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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

DC 20510—6200

JOSHUA SHEINKMAN, STAFF DIRECTOR

October 4, 2021

The Honorable Gail S. Ennis
Inspector General
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard; Suite 300
Baltimore, MD 21235

General Ennis:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General's reported drop in office morale and its impact on the office's ability to perform its mission.

In the 2020 Partnership for Public Service's annual "Best Places to Work" in the federal government report, the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General was ranked 382 out of 411 agency subcomponents, the second lowest ranking out of all Inspector General offices.¹ The survey, using data from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, reported a substantial drop in scores related to employees' job satisfaction, employer satisfaction and whether they would recommend their organization than in previous years. The survey also showed poor scores related to employees' feeling of empowerment, trust and respect in agency leadership and direct supervisors, and "perceptions of efforts to improve the way work is done."²

These survey responses appears to concur with the recent vote of no confidence by the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association members, citing concerns regarding "erroneous policies that hamper investigative capacity."³

During your confirmation process, you spoke about establishing a culture that welcomes debate from employees at all levels through "tone at the top" and seeking to work with CIGIE and other Inspector Generals to make sure SSA OIG hires and retains a professional and effective

¹ Partnership for Public Service, *2020 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Rankings*, <https://www.pps.org/best-places-to-work-in-the-federal-government-rankings>.

² Partnership for Public Service, *2020 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Rankings: Innovation*, <https://www.pps.org/best-places-to-work-in-the-federal-government-rankings-innovation>.

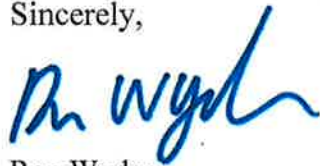
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, *No Confidence Vote Against SSA-OIG Leadership* (Sept. 20, 2021), <https://www.ilcoa.org/news-stotv.ast?x?id=10t106>.

workforce.⁴

The Social Security Inspector General plays a critical role in overseeing the administration of Social Security's programs and operations, and is a vital resource to Congress on strengthening the program with legislative changes. Without a vibrant, experienced, and productive workforce, SSA OIG will not be able to perform its essential oversight role and performance at SSA may suffer as a result. Moreover, unless significant steps are taken to improve employee satisfaction, SSA OIG risk losing talented and experienced auditors and investigators and being unable to attract new employees.

I request that you and your staff brief my Committee staff within 14 days to discuss employee satisfaction survey data, employee retention, and strategies to restore morale within the office. Please contact Sam Conchuratt on my Committee staff at Sam_Conchuratt@finance.senate.gov for scheduling and any questions.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance

⁴ See S. Hrg. 115-836, *Nominations of Gordon Hartogensis and Gail S. Ennis*, Sept. 27, 2018, 26, <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/40861.fxd> f.