



COUNCIL OF THE INSPECTORS GENERAL ON INTEGRITY AND EFFICIENCY

March 10, 2025

Deidre Harrison
Acting Executive Chairperson
Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency
Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget

Subject: Council of the Inspectors General Legislative Priorities for the 119th United States Congress

Ms. Harrison,

On behalf of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), the Legislation Committee¹ (the Committee) is sharing CIGIE's top legislative priorities for the 119th Congress.

The Committee provides timely information to the Inspector General (IG) community about congressional initiatives; solicits the technical advice of the IG community to proposed legislation; and provides recommendations to the U.S. Congress and the Office of Management and Budget on legislative issues affecting the IG community. At the start of each new Congress, the Committee issues legislative priorities to strengthen the integrity and operations of federal programs and improve oversight and effectiveness of Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs).

CIGIE appreciates the historically bipartisan support of the IG community, its mission, and the collaboration in strengthening its effectiveness and ability to conduct independent oversight. In the 118th Congress, the bipartisan enactment of the Administrative False Claims Act (AFCA) as part of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (P.L. 118-159), moved forward a longstanding proposal of the IG community. Sponsored by Senators Charles E. Grassley and Dick Durbin, AFCA includes substantial reforms of the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act, a tool that agencies use to fight fraud committed against the federal government with the ability to recover taxpayer funds and seek damages when a person knowingly presents a false, fictitious, or fraudulent claim for payment.

Congress' enactment of the GAO Inspector General Parity Act (P.L. 118-131) also moves forward another CIGIE legislative proposal for the 118th Congress, seeking parity for legislative branch IGs with their executive counterparts regarding notification when an IG is placed on non-duty status. This law includes the same provision for the GAO IG afforded to other IGs established in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (NDAA) (P.L. 117-

¹ The CIGIE Legislation Committee membership currently includes 45 of the 73 federal Inspectors General.

263). We continue to work with Congress to obtain parity for the Government Publishing Office, Architect of the Capitol, Library of Congress, and U.S. Capitol Police IGs.

Below are CIGIE's top Legislative Priorities for the 119th Congress. If enacted, these Legislative Priorities would strengthen government oversight and accountability, as well as prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in federal programs. The Committee looks forward to providing technical assistance on legislation related to these priorities:

1. Permanent Data Analytics Capability for the IG Community,
2. Prohibiting the Use of Appropriated Funds Government-wide to Deny IGs Full and Prompt Access, and
3. Enhancing Oversight Independence and Efficiency by Providing Separate and Flexible OIG Funding.

Summaries of CIGIE's top legislative priorities are provided below. Additional relevant information about the priorities is provided in the enclosure. For the full listing of other legislative priorities and initiatives supported by the Committee, please visit:

<https://www.ignet.gov/content/legislation-0>.

1. Permanent Data Analytics Capability for the IG Community

The highest among the IG community's top priorities is to establish a permanent, scalable data analytics platform for IGs and the agencies they oversee to help detect and prevent fraud and improper payments in all federal spending, including emergency spending. In early 2021, Congress provided CIGIE's Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC) with the authority and \$40 million in funding to create and operate a data analytics center through Fiscal Year 2025. This support from Congress was instrumental in the PRAC's development of its Pandemic Analytics Center of Excellence (PACE).

The PRAC moved swiftly to stand up the PACE, leveraging leading practices and lessons learned from the Recovery Operations Center (ROC).² The ROC sunset in 2015, despite its substantial accomplishments in detecting and preventing fraud. Due to the failure to sustain the ROC, in the critical first year of the COVID-19 pandemic the PRAC did not have an analytics platform to help IGs and agencies prevent and detect hundreds of millions—if not billions—of dollars in improper payments and fraud **before** federal programs disbursed more than a trillion dollars in relief funds. The PACE has proven to be extraordinarily successful in identifying improper payments and fraud in pandemic relief programs, resulting in recoveries for the taxpayers that far exceeded its initial appropriation. In one recent case alone, the PACE helped a smaller IG office develop an investigative lead that resulted in a \$135 million civil recovery for the federal government.

As of September 2024, the PACE has provided investigative support to 48 federal law enforcement and OIG partners on over 935 pandemic-related investigations involving 22,000

² The ROC was developed in 2009 by the IG community with Congressional funding following the financial collapse.

subjects and an estimated fraud loss of \$2.25 billion.³ The Government Accountability Office recently estimated that expanding the PACE’s authority to include all federal programs “could result **in a billion or more annually** in financial benefits.” However, the PRAC is scheduled to sunset on September 30, 2025, which will result in the loss of the PACE. If that occurs, when the next natural disaster, financial emergency, or other crisis strikes, resulting in large-scale emergency relief funding, the federal government will once again be without a critical resource that could help ensure that taxpayer funds are used to assist those they were intended to benefit, rather than being stolen by fraudsters.

The IG community seeks Congressional support to sustain the PACE’s capabilities to enable the application of its fraud prevention and detection tools to all federal spending for timely oversight of emerging crises. The federal government will more effectively fight fraud with a centralized analytics system to flag offenders seeking to exploit multiple programs, or to find hidden connections between schemes. Sustaining and expanding the current scope of the PACE beyond pandemic spending would enable individual IGs across the community, regardless of their size or current analytic capability, to bolster their oversight. By leveraging high-quality data sets and analytic solutions to conduct efficient audit planning, and assess complaints, the IG community would continue to be at the forefront of preventing and detecting fraud.

Given the variety of legislative approaches to developing a permanent data analytics capacity in the 118th Congress, the IG community is providing a set of principles we have developed that address the critical elements of a permanent, scalable data analytics platform rather than proposed legislative text.

2. Prohibiting the Use of Appropriated Funds Government-wide to Deny IGs Full and Prompt Access

Despite clear language in the Inspector General Act of 1978 (IG Act) (codified at 5 U.S.C. Chapter 4) authorizing IGs to have full and timely access to all agency information, over the years, multiple IGs have been denied the access they need to provide robust oversight.

On an *ad hoc* basis, Congress has effectively resolved such denials by including, within subcommittee appropriations acts, a prohibition on an agency’s use of appropriated funds to deny full and prompt IG access. Such prohibitions have had great practical effect because the consequences of denying the IG access could lead to an Anti-deficiency Act violation. However, the existing appropriation prohibitions apply to only those agencies funded under the particular subcommittee appropriations act.

CIGIE accordingly recommends a government-wide prohibition on the use of appropriated funds to deny an IG access and a requirement of congressional notification when access is denied. CIGIE’s proposal recognizes existing statutes that limit IG access and those that prevent an IG from further disclosing information protected by law.

³ Source: <https://www.pandemicoversight.gov/media/file/sept-10-testimony-prac-chair-michael-horowitz0pdf>.

3. Enhancing Oversight Independence and Efficiency by Providing Separate and Flexible OIG Funding

Through the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-409), Congress recognized that OIGs benefit from greater budgetary independence from their agency. For some OIGs, the appropriations through which they receive funding can further that goal. CIGIE supports certain revisions to OIG funding that would help safeguard the ability of OIGs to perform independent oversight, ensure effective management of resources, and protect against OIG budget cuts by agencies. CIGIE also supports providing additional budgetary flexibility, to OIGs who request it, through appropriations that explicitly provide for OIG funding across more than one year to ensure continuity of operations. For many OIGs, this could be accomplished by providing the OIG: (1) their own funding level, such as through a separate appropriation sub account, separate line item, or by specifying an amount “no less than” and (2) funding that is flexible, such as two-year, multi-year, or no-year funding, as appropriate.

The Committee appreciates the opportunity to present this summary of key legislative priorities. We look forward to working together in the 119th Congress to advance legislation that will improve oversight and accountability of federal programs.

Should you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-692-2900.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joaquin Ferrao". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joaquin E. Ferrao
Chair
CIGIE Legislation Committee

CC: CIGIE Executive Council
CIGIE Members and liaisons