



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
INSPECTOR GENERAL  
WASHINGTON DC 20420

JUN 18 2018

The Honorable Tim Walz  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Walz:

I am writing to notify you of a current dispute between the Acting Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) concerning the Department's refusal to provide the OIG with requested information necessary for us to perform our oversight work. Specifically, since November 2017, and despite repeated requests, the Department has not provided the OIG with access to the Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection (OAWP) complaint database. The OIG is required to report in our semiannual report to Congress on incidents in which we are restricted from or significantly delayed in obtaining access to information needed to conduct our oversight work. Because our next semiannual report will not be published until the end of November 2018, we are bringing this to your attention now in an effort to resolve the impasse and move forward with our oversight work.

As you are aware, OAWP was formed last year by the *Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017* (Public Law 115-41). One of the stated purposes of OAWP is to receive whistleblower disclosures and to refer those disclosures to an appropriate office, including the OIG, for investigation. Given the potential for overlap between the complaints made to OAWP and complaints to the OIG Hotline, the attendant waste of government resources if OAWP and OIG duplicate investigations, and the OIG's responsibility for investigating all potential criminal matters involving the Department, the OIG has for more than seven months sought to work out a process with OAWP to obtain access to its complaint database. As discussed in the attached correspondence, the OIG needs this information to promote efficiency and to ensure that all serious allegations of wrongdoing involving the Department and its leadership are appropriately investigated.

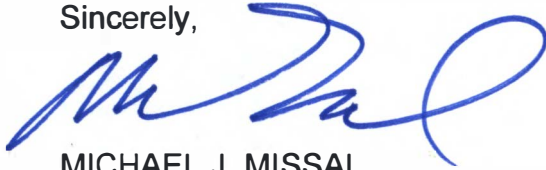
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Unfortunately, the OIG's requests to OAWP for access to this information have not been granted. We enclose for your information our recent correspondence with Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke on this matter. Given the lack of responsiveness to repeated OIG requests, I believe you should be notified so that you may take whatever action you deem appropriate.

Our access to this information is more critical at this time, as we have received a request on June 15, 2018, from the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs Ranking Member Jon Tester and Senator Richard Blumenthal, Senator Tammy Baldwin, and Senator Sherrod Brown to examine the perceived inadequacy of the Department's mandated reporting of its OAWP operations.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Missal", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

MICHAEL J. MISSAL

Enclosures