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Testimony Before the House of Representatives
Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee
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Chairman Yoder, Ranking Member Ryan, and members of the Legislative Branch Appropriations subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Whistleblowers serve as Congress' lifeline to information about federal waste, fraud, abuse, and malfeasance, and we believe Congress should protect and strengthen its ability to obtain the information they seek to provide. Accordingly, we respectfully recommend the House of Representatives establish a Whistleblower Resource Center through the allocation of funds from fiscal year 2019 appropriations. This office would support House staff who work with whistleblowers and facilitate whistleblower communications to appropriate House committees and offices.

The Center would be constituted as an independent office of the House of Representatives that provides advice, assistance, guidance, and training to congressional offices on communicating with whistleblowers. In addition, it would inform whistleblowers on the full range of offices with jurisdiction over a matter, and would provide a secure, confidential mechanism to communicate. Furthermore, the Center would help improve the House's ability to receive whistleblower communications by issuing an annual unclassified publicly-available report on how the House overall has handled whistleblower communications. The Center would *not* address the substance of issues raised by whistleblowers, which remains the purview of House offices and committees.

As matters currently stand, some congressional offices inadvertently mishandle whistleblower complaints, increasing the likelihood of retaliation or misdirected communications. Congressional offices would benefit from advice on improving how whistleblower communications are handled. In addition, people who wish to contact the House of Representatives concerning waste, fraud, abuse, or malfeasance often are flying blind. They may not know how congressional offices operate or which office to contact, and a mistaken assumption could inadvertently harm them or prevent information from going through proper channels. The Center can help ensure whistleblowers are informed of the options.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the matter and look forward to working with you to strengthen this vital lifeline and protect whistleblower communications to Congress.