

INSPECTOR GENERAL PROTECTION ACT

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1847) to require congressional notification for certain changes in status of inspectors general, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1847

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Inspector General Protection Act”.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE IN STATUS OF INSPECTOR GENERAL.

(a) CHANGE IN STATUS OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF OFFICES.—Section 3(b) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

(1) by inserting “, is placed on paid or unpaid non-duty status,” after “is removed from office”;

(2) by inserting “, change in status,” after “any such removal”; and

(3) by inserting “, change in status,” after “before the removal”.

(b) CHANGE IN STATUS OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF DESIGNATED FEDERAL ENTITIES.—Section 8G(e)(2) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

(1) by inserting “, is placed on paid or unpaid non-duty status,” after “office”;

(2) by inserting “, change in status,” after “any such removal”; and

(3) by inserting “, change in status,” after “before the removal”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. PRESIDENTIAL EXPLANATION OF FAILURE TO NOMINATE AN INSPECTOR GENERAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 3349d the following new section:

§ 3349e. Presidential explanation of failure to nominate an Inspector General

“If the President fails to make a formal nomination for a vacant Inspector General position that requires a formal nomination by the President to be filled within the period beginning on the date on which the vacancy occurred and ending on the day that is 210 days after that date, the President shall communicate, within 30 days after the end of such period, to Congress in writing—

“(1) the reasons why the President has not yet made a formal nomination; and

“(2) a target date for making a formal nomination.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to 3349d the following new item:

“3349e. Presidential explanation of failure to nominate an Inspector General.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply to any vacancy first occurring on or after that date.

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be deter-

mined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROUDA) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure before us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to support the Inspector General Protection Act, which would improve the independence of inspectors general.

This bipartisan bill, introduced by Representative TED LIEU and Representative JODY HICE, would also address the disturbingly slow nomination of IGs that have been the norm across multiple administrations.

The bill would require notification of Congress 30 days prior to an IG being placed on leave. Such notification is already required prior to an IG being removed from duty.

The bill would also require the President to report to Congress if he has not nominated an IG after 210 days of a vacancy occurring.

The report must include the reasons for failing to make the nomination and a target date for doing so. The requirement will hopefully prod the executive branch to nominate IGs in a more timely manner.

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Inspectors general provide critical oversight and accountability within Federal agencies, and the positions need to be filled more quickly than is currently the case.

Madam Speaker, I urge Members to support this bipartisan bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 1847, the Inspector General Protection Act. I thank Representative TED LIEU for working in a bipartisan manner on this legislation. H.R. 1847 will help ensure that inspectors general vacancies across Federal agencies will be filled in a timely manner.

Inspectors general play an important role in improving the operations of the Federal Government. They help combat fraud, waste, and abuse throughout executive branch departments and

agencies and promote a resourceful and effective Federal Government.

They have assisted us with discharging one of our most important responsibilities, shining the light on areas of the government that need improved efficiency and economy.

However, throughout both Republican and Democratic administrations, there have been numerous vacant inspector general positions. Certain agencies have experienced prolonged periods of absent inspector general leadership.

For example, the Department of the Interior has been without a permanent inspector general since 2009. Likewise, there are approximately 13 vacant inspector general positions for agencies covered by the Inspector General Act.

This bill would require the President to timely notify Congress of a failure to nominate an inspector general for a given agency. The President would also be required to explain why a nomination has not yet been made and provide a target date for that nomination.

The bill also calls for increased transparency by requiring the President to notify Congress if an inspector general is placed on leave or changes status.

Inspectors general are an indispensable tool to Congress. By ensuring the Federal Government is adequately staffed with inspectors general, we are reaffirming our commitment to rooting out government fraud, waste, and abuse.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. TED LIEU), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Madam Speaker, first, let me thank the gentleman from California (Mr. ROUDA) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLER) for their comments in support of this legislation.

I rise today in support of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 1847, the Inspector General Protection Act, which will enhance the independence and integrity of our IGs.

Since Congress passed the original Inspector General Act in 1978, these government watchdogs have played a crucial role in our democracy. They root out waste, fraud, mismanagement, and abuse at all levels of government, saving American taxpayers billions of dollars annually and ensuring that government programs benefit the people.

According to the nonpartisan Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, taxpayers saved \$32.7 billion in fiscal year 2017 from audit recommendations. That is a \$22 return on every dollar invested.

Unfortunately, both Democratic and Republican administrations have hamstrung our IGs with persistent vacancies and underfunded budgets. According to the Project on Government

Oversight, vacancies of permanent inspectors general is not a new problem or one that is unique to this administration. This issue has persisted for years under both Democratic and Republican leadership. The Department of the Interior, for example, has lacked a Senate-confirmed inspector general for over a decade.

But it is not just vacancies that have been problematic. In a committee report, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs noted that “another type of personnel action has the potential for doing significant damage to OIG independence if abused: placing an IG on indefinite paid or unpaid nonduty status.”

My bill will address both of these problems.

First, H.R. 1847 requires notification of Congress in advance of an inspector general being placed on administrative leave. This ensures Congress is aware of any potential attempts to improperly sideline an inspector general.

Second, the bill requires the President to report to Congress if an inspector general has not been nominated within 210 days after a vacancy occurs for the position, including the reasons a nomination has not been made and a target date for doing so.

This reasserts Congress’ oversight role and allows Members to question, on an informal basis, the decision of any future administration to leave core offices vacant.

As Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY told The Washington Post in 2017, “Independent, nonpartisan IGs can be some of the President’s best allies in finding and cutting waste, fraud, and abuse in the bureaucracy.”

I agree with that statement. That is why I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, as well as the U.S. Senate, toward getting this commonsense bill signed into law.

I am grateful to my colleague from Georgia (Mr. HICE) for partnering with me on this legislation and to Chairman CUMMINGS and Ranking Member JORDAN for recognizing the importance of strengthening our Nation’s inspectors general.

I am also proud that this bill has received the endorsement of good-government groups across the ideological spectrum, including Project on Government Oversight, R Street Institute, American Oversight, Campaign for Accountability, Common Cause, and Public Citizen.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting good governance by voting “yes.”

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr.

ROUDA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1847, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ACCESS TO CONGRESSIONALLY MANDATED REPORTS ACT

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 736) to require the Director of the Government Publishing Office to establish and maintain an online portal accessible to the public that allows the public to obtain electronic copies of all congressionally mandated reports in one place, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 736

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CONGRESSIONALLY MANDATED REPORT.—The term “congressionally mandated report”—

(A) means a report that is required by statute to be submitted to either House of Congress or any committee of Congress or subcommittee thereof; and

(B) does not include a report required under part B of subtitle II of title 36, United States Code.

(2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means the Director of the Government Publishing Office.

(3) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal agency” has the meaning given that term under section 102 of title 40, United States Code, but does not include the Government Accountability Office.

(4) OPEN FORMAT.—The term “open format” means a file format for storing digital data based on an underlying open standard that—

(A) is not encumbered by any restrictions that would impede reuse; and

(B) is based on an underlying open data standard that is maintained by a standards organization.

(5) REPORTS ONLINE PORTAL.—The term “reports online portal” means the online portal established under section (3)(a).

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF ONLINE PORTAL FOR CONGRESSIONALLY MANDATED REPORTS.

(a) REQUIREMENT TO ESTABLISH ONLINE PORTAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall establish and maintain an online portal accessible by the public that allows the public to obtain electronic copies of all congressionally mandated reports in one place. The Director may publish other reports on the online portal.

(2) EXISTING FUNCTIONALITY.—To the extent possible, the Director shall meet the requirements under paragraph (1) by using existing online portals and functionality under the authority of the Director.

(3) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this Act, the Director shall consult with the

Clerk of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of the Senate, and the Librarian of Congress regarding the requirements for and maintenance of congressionally mandated reports on the reports online portal.

(b) CONTENT AND FUNCTION.—The Director shall ensure that the reports online portal includes the following:

(1) Subject to subsection (c), with respect to each congressionally mandated report, each of the following:

(A) A citation to the statute requiring the report.

(B) An electronic copy of the report, including any transmittal letter associated with the report, in an open format that is platform independent and that is available to the public without restrictions, including restrictions that would impede the re-use of the information in the report.

(C) The ability to retrieve a report, to the extent practicable, through searches based on each, and any combination, of the following:

(i) The title of the report.

(ii) The reporting Federal agency.

(iii) The date of publication.

(iv) Each congressional committee or subcommittee receiving the report, if applicable.

(v) The statute requiring the report.

(vi) Subject tags.

(vii) A unique alphanumeric identifier for the report that is consistent across report editions.

(viii) The serial number, Superintendent of Documents number, or other identification number for the report, if applicable.

(ix) Key words.

(x) Full text search.

(xi) Any other relevant information specified by the Director.

(D) The date on which the report was required to be submitted, and on which the report was submitted, to the reports online portal.

(E) To the extent practicable, a permanent means of accessing the report electronically.

(2) A means for bulk download of all congressionally mandated reports.

(3) A means for downloading individual reports as the result of a search.

(4) An electronic means for the head of each Federal agency to submit to the reports online portal each congressionally mandated report of the agency, as required by section 4.

(5) In tabular form, a list of all congressionally mandated reports that can be searched, sorted, and downloaded by—

(A) reports submitted within the required time;

(B) reports submitted after the date on which such reports were required to be submitted; and

(C) reports not submitted.

(c) NONCOMPLIANCE BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) REPORTS NOT SUBMITTED.—If a Federal agency does not submit a congressionally mandated report to the Director, the Director shall to the extent practicable—

(A) include on the reports online portal—

(i) the information required under clauses (i), (ii), (iv), and (v) of subsection (b)(1)(C); and

(ii) the date on which the report was required to be submitted; and

(B) include the congressionally mandated report on the list described in subsection (b)(5)(C).

(2) REPORTS NOT IN OPEN FORMAT.—If a Federal agency submits a congressionally mandated report that is not in an open format, the Director shall include the congressionally mandated report in another format on the reports online portal.