



Council of the
INSPECTORS GENERAL
on INTEGRITY and EFFICIENCY

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate

Dear Ranking Member Murray:

We are writing in response to your letter dated April 13, 2020, in which you requested information about the nomination of Mr. Andrew De Mello to be Inspector General of the Department of Education. In addition, you referenced the role of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) in the process of vetting potential IG nominees.

The Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 merged the pre-existing Councils of Presidentially- and agency head- appointed Inspectors General to create CIGIE. The functions of this new Council included “submit[ting] recommendations of individuals to the appropriate appointing authority for any appointment to an office of Inspector General described under subsection (b)(1)(A) or (B).” 5 U.S.C. App. 3, §11(c)(1)(F)

In January 2009, CIGIE’s Chair created the Inspector General Candidate Recommendations Panel. That Panel, which currently is led by CIGIE’s Vice Chair and also includes two Presidentially-appointed and two agency head-appointed IGs, has worked with Presidential administrations and agency heads since its inception to fulfill its responsibility to identify candidates “without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in accounting, auditing, financial analysis, law, management analysis, public administration, or investigations.” 5 U.S.C. App. 3, §3(a). We have met on a number of occasions with senior officials in both the Obama and Trump administrations to discuss the importance of filling IG vacancies in a timely fashion and the Council’s role in that process. We have also sent letters focused on the need to confirm IG vacancies to the leaders of the Senate, and the CIGIE Chair has testified on this topic in Congressional hearings. In October of 2019, we launched an IG Vacancy Tracker on [Oversight.gov](https://oversight.gov) to highlight critical information about the number and length of all IG vacancies. The Vacancy Tracker also links to information about the process of filling IG vacancies.

Individuals interested in an IG position can express their interest directly to the Panel; the White House also sends resumes of individuals it is considering for such positions. Prior to 2017, the Panel’s process generally involved reviewing a candidate’s resume, and any additional information submitted by the candidate, and then providing feedback to either the White


House Counsel's Office (for Presidentially-appointed IGs) or the agency (for agency-appointed IGs). In the spring of 2017, the White House Counsel's Office asked the Panel to enhance the steps it took to review potential candidates, including by interviewing candidates, and sought further feedback from the Panel on candidates for Presidentially-appointed IGs. As a result, since 2017, the Panel has interviewed individuals interested in being considered for Presidentially-appointed IG positions before making any recommendation to the White House Counsel's Office, and the discussions about candidates with the White House Counsel's Office have been robust and extensive. Panel interviews require a quorum of the Panel (four members) and are conducted by phone, given the challenge of coordinating the schedules of five Inspectors General and one candidate. The interviews usually last about an hour and consist of questions designed to probe the candidate's understanding of the role of an Inspector General and challenges faced by IGs; leadership experience and philosophy; and demonstrated ability in accounting, auditing, financial analysis, law, management analysis, public administration, investigations, or other oversight work. Following the interview, the Panel decides whether to recommend (or not recommend) the candidate for consideration for an Inspector General position. If the Panel recommends that a candidate be considered, it also shares its thoughts on the candidate's suitability for any vacancies the candidate has expressed an interest in. The Panel's chair condenses this feedback into a table, which she provides to the White House Counsel's Office. Through this process, CIGIE has provided dozens of recommendations to the White House and agencies concerning Inspector General candidates.

With respect to your question about the nomination of Mr. Andrew De Mello to be the IG of the Department of Education, the Panel submitted a recommendation to the White House Counsel's Office concerning Mr. De Mello. With regard to any request for the specifics of the Panel's recommendation, and whether it was or was not positive, we would direct you to the White House Counsel's Office.

We appreciate your continued support for the IG community. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact us, or CIGIE Executive Director Alan Boehm at 202-292-2603.

Sincerely,


Michael E. Horowitz
Chair


Allison C. Lerner
Vice Chair