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December 21, 2009

Ms. Jackie Norris
Corporation for National and Community Service
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20525

Dear Ms. Norris:

The Committee is investigating the White House's removal of Gerald Walpin from his post as Inspector General ("IG") at the Corporation for National and Community Service (the "Corporation" or "CNCS"). As the Ranking Member of the principal oversight committee in the House of Representatives with specific jurisdiction over Inspectors General, I am writing you in furtherance of that investigation.

On June 16, 2009, the White House characterized Mr. Walpin's performance in a letter intended to satisfy the requirements of the IG Act, which obligates the President to formally provide notice to Congress prior to removing an IG.¹ The White House further assured Committee investigators that there were no inappropriate political reasons for the President's action. Despite a thorough review of the process by which the White House decided to effectuate Mr. Walpin's removal, there remain several unanswered questions.

While the President was deliberating action regarding Mr. Walpin in response to concerns expressed to the White House by CNCS personnel, you left the White House to become a senior advisor at CNCS.² After Mr. Walpin was removed, there was speculation in the press that you or others at the White House may have influenced the President's action.

On December 9, 2009 my staff asked the Corporation to arrange an interview with you to inquire about three meetings you had with former CNCS Chairman Alan Solomont between January 20, 2009 and Mr. Walpin's removal on June 10, 2009. According to White House

¹ Letter from Special Counsel to the President Norman L. Eisen to Chairman Edolphus Towns and Ranking Member Darrell Issa, June 16, 2009.

² White House Press Release, "White House Announces East Wing Staff Changes: Jackie Norris to Senior Advisor to Corporation for National and Community Service, Susan Sher to Chief of Staff to First Lady Michelle Obama," June 4, 2009.

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visitor logs and testimony provided by Mr. Solomont on December 8, 2009, he met with you on at least three occasions during that period to discuss CNCS business. Notably, you met with Mr. Solomont on June 9, 2009, one day prior to Mr. Walpin's ouster. Based on the information provided by Mr. Solomont, we are now interested in hearing from you.

Our request to meet with you was denied by Corporation General Counsel Frank Trinity. Mr. Trinity told my staff that the White House Counsel's office has advised him that they were not permitting the Corporation to make you available for an interview. Rather, according to Mr. Trinity, the White House Counsel's office would consider the request and notify us if they were going to permit you to be interviewed. It has been some time since we made our initial request to Mr. Trinity, and we have not heard from him or the White House Counsel's office.

We remain interested in speaking with you. We are also interested in better understanding the basis for the White House's decision to block your testimony. Throughout our investigation of Mr. Walpin's removal, the White House has repeatedly communicated that the President was not motivated by inappropriate political reasons. The White House has averred that you had no role whatsoever in the President's decision to remove Mr. Walpin. In light of these representations, it is hard to understand a decision to prevent your testimony. If the information provided by White House officials is true, it follows that no colorable claim of executive privilege should impede your cooperation with the Committee.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Please contact Steve Castor or Jonathan Skladany of the Committee staff at (202) 225-5074 to schedule your interview. We look forward to your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Edolphus Towns, Chairman
The Honorable Charles E. Grassley