



*National Archives and Records Administration*  
*Office of Inspector General*

8601 Adelphi Road, Suite 1300  
College Park, Maryland 20740

**Via Electronic Transmission**

September 1, 2010

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
United States Senate  
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance  
Washington, DC 20510-6200

The Honorable Darrell Issa  
United States House of Representatives  
Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
Washington, DC 20515-6143

Dear Senator Grassley and Representative Issa:

We are in receipt of your August 23, 2010, letter inquiring whether there is any review of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) by political appointees. NARA has only one political appointee, the Archivist of the United States, and he is not involved in decision-making or the process for FOIA requests for NARA operational records. A unit within the General Counsel's office handles such FOIA requests, and they have no process whereby any appointee reviews releases. If a release is expected to garner a fair amount of attention, the General Counsel's office will generally give notice to the Public Affairs office, the Archivist's office, etc. However, this is simply passive notice of what is being released, and does not involve any active participation or review of the FOIA process.

Requests for NARA Office of Inspector General (OIG) records are handled by our office independently from the General Counsel's office. Any withholdings made by the OIG are appealable to the Archivist, and he makes the final decision on release. This process was set up to ensure OIG independence from the agency, and in our experience we have had no incidents or complaints about the process having any political connotations at all.

We welcome the opportunity to work with your offices. If there is anything else we can do for you, or if you wish any further detail or documentation, please do not hesitate to contact me at 301-837-1966. Thank you.

Sincerely,

John Simms  
Counsel, Office of Inspector General  
National Archives and Records Administration

CC: Hon. Max Baucus, Chairman, U.S. Senate Finance Committee; Hon. Adolphus Towns, Chairman U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform