

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

July 25, 2024

Mr. Michael Berkow  
Former Director  
U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service  
*Transmitted Electronically*

Dear Mr. Berkow:

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability continues to investigate the U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG) mishandling of serious misconduct, including racism, hazing, discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and the failure to disclose internal investigations into those issues to Congress. As the former Director of the Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) from October 2012 to December 2021, we believe that you have valuable information relevant to the Committee's investigation. Therefore, we are requesting you participate in a voluntary transcribed interview.

First reported publicly on June 30, 2023, Operation Fouled Anchor (OFA) was an internal USCG investigation into allegations of sexual abuse at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy from the 1980s to 2006.<sup>1</sup> Operation Fouled Anchor found that "school leaders routinely failed to report serious allegations to law enforcement, intentionally avoiding the criminal justice system." In addition to OFA, on November 28, 2023, the Committee received an April 2015 USCG report titled "Culture of Respect (COR) Integrated Process Team (IPT) Phase I Report."<sup>2</sup> Among the highly concerning findings of the report, USCG investigators found systemic issues including a lack of training on sexual assault and harassment; methods used by the USCG to track sexual assault and harassment were ineffective and inefficient; USCG training did not include a focus on sexual assault or harassment; and senior leaders misunderstood basic USCG leadership competencies.<sup>3</sup>

One of the key questions the Committee is examining is the extent to which senior USCG leadership willfully concealed internal reports from Congress that would have informed policy changes needed to combat, and further prevent, future incidents of misconduct. Additionally, as the former Director of CGIS during the investigation of OFA, the Committee is

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<sup>1</sup> Blake Ellis, Melanie Hicken, Audrey Ash, Criminal investigation into Coast Guard Academy revealed years of sexual assault cover-ups, but findings were kept secret, CNN (June 30, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> United States Coast Guard Force Readiness Command, Culture of Respect (COR) Integrated Process Team (IPT) Phase I Report, April 2015.

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

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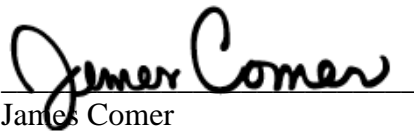
interested in learning more about what efforts were made to notify Congress or conceal misconduct.

We believe that as the former Director of CGIS, you have information that will assist us in fully understanding the extent to which USCG withheld these reports from Congress, how these incidents of misconduct were handled, and what actions USCG took regarding those responsible. We therefore request that you make yourself available voluntarily for a transcribed interview.

To schedule the transcribed interview or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Accountability Majority Staff at (202) 225-5074 no later than August 1, 2024.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



James Comer  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and Accountability



Glenn Grothman  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security,  
the Border, and Foreign Affairs

cc: The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

The Honorable Robert Garcia, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs