

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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### Opening Statement Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney House Oversight and Reform Committee “Improving Government Accountability and Transparency” May 3, 2021

**Today’s hearing will examine legislative proposals to improve government accountability and transparency. Enacting these common-sense, bipartisan reforms would improve efficiency, combat waste, fraud, and abuse, and build public trust in the federal government.**

The work of Inspectors General is critical to each of these goals. I introduced the [IG Independence and Empowerment Act](#) to ensure that Inspectors General can perform their jobs free from political retaliation, and that they have the tools needed to perform thorough investigations.

This [comprehensive package](#) includes my bill that would protect IGs from being fired just for doing their jobs, and would only allow an IG to be removed for cause, based on a defined list of legitimate, nonpartisan reasons.

**The previous Administration retaliated against IGs who dared to conduct meaningful oversight. Last April and May, President Trump fired the IGs for the State Department and the Intelligence Community after they conducted oversight of the President and his top advisors. This legislation would ensure that abuses like these are never repeated.**

**This [package](#) also includes bills introduced by several Committee members, including Government Operations Subcommittee Chairman Connolly, Committee Vice Chair Gomez, and Congresswoman Porter. I want to thank each of them for their hard work on these reforms. Many of these proposals have historically enjoyed bipartisan support—such as giving Inspectors General the ability to compel testimony from contractors and former federal employees.**

Another bill we will be considering is the [Periodically Listing Updates to Management Act](#), also known as the PLUM Act. With the support of Chairman Connolly and Congressman Sarbanes, we introduced this bill as part of Sunshine Week back in March. This bill would provide the American people with timely and transparent information about senior government officials.

During Sunshine Week, I also introduced the bipartisan [Federal Advisory Committee Transparency Act](#) with Ranking Member Comer. This bill would close loopholes that agencies

have often used to avoid making the work of these advisory committees transparent to the public. I am grateful to the Ranking Member for his continued support on this much-needed reform.

Today we will also discuss the [Accountability for Acting Officials Act](#), Congresswoman Porter's bill to amend federal vacancies law. I support this important bill, which would clarify and strengthen requirements around who can serve as an acting official, and for how long, when a Senate-confirmed position is vacant. The bill would also increase transparency with new requirements for agencies to notify Congress about vacancies and for acting officials to testify regularly before Congress.

Finally, protections for whistleblowers need to be strengthened to preserve the crucial role these brave federal employees play in holding the government accountable, including by providing information to Congress. These reforms have always received strong bipartisan support. That is why I am pleased to announce that Representatives Mace, Connolly, Speier, Johnson, Rice, and I are releasing the bipartisan [Whistleblower Protection Improvement Act](#) today.

This bill would clarify that no federal employee—including the President or Vice President of the United States—may interfere with or retaliate against a whistleblower for sharing information with Congress. The bill would provide federal whistleblowers with faster legal recourse for retaliation claims and would allow whistleblowers who take a claim to court to have their case heard by a jury.

I look forward to hearing from today's panel of non-partisan experts on these topics and our proposed reforms. Today's hearing is the first step in the legislative process. Going forward, I hope to work with the Ranking Member and all Members of the Committee to pass these bills out of our Committee and enact them into law.

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