



CITIZENS FOR  
RESPONSIBILITY &  
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

August 7, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Bolstering the government ethics infrastructure by filling Inspector General and other ethics vacancies

Dear President Biden,

I write to you on behalf of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to ethics, transparency and accountability in government to raise with you the importance of filling all vacant Inspector General positions within the executive branch and to take steps to fill all other ethics vacancies as well.

Since day one, the Biden administration has made ethical governance a priority, issuing an Executive Order requiring all executive branch appointees to sign ethics pledges that seek to close the revolving door and ban gifts from lobbyists.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the administration has worked hard to nominate and confirm qualified individuals to fill ethics roles throughout the executive branch. Over the past four years, the President has filled key inspector general positions, including in the Department of State, Office of Personnel Management, Department of Defense and most recently, nominated a Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. We commend these efforts.

Inspectors General (IGs) play a key role in ferreting out waste, fraud and abuse. The importance of IGs was evident in 2022, when the Architect of the Capitol IG released a report detailing former Architect of the Capitol J. Brett Blanton's abuse of authority and misuse of taxpayer funds, leading you to rightfully remove Blanton from his position.<sup>2</sup> In this case and many others in the nearly 50 years since the first IG positions were established, an IG office provided critical independent oversight that improved the integrity of our government. At a

---

<sup>1</sup> White House, Executive Order on Ethics Commitments by Executive Branch Personnel, Jan. 20, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-ethics-commitments-by-executive-branch-personnel/>.

<sup>2</sup> Alex Goldstein, *The Architect of the Capitol abused his authority. Congress should call for his resignation.*, CREW (Nov. 17, 2022), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/news/analysis/the-architect-of-the-capitol-abused-his-authority-congress-should-call-for-his-resignation/>; Justin Papp, *Congress appoints Army veteran Thomas Austin as new architect of the Capitol*, Roll Call (May 22, 2024), <https://rollcall.com/2024/05/22/congress-appoints-army-veteran-thomas-austin-as-new-architect-of-the-capitol/>.

time when public trust in government is low<sup>3</sup> and we face rising threats of authoritarianism at home and abroad,<sup>4</sup> the role of Inspectors General is more important than ever.

Unfortunately, several Inspector General vacancies currently exist throughout the executive branch. Accordingly, we encourage you to ensure that every Inspector General office has competent leadership,<sup>5</sup> and to identify, nominate and push to confirm a diverse slate of qualified individuals to fill all remaining Inspector General vacancies. To date, 14 Inspector General positions are empty throughout the executive branch and in agencies that touch every aspect of American life. Of these 14, four IG positions have yet to receive a presidential nominee, including the Inspectors General for the Social Security Administration and the General Services Administration.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to Inspectors General, there are other vacancies in key ethics roles throughout the government, including Designated Agency Ethics Officials and Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Officials. We urge you to direct agency heads to prioritize appointing qualified individuals to fill these roles as part of a broader campaign to fortify the executive branch's ethics infrastructure and ensure that corruption, waste and mismanagement have no haven in our executive branch.

We applaud the Biden administration's commitment to ensuring ethical governance. We urge you to continue these efforts by filling all vacant Inspector General positions and ensuring that the executive branch has the internal expertise it needs to be a government leader in detecting and eliminating corruption, waste and malfeasance.

Sincerely,



Noah Bookbinder  
President and Chief Executive Officer

---

<sup>3</sup> *Public Trust in Government 1958-2024*, PEW Research Center (June 24, 2024), <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/06/24/public-trust-in-government-1958-2024/>.

<sup>4</sup> *The Mounting Damage of Flawed Elections and Armed Conflict*, Freedom House (February 2024), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2024/mounting-damage-flawed-elections-and-armed-conflict>

<sup>5</sup> CREW and other watchdog groups have repeatedly raised concerns about ethical abuses by Department of Homeland Security Inspector General Joseph Cuffari that warrant your review and attention. See, e.g., Donald Sherman; *Biden Fired the Architect of the Capitol. But What About Other Trump Appointees?*, Huffington Post (Feb. 24, 2023),

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/architect-of-the-capitol-trump-appointees\\_n\\_63e55eb6e4b02c25737506c2/](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/architect-of-the-capitol-trump-appointees_n_63e55eb6e4b02c25737506c2/); see also Lisa Rein, Carol D. Leonnig and Maria Sacchetti, *Homeland Security watchdog previously accused of misleading investigators, report says*, Washington Post (Aug. 3, 2022),

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/08/03/homeland-security-joseph-cuffari-watchdog-report/>.

<sup>6</sup> Oversight.gov, Inspector General Vacancies, <https://www.oversight.gov/ig-vacancies>.