

United States Senate

December 1, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader
United States Senate

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Senator Reid:

In the interest of transparency and accountability, I write today to urge you to move forward on confirming the remaining Inspector General (IG) positions currently awaiting approval in the Senate. Some of these IGs have been awaiting confirmation for months, if not years. In order to keep our promise to the American people to hold government entities accountable and ensure taxpayer dollars are well spent, we must ensure these vacant IG positions are filled in a timely manner.

As the transition to the new Administration begins, the roles of the Inspectors General are critical. IGs are non-partisan, independent entities within the agencies whose goal is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the government and its initiatives. As our colleagues and I noted last year, permanent leadership in these offices is vital for guaranteeing IG independence, promoting transparency and accountability in government operations and ensuring fiscal responsibility. IGs empower causes and individuals who need to be empowered, including whistleblowers, and provide Congress critical assistance in holding all of the federal government accountable. As permanent leadership slots get filled throughout government agencies in the coming months, the IGs oversight role is critical.

Confirming the remaining IGs quickly will help Congress achieve its oversight mission and will save significant taxpayer dollars. In Fiscal Year 2014 alone, Inspectors General across the federal government saved taxpayers \$46.5 billion through audits, program improvements, and investigations. Among the eight Presidentially-nominated IGs still committee action or Senate confirmation, nearly all of them oversee large programs for vast Executive agencies, including the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of Energy. If we are to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, we must ensure that the funds we are about to spend on government initiatives and acquisition is not being wasted.

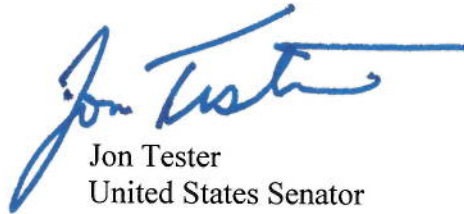
As we saw before the appointment of a permanent Inspector General at the Department of Veterans Affairs, the credibility of Executive agencies can be severely undercut without a permanent IG and can jeopardize citizens' safety. Now, after the election, agencies must await the announcement and confirmation of permanent leadership roles. Without such leadership in

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place, Congress and the American public have little insight into Executive activities and programs. For that reason, now is the time to redouble our oversight efforts, not diminish them.

This last election demonstrated that many Americans feel that their government does not work for them. If Congress fails to do yet another critically important oversight job, we risk enhancing that concern. That is why it is so important to confirm these nominees quickly. A successful transition and the trust of the American public depend on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jon Tester". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jon Tester
United States Senator