

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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March 1, 2018

The Honorable Trey Gowdy
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are writing to request that you issue a subpoena to compel J. Russell George, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA), to produce a full, unredacted copy of a response he submitted to the Integrity Committee of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), which investigated allegations contained in a letter sent on February 5, 2014, by Subcommittee Ranking Members Connolly and Cartwright.¹

In their letter, Ranking Members Connolly and Cartwright raised serious concerns about TIGTA's compliance with generally accepted government auditing standards in conducting its performance audit entitled, *Inappropriate Criteria Were Used to Identify Tax-Exempt Applications for Review*. These standards exist to ensure the quality, integrity, objectivity, and independence of audits, including those we rely on heavily in conducting the fundamental responsibilities of our Committee.

As they explained, TIGTA appeared to engage in a partisan audit acceptance and initiation process; gave incomplete, inaccurate, and misleading responses to questions; left glaring deficiencies and omissions in its final product; failed to give Congress timely notification of new developments; and even made statements that could be viewed as attempts to intimidate congressional criticism of audit methods and conclusions. They wrote:

¹ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Subcommittee on Government Operations, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and Ranking Member Matthew Cartwright, Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Job Creation, and Regulatory Affairs, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to Beth Cobert, Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget, and Executive Chair, Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, Phyllis K. Fong, Inspector General, Department of Agriculture and Chair, Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and Joseph S. Campbell, Deputy Assistant Director, Criminal Investigative Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation and Chair of the Integrity Committee, Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity & Efficiency (Feb. 5, 2014) (online at <https://connolly.house.gov/uploads/connolly-cartwright%20complaint%20-%20cigie%20-%2002%2005%202014.pdf>).

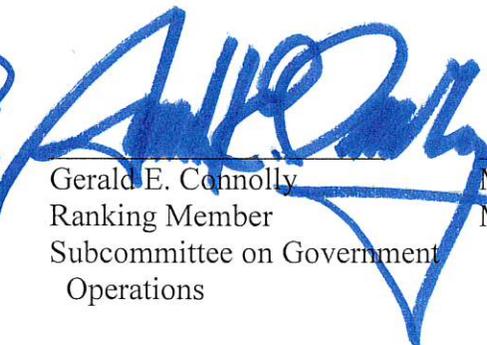
TIGTA produced a fundamentally flawed performance audit of the activities of the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Tax Exempt and Government Entities Division that harmed the public interest to such a severe extent that trust and confidence in TIGTA's independence, ethics, competence, and quality control have been called into question and its effectiveness is threatened.²

Committee staff first requested Mr. George's response to CIGIE on September 17, 2014, and they were assured that a response would be provided shortly. Having not received his response for months, Ranking Members Connolly and Cartwright sent a letter to Mr. George on February 26, 2015, requesting the response directly from him.³

We are requesting this document now in light of the Committee's recent decision to launch new investigations of the work of Inspectors General. For example, last month, you sent a letter to the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (OIG) questioning "the judgment of the OIG in its efforts to carry out its independent core mission of identifying waste, fraud, and abuse at the Department."⁴

If you decline to issue this subpoena yourself, then we request that you allow Committee Members to debate and vote on a motion to subpoena TIGTA at our next regularly-scheduled business meeting. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

		
Elijah E. Cummings Ranking Member Committee on Oversight and Government Reform	Gerald E. Connolly Ranking Member Subcommittee on Government Operations	Matthew Cartwright Member of Congress

² *Id.*

³ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Subcommittee on Government Operations, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and Ranking Member Matthew Cartwright, Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Job Creation, and Regulatory Affairs, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to J. Russell George, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (Feb. 26, 2015) (online at <https://democrats-oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2015-02-26.Connolly%20Cartwright%20to%20George-TIGTA%20re%20Response%20to%20CIGIE%20Requ....pdf>).

⁴ Letter from Chairman Trey Gowdy, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to John V. Kelly, Acting Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security (Jan. 23, 2018).