

July 21, 2026

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Robert Garcia
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives

Re: Letter in opposition to H.R. 9725, Restoring Integrity and Efficiency to Inspector General Oversight Act

Dear Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Garcia:

The undersigned organizations, a diverse group of nonprofits dedicated to enhancing transparency and accountability in government, write in strong opposition to H.R. 9725, the so-called Restoring Integrity and Efficiency to Inspector General Oversight Act. The bill would abolish the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), transfer certain CIGIE functions to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and eliminate the Integrity Committee. We urge you to reject this legislation and to focus the committee's efforts on ensuring that inspectors general (IGs) remain independent and that CIGIE has access to the resources it needs to effectively fulfill its critical role in the IG community.

I. CIGIE addresses integrity, economy and effectiveness issues across federal agencies.

As part of a package of reforms to enhance IG independence, in 2008 Congress created CIGIE to coordinate and oversee IGs.¹ CIGIE's mission is to "address integrity, economy, and effectiveness issues that transcend individual Government agencies," and "increase the professionalism and effectiveness of personnel by developing policies, standards, and approaches to aid in the establishment of a well-trained and highly skilled workforce in" Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs).² In support of its mission, CIGIE, among other functions:

¹ See generally 5 U.S.C. § 424; see also Inspector General Reform Act of 2008, Pub. L. No. 110-409, 122 Stat. 4302 (2008).

² 5 U.S.C. § 424(a)(2).

- Operates Oversight.gov, on which CIGIE consolidates and publishes OIG reports, tracks IG vacancies, and hosts OIG websites and whistleblower hotlines.³
- Recommends individuals to serve as IGs.⁴
- Maintains a training institute.⁵
- Develops and publishes on [ignet.gov](https://www.ignet.gov) OIG quality standards, guides and reports to facilitate and standardize the work of IGs.⁶
- Maintains an Integrity Committee to receive, review and refer for investigation allegations of wrongdoing made by federal employees and members of the public against IGs, certain OIG staff, and the Special Counsel and Deputy Special Counsel of the Office of Special Counsel (OSC).⁷

II. Rather than transferring CIGIE functions to OMB, the committee should focus on ensuring that OMB does not constrain CIGIE’s ability to perform these and other functions.

Among CIGIE’s other duties, it (1) develops “policies, standards, and approaches to aid in the establishment of a well-trained and highly skilled workforce in the offices of the Inspectors General,” (2) develops “plans for coordinated, Governmentwide activities” to address areas of weakness and vulnerability and “promote economy and efficiency in” federal programs and operations, (3) develops “policies that will aid in the maintenance of a corps of well-trained and highly skilled” OIG personnel, and (4) receives, reviews and mediates certain disputes between OIGs.⁸ Despite the fact that OMB has spent most of the last year attempting to prevent CIGIE from being able to effectively fulfill these functions, the bill proposes to transfer these responsibilities to the OMB Director.⁹ The committee should reject this effort to further politicize IGs.

³ 5 U.S.C. § 424(e)(2); see Letter from CIGIE to S. Appropriations Comm., House Appropriations Comm., S. Homeland Sec. and Governmental Affs. Comm., and House Oversight and Gov’t Reform Comm., at 2 (Sept. 27, 2025),

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/26173184-cigie-letter-to-congress-september-27-2025/> (September 27 Letter); CIGIE, *Inspector General Vacancies*,

<https://www.oversight.gov/about/inspectors-general-vacancies> (last visited July 16, 2026); CIGIE, *Annual Report to the President and Congress Fiscal Year 2024*, at 7,

https://www.ignet.gov/sites/default/files/files/CIGIE%20Annual%20Report%20to%20the%20President%20FY2024_FINAL.pdf.

⁴ 5 U.S.C. § 424(c)(1)(F).

⁵ *Id.* § 424(c)(1)(E); CIGIE, *Congressional Budget Justification, Fiscal Year 2026* 12 (2025),

<https://www.ignet.gov/sites/default/files/files/CIGIE%20FY%202026%20Congressional%20Justificati%20on.pdf>.

⁶ See generally CIGIE, *Quality Standards*, <https://www.ignet.gov/content/quality-standards> (last visited July 16, 2026); CIGIE, *IG Peer Reviews*, <https://www.ignet.gov/content/ig-peer-reviews> (last visited July 16, 2026); CIGIE, *Top Management and Performance Challenges*, <https://www.ignet.gov/content/top-management-and-performance-challenges> (last visited July 16, 2026).

⁷ 5 U.S.C. §§ 424(d)(1), (4), (12).

⁸ *Id.* §§ 424(a)(2)(B), (c)(1)(B), (c)(1)(C), (c)(1)(H).

⁹ H.R. 9725, 119th Cong., 2d Sess. § 2(b) (vesting of functions) (2026).

Notably, CIGIE is an “independent entity” in the executive branch¹⁰ and comprises both expert staff and more than 70 IGs and other senior officials who serve as members.¹¹ By contrast, OMB sits in the Executive Office of the President, is led by a director who administers the office “[u]nder the direction of the President,” and lacks institutional expertise in standards for independent audits and investigations.¹² In describing the OMB director’s role, the D.C. Circuit explained that “the OMB Director, whose duties include aiding the President in managing the entire executive branch, is . . . the cabinet officer functionally, if not actually, closest to the President.”¹³ In light of the OMB director’s close relationship with, and direct subordination to, the president, and OMB’s relative inexperience in OIG procedures and oversight, giving the OMB director explicit authority to develop these plans and policies would both hinder the effectiveness and efficiency of the IG community and violate the principles of independence that serve as its foundation.

Transferring this authority to the OMB director is particularly concerning given that both the president and OMB have demonstrated hostility toward these independent offices. Since the beginning of the president’s second term, President Trump has systematically disrupted, weakened or outright eliminated the guardrails meant to protect against waste, fraud and abuse within the executive branch,¹⁴ including by firing 17 inspectors general within days of returning to office.¹⁵ As a result of both the administration’s action and inaction, at the end of 2025, over half—55 percent—of the 38 presidentially appointed federal IG positions remained vacant, and of the total 72 federal IG positions, there were 29 vacancies across the federal government.¹⁶ According to CIGIE’s IG vacancy tracker, today that same number of positions remains unfilled.¹⁷

¹⁰ 5 U.S.C. § 424(a).

¹¹ CIGIE, Congressional Budget Justification, Fiscal Year 2026 4 (2025), <https://www.ignet.gov/sites/default/files/files/CIGIE%20FY%202026%20Congressional%20Justification.pdf>.

¹² 31 U.S.C §§ 501, 502(a).

¹³ *Meyer v. Bush*, 981 F.2d 1288, 1294 (D.C. Cir. 1993).

¹⁴ Dani Schulkin et al., *The Anti-Corruption Tracker: Mapping the Erosion of Oversight and Accountability*, Just Security (Apr. 14, 2026), <https://www.justsecurity.org/117267/anti-corruption-tracker/>.

¹⁵ Danielle Caputo, *The Significance of Firing Inspectors General: Explained*, Campaign Leg. Ctr. (Jan. 31, 2025), <https://campaignlegal.org/update/significance-firing-inspectors-general-explained>; *Storch v. Hegseth*, 804 F. Supp. 3d 216, 225 (D.D.C. 2025) (finding it certain that plaintiffs “will succeed in arguing that their terminations violate the IGA”).

¹⁶ Isabel Rogers, *By Leaving over 55% of Presidentially Appointed IG Posts Vacant, Trump is Opening the Door for Waste, Fraud and Abuse*, CREW (Feb. 4, 2026), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/news/analysis/by-leaving-over-55-of-presidentially-appointed-ig-posts-vacant-trump-is-opening-the-door-for-waste-fraud-and-abuse/>.

¹⁷ CIGIE, *Inspector General Vacancies*, <https://www.oversight.gov/about/inspectors-general-vacancies> (last visited July 16, 2026).

OMB has likewise attempted to undercut the independence of the IG community, including by limiting OIG budget requests¹⁸ and, critically, unlawfully restricting CIGIE's funding. Four days before the beginning of this fiscal year, OMB abruptly made a new "policy decision" not to apportion any funds for CIGIE for fiscal year 2026 despite the fact that CIGIE had over \$27 million in no-year funds in its account.¹⁹ Because agencies, including CIGIE, are legally prohibited from spending more than OMB apportions, OMB's decision to not make any money available to CIGIE meant that CIGIE had to shutter its operations on October 1, 2025.²⁰ It furloughed staff, ceased Integrity Committee operations, stopped training programs, turned off Oversight.gov, and shut down the more than two dozen websites and hotlines it hosted for other inspectors general.²¹ When asked about its decision to defund CIGIE, OMB asserted—without any evidence—that IGs are "corrupt, partisan, and in some cases, have lied to the public," and that OMB would "no longer be funding this corruption."²²

OMB kept CIGIE shuttered for 48 days and provided limited funding for CIGIE only after Congress passed a separate law that prohibited reductions-in-force through the end of January.²³ The apportionment that reopened CIGIE included only a small portion of the otherwise available amounts, restricted the use of those funds to salaries and expenses and legally required payments, and positioned OMB to defund CIGIE again at the end of January.²⁴ OMB simultaneously conducted a "programmatic review" of CIGIE's activities.²⁵

¹⁸ Chris Piper, *Weakening the watchdogs: The Trump Administration's unprecedented efforts to undermine inspector general capacity*, Partnership for Public Service (Apr. 14, 2026), <https://ourpublicservice.org/know-the-facts/blog/weakening-the-watchdogs-the-trump-administrations-unprecedented-efforts-to-undermine-inspector-general-capacity> (explaining that the budget proposed to "cut Cabinet department OIG appropriations by 12% on average relative to 2024 levels, with some agencies facing cuts of nearly 30%"); see also *Budget Estimates: Fiscal Year 2027*, Office of Inspector General, Dep't of Transportation, at 1, <https://www.transportation.gov/media/2216> (explaining that the amount OMB proposed for DOT OIG "would substantially inhibit OIG's ability to fully execute its mission").

¹⁹ See September 27 Letter, *supra* note 3, at 1; OpenOMB, *Inspectors General Council Fund*, TAFS: 542-4592/X-Inspectors General Council Fund, <https://openomb.org/file/11483369> (November 18 apportionment).

²⁰ See September 27 Letter, *supra* note 3, at 1; 31 U.S.C. §§ 1517–19; see also *Citizens for Resp. & Ethics in Washington v. Off. of Mgmt. & Budget*, 791 F. Supp. 3d 29, 55 (D.D.C. 2025).

²¹ See September 27 Letter, *supra* note 3, at 1–3; see Sean Michael Newhouse & Natalie Alms, *Trump administration resumes funding for inspectors general hub after previously blocking it*, Gov't Exec. (Nov. 18, 2025), <https://www.govexec.com/oversight/2025/11/trump-administration-resumes-funding-inspectors-general-hub-after-previously-blocking-it/409615/>.

²² Scott MacFarlane, *Trump administration to defund federal watchdog council*, CBS News (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-defunding-council-of-inspectors-general/>.

²³ *Trump administration resumes funding for inspectors general hub*, *supra* note 21; Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026, Pub. L. No. 119-37, div. A, § 120(a), 139 Stat. 495, 500 (2025).

²⁴ See November 18 apportionment, *supra* note 19.

²⁵ Chuck Grassley, *OMB Releases Nearly \$4.3 Million For CIGIE Following Push By Grassley, Collins* (Nov. 18, 2025), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/omb-releases-nearly-43-million-for-cigie-following-push-by-grassley-collins>.

OMB has since continued to restrict CIGIE's funding, apportioning only a fraction of CIGIE's funding one quarter at a time.²⁶ These policy decisions not only contravene the funding scheme Congress established for CIGIE—which ensures that CIGIE receives funding in advance of the following fiscal year²⁷—but they also hinder program operations and long-term planning. In fiscal year 2025, for example, CIGIE had obligated more than \$8.8 million by the end of January, and more than \$12.7 million by the end of May. With OMB's funding restrictions in place this fiscal year, however, by the end of January CIGIE had obligated only \$3.2 million. And by the end of May, CIGIE had not yet reached the \$8.8 million it had committed by January the year before. This stark difference in both amount and obligation rate demonstrates the tangible impact of OMB's efforts to constrict CIGIE's operations.²⁸

OMB's new policy of restricting funding for the only agency responsible for overseeing IGs merely affirms that OMB should not be the agency in charge of ensuring their independence. We urge this committee not to give the president and his closest advisor the authority to develop the policies that will govern the audits and investigations of the same agencies the president controls.

III. The committee should conduct oversight of, rather than abolish, the Integrity Committee.

The Integrity Committee is the watchdog of the watchdogs. It receives, reviews, and refers for investigation allegations of wrongdoing against IGs, certain OIG staff and OSC officials. Between October 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026 alone the Integrity Committee received 1,508 complaints and referred 41 for review.²⁹

The Integrity Committee serves an incredibly important purpose, particularly as the administration places immense pressure on IGs.³⁰ Although the standards that CIGIE

²⁶ OpenOMB, *Inspectors General Council Fund*, TAFS: 542-4592/X-Inspectors General Council Fund, <https://openomb.org/file/11496918> (January 29 apportionment); OpenOMB, *Inspectors General Council Fund*, TAFS: 542-4592/X-Inspectors General Council Fund, <https://openomb.org/file/11512091> (March 19 apportionment); OpenOMB, *Inspectors General Council Fund*, TAFS: 542-4592/X-Inspectors General Council Fund, <https://openomb.org/file/11524406> (June 10 apportionment).

²⁷ U.S. Gov't Accountability Off., GAO-26-107922, *Inspectors General Integrity Committee 7* (2026), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-26-107922.pdf>.

²⁸ Compare SF 133, Fiscal Year 2026, Other Independent Agencies, Inspectors General Council Fund, TAFS: 542-4592/X, with SF 133, Fiscal Year 2025, Other Independent Agencies, Inspectors General Council Fund, TAFS: 542-4592/X.

²⁹ CIGIE, *Integrity Committee Semiannual Report to Congress and the President: October 1, 2025–March 31, 2026* 4, <https://www.ignet.gov/sites/default/files/files/2026-04-23%20Integrity%20Committee%20Semiannual%20Report.pdf>.

³⁰ Donald K. Sherman, Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship Hearing On: “Blowing the Whistle: Inside the Grift that Keeps Giving” 4 (May 20, 2026),

develops to guide IG practices provide uniform guidance for OIGs to follow regardless of who is in charge, “the ultimate success or failure of an IG office is largely determined by the individual IG placed in that office and that person’s ability to maintain . . . independence both in fact and appearance.”³¹

Several of the individuals who have been confirmed as IGs previously served in the president’s administration—including at the agencies they now audit.³² And others face criticism for a lack of independence from the agencies they were established to investigate.³³ The IG for the Department of Defense, for example, stated that it would not investigate a matter that the secretary “indicated that he had decided not to pursue.”³⁴ The present risk of politicization in these offices makes it all the more important for whistleblowers and other interested individuals and organizations to have the ability to raise allegations of wrongdoing against IGs themselves.

Rather than abolishing this critical accountability mechanism, the committee should focus its oversight efforts on improving the existing process. GAO recently released a report making several recommendations for the CIGIE Chair with regard to the Integrity Committee, including improving oversight of the investigations themselves, the timeliness of reviews and reports, and the documentation of required information.³⁵ CIGIE Chair Cheryl Mason explained in response to GAO’s recommendations that “it is critical that a mechanism exists to ensure members of the IG community are held accountable should they fail to meet” the highest standards of official conduct, and agreed to work with the committee to implement GAO’s recommendations.³⁶ But Mason also explained that CIGIE has had difficulty managing the Integrity Committee, in part, due to the committee’s “limited permanent staffing and statutory structure,” including its small staff, reliance on IGs to conduct investigations, and rotating committee membership.³⁷ Relatedly, in the Integrity Committee’s semiannual report, the Integrity Committee Chairperson explained

<https://www.citizensforethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Donald-Sherman-Written-Testimony-Senate-Small-Business-Committee-May-2026.pdf>.

³¹ U.S. Gov’t Accountability Off., GAO-07-1089T, *Inspectors General: Opportunities to Enhance Independence and Accountability* 6 (2007), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-07-1089t.pdf>.

³² Sean Michael Newhouse, *Most newly confirmed Trump inspectors general previously worked in his administration, raising fears about independent agency oversight*, Gov’t Exec. (Jan. 13, 2026), <https://www.govexec.com/oversight/2026/01/most-newly-confirmed-trump-inspectors-general-have-previously-worked-his-administration-raising-fears-about-independent-agency-oversight/410657/>.

³³ Meryl Kornfield & Lisa Rein, *Trump breaches fire wall between watchdogs and agencies they investigate*, Wash. Post (Mar. 19, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2026/03/19/inspector-general-independence-trump/>.

³⁴ Letter from Platte B. Moring, III, Inspector General, Dep’t of Defense, to Donald K. Sherman, President and Chief Executive Officer, CREW (Apr. 24, 2026), https://www.citizensforethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/4581_001.pdf.

³⁵ See *Inspectors General Integrity Committee*, *supra* note 27, at 22–23.

³⁶ *Id.* at 29, 30.

³⁷ *Id.* at 30.

that the committee had encountered delays in investigations because OIGs suffered staff reductions as agencies downsized “in an effort to reduce government spending in line with the Administration’s priorities.”³⁸

Members of Congress may rely on the results of an IC investigation to inform their own oversight of IGs.³⁹ Rather than eliminating this resource, the committee should use the constructive engagement between CIGIE and GAO on this issue as an opportunity to oversee CIGIE’s implementation of GAO’s recommendations while also ensuring the Integrity Committee has the statutory authorization and resources it needs to fulfill its important duties.

* * *

The Restoring Integrity and Efficiency to Inspector General Oversight Act would significantly impair independent oversight. We urge the committee to reject this legislation and instead focus its efforts on both improving CIGIE’s ability to hold inspectors general accountable and conducting much-needed oversight of OMB’s ongoing efforts to constrain CIGIE’s ability to ensure a well-trained and highly skilled IG workforce.

Sincerely,

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Government Accountability Project (GAP)
Project On Government Oversight (POGO)
Protect Democracy
Public Citizen
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)

³⁸ See *Integrity Committee Semiannual Report*, *supra* note 29, at 1; see also *Weakening the watchdogs*, *supra* note 18 (“President Trump reduced the average Cabinet department OIG staff by 10% in his first year.”).

³⁹ See, e.g., Chuck Grassley, *Grassley, Johnson Call for Removal of FHFA Inspector General Following Findings of Misconduct, Reprisal* (Apr. 28, 2021), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-johnson-call-for-removal-of-fhfa-inspector-general-following-findings-of-misconduct-reprisal>.