



Office of the
Inspector General

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

June 12, 2013

Allan Blutstein
Cause of Action
1919 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 650
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Blutstein:

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of May 30, 2013, in which you asked for the response of the Office of Personnel Management's Office of the Inspector General (OPM OIG) to the letter dated August 23, 2010, from Senator Charles Grassley and Representative Darrell Issa. In that letter, Senator Grassley and Representative Issa asked the Inspector General to review whether political appointees at OPM were made aware of and played decision-making roles in FOIA requests.

OPM Inspector General Patrick McFarland responded to Senator Grassley and Representative Issa with the attached letter (one page), dated September 15, 2010. This letter constitutes OPM OIG's complete response to the inquiry and therefore fully complies with your FOIA request.

If you wish to appeal the response that I have provided to you under the Freedom of Information Act, you should contact, in writing, David J. Cope, FOIA Appeals Officer, Room 6400, 1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20415. Please include a copy of your initial request, a copy of this letter, and a statement explaining why you disagree with our decision. You should write "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" on the front of the envelope and on the first page of the appeal letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Timothy C. Watkins".

Timothy C. Watkins
Counsel to the Inspector General

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UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

September 15, 2010

Office of the
Inspector General

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Senator Grassley and Representative Issa:

This is in response to your request, dated August 23, 2010, asking the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to conduct an inquiry into the agency's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) office. You specifically asked that we determine whether, and if so, the extent to which political appointees are made aware of information requests and have a role in request reviews or decision-making. We have concluded our inquiry into OPM's FOIA office and have determined that:

- The FOIA office at OPM receives all initial FOIA requests and forwards them to the program office that is best able to provide the information to the requestor. The program office's Associate Director (a non-political appointee) is responsible for the final response to the FOIA request. Based on interviews with FOIA office personnel and a review of FOIA requests received over the last three months, we found no evidence of political filtering of FOIA requests at OPM.
- The FOIA appeal process at OPM is conducted outside of the FOIA office. The appeal process is handled by OPM's Office of General Counsel, with the General Counsel being responsible for the appeal response. While the General Counsel is a political appointee, we again found no evidence during the review of political filtering, and believe this practice makes good sense in protecting the agency from potential FOIA lawsuits.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me, at (202) 606-1200, or have a member of your staff contact Michael R. Esser, Assistant Inspector General for Audits, on (202) 606-2143.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patrick E. McFarland".

Patrick E. McFarland
Inspector General