitute violations of law, rule, or regulation; gross mismanagement; a gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; a substantial and specific danger to public health and safety; and censorship related to scientific research. You consented to the disclosure of your name.

OSC is authorized to determine whether disclosures should be referred to the involved agency for investigation, or review, and a report; however, OSC does not have the authority to investigate disclosures. OSC may refer allegations of violation of law, rule or regulation; gross mismanagement; a gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety. Disclosures referred to the agency for investigation and a report must include information sufficient for OSC to determine whether there is a substantial likelihood of wrongdoing.

You disclosed improprieties related to HHS's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and contracts. After reviewing the information you submitted, we have requested that the HHS Secretary conduct an investigation into these allegations and report back to OSC pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 1213(c). We have provided the Secretary 60 days to conduct the investigation and submit the report to OSC. However, you should be aware that these investigations usually take longer and agencies frequently request and receive extensions of the due date. Should the agency request an extension in this case, we will advise you of the new due date for the report.

Because you consented to the disclosure of your name, we requested that the agency interview you at the beginning of the investigation. Although the referral for investigation generally describes your allegations, we rely on you, as the originator of the disclosure, to

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provide the agency additional information and an explanation of your allegations, thereby streamlining the investigation.

Unless the report is classified or otherwise not releasable by law, we will send you a copy after our review so that you may comment on the report, if you wish. When the matter is closed, the Special Counsel will transmit the report and your comments to the President and the appropriate congressional oversight committees. Copies of these documents will be maintained by OSC in a public file, which is posted on OSC's website at www.osc.gov.

We emphasize that, while OSC has found a substantial likelihood of wrongdoing based on the information you submitted in support of your allegations, our referral to the Secretary for investigation is not a final determination that the allegations are substantiated. This remains an open matter under investigation until the agency's final report is forwarded to the President and Congress.

If you have questions or would like to discuss this matter, please contact me at (202) 804-7069.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.B. Land". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jacob B. Land
Attorney, Disclosure Unit