

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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July 13, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I wrote in May to raise concerns about allegations of abuse of authority by the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) inspector general (IG), based on findings of the Integrity Committee of the Council of the Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE).<sup>1</sup> Since that time, Inspector General Laura Wertheimer announced her resignation, effective July 30, 2021.<sup>2</sup> But your attention remains critical to rebuilding the integrity of the office. I respectfully request that you prioritize the appointment of a new FHFA IG and nominate an individual with the acumen and integrity needed to rebuild that office.

IGs must be above reproach, adhering to the highest standards of ethics and conduct, so that whistleblowers who would report wrongdoing in their agencies can trust them. The Integrity Committee reported that IG Wertheimer abused her authority and created a “culture of witness intimidation.”<sup>3</sup> Her perpetuation of this toxic work environment and reprehensible mistreatment of her staff for four years undeniably damaged the culture and operations of the office she was tasked to lead.

Ms. Wertheimer’s departure is an important step toward restoring integrity in the FHFA Office of the Inspector General (OIG). But there remains a risk that the position of acting IG could be filled by a senior official who has also been identified as having abused his authority.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Chairman Gerald E. Connolly, Subcommittee on Government Operations, to President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (May 4, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> *Embattled Housing Finance Agency IG Steps Down*, Government Executive (June 29, 2021) (online at [www.govexec.com/oversight/2021/06/embattled-housing-finance-agency-ig-steps-down/176819/](http://www.govexec.com/oversight/2021/06/embattled-housing-finance-agency-ig-steps-down/176819/)).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Jason Foster, Empower Oversight Whistleblowers & Research, Tom Devine, Government Accountability Project, and Danielle Brian, Project on Government Oversight, to President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (July 7, 2021) (online at <https://empowr.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2021.07.07-POTUS-ltr-re-FHFA-IG.pdf>); Letter from Chairperson Kevin H. Winters, Integrity Committee, Council of the Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency, to President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (Apr. 14, 2021) (online at [https://cdn.govexec.com/media/gbc/docs/pdfs\\_edit/051321cb2.pdf](https://cdn.govexec.com/media/gbc/docs/pdfs_edit/051321cb2.pdf)).

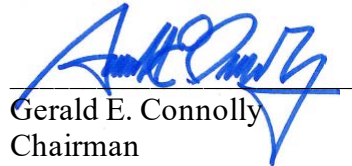
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It would be intolerable to allow an individual who was complicit in IG Wertheimer's misconduct to assume leadership of the office once she departs.

We must hold our federal watchdogs to the highest principles of transparency and accountability. Prioritizing the appointment of a new FHFA IG will help to restore integrity to the office. In the interim, I ask that you install a qualified acting IG who upholds the ideals of transparency and accountability within the OIG.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly

Chairman

Subcommittee on Government Operations

cc: The Honorable Jody Hice, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government Operations