

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

March 19, 2015

Via U.S. Mail and Email (CongressToDHS@hq.dhs.gov)

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for your February 9, 2015, letter and subsequent staff briefing regarding the employment status of former Acting and Deputy Inspector General Charles Edwards.¹ At that briefing, your staff stated that Mr. Edwards had his security clearance reinstated and thus was eligible to return to employment as Director of the Interagency Office Research and Development Partnerships Group, in the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (S&T).² Mr. Edwards' security clearance was suspended after a bipartisan investigation by the Senate Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight found that he jeopardized the independence of the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG).³ Mr. Edwards was placed on paid administrative leave from April 24, 2014, until December 22, 2014, when he was indefinitely suspended without pay.⁴

Your letter stated that Mr. Edwards received \$118,974.96 while on administrative leave and, if he were to return to paid status, he would receive a salary of \$181,500 per annum. He will qualify for reduced retirement on July 5, 2016. When you placed Mr. Edwards on administrative leave, you stated “. . . [I]f additional information comes to light, I will continue to take appropriate action.”⁵

Additional information has in fact come to light. The Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General (DOT OIG) completed its investigation into Mr. Edwards on behalf of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE). The DOT OIG

¹ Letter from Hon. Jeh Johnson, Sec'y, Dep't of Homeland Security, to Hon. Jason Chaffetz, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform (Feb. 9, 2015). [hereinafter Letter]

² Meeting, Dep't of Homeland Security staff and H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform staff (Mar. 2, 2015). [hereinafter Meeting]

³ U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight: *Investigation into Allegations of Misconduct by the Former Acting and Deputy Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security*, 113th Cong. (Apr. 24, 2014).

⁴ See Meeting, *supra* note 2.

⁵ See Letter, *supra* note 1.

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report found that Mr. Edwards arranged at least one taxpayer-funded trip to the DHS OIG office in Miami as a pre-text to visit nearby Nova Southeastern University, where he was earning a computer and information sciences degree. The report also found that Mr. Edwards' failure to disclose the hiring of his wife by the DHS Program Accountability and Risk Management office impaired the independence of a DHS OIG audit and required the audit to be rescinded at a cost to taxpayers of \$659,943.32. The DOT OIG also found, among other things, that Mr. Edwards instructed subordinates to work on personal matters for him during official time.⁶

The findings of the Senate Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight and the DOT OIG are egregious. Documents and testimony show that Mr. Edwards misused taxpayer dollars and abused the public trust.

We support your decision to place Mr. Edwards on unpaid administrative leave based on the DOT OIG's findings, and we urge you not to adjust his employment status simply because his security clearance has been reinstated.⁷ We further respectfully request that you do not return Mr. Edwards to paid status and take all steps necessary to separate him from the Department.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and may at "any time" investigate "any matter" as set forth in House Rule X. An attachment to this letter provides additional information about responding to the Committee's request.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Mike Howell of the Majority staff at (202) 225-5074 and Brandon Reavis of the Minority staff at (202) 225-4741. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



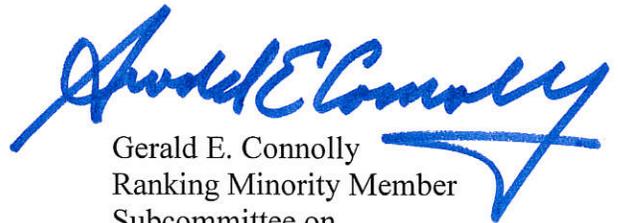
Jason Chaffetz
Chairman



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Minority Member



Mark Meadows
Chairman
Subcommittee on
Government Operations



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on
Government Operations

⁶ Letter from Timothy Delaney, Chair, Integrity Comm., CIGIE, to Hon. Thomas Carper, Chairman, S. Comm. on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Hon. Tom Coburn, Ranking Member, S. Comm. on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Hon. Darrell Issa, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform, and Hon. Elijah Cummings, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform (Nov. 19, 2014).

⁷ See Meeting, *supra* note 2.