



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

Office of the  
Inspector General

January 11, 2010

Representative Stephen Lynch  
Chair, Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service,  
and the District of Columbia  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-349A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lynch:

As the Inspector General for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), I am alerting you about a very serious matter that represents an attempt to thwart an authority provided to us by the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 and that creates a risk of compromising our operational independence.

On January 4, 2010, my office received a telephone call from the OPM budget officer. He stated that he had been asked by a program examiner in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to determine if my office planned to exercise the provisions of section 6(f)(3)(E) of the Inspector General Act regarding our fiscal year (FY) 2011 budget. This provision provides that "any comments of [an] affected Inspector General" shall be included in the budget of the United States Government submitted to Congress if the Inspector General concludes that the budget would "substantially inhibit" him from performing his duties. The troubling aspect of the telephone conversation occurred when the OPM budget officer informed my Assistant Inspector General for Management that there is a "not so veiled threat from OMB" to expressly inform my office that they [OMB] will be working with the same [Congressional] committees that we do and if we go to the Congress regarding our FY 2011 budget, they [OMB] "will make life miserable for us."

We take this threat of retaliation and interference to our independence very seriously, and referred it to Robert Bauer, White House Counsel, on January 11, 2010 for his immediate attention. We want to be assured that the statutory processes established by the Inspector General Act are given their full intended effect, and to avoid any possibility that our relationships with the Congress and the Administration are ever violated.

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Deputy Inspector General Norbert E. Vint, at (202) 606-1200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick E. McFarland".

Patrick E. McFarland  
Inspector General