



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
INSPECTOR GENERAL
WASHINGTON DC 20420

SEP -9 2010

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

Dear Senator Grassley:

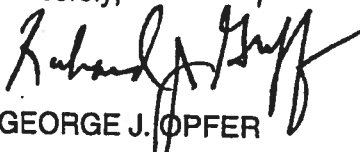
This is in further response to your and Congressman Darrell Issa's letter of August 23, 2010, requesting the Office of Inspector General (OIG) conduct an inquiry into the Department of Veterans Affairs' Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) office to determine the extent of political appointees' involvement in that office's operations.

VA's FOIA process is very decentralized both in the field and in VA Central Office (VACO). The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and National Cemetery Administration (NCA) are each responsible for processing information requests within their respective organizations. Many FOIA requests are handled directly by the VA field facility where a request for information is received. Other requests are processed by various offices within VACO. There are no political appointees in VA who have the responsibility for responding to FOIA requests.

Our review consisted of interviewing the responsible FOIA officers in VHA, VBA, and NCA as well as the Acting Director of VA's FOIA Service at VACO. None were aware of or reported any involvement by political appointees.

A similar response has been sent to Congressman Issa. Thank you for your interest in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sincerely,


GEORGE J. OPFER



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
INSPECTOR GENERAL
WASHINGTON DC 20420

SEP - 9 2010

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

Dear Congressman Issa:

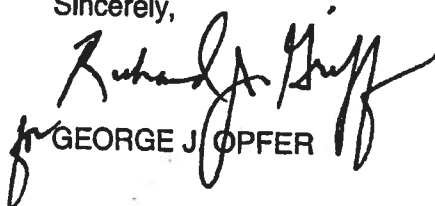
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for GEORGE J. OPFER