

TRUMP FIRED INSPECTORS GENERAL WHO IDENTIFIED \$183.5 BILLION IN WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE

There have and will be a slew of lawsuits in response to Trump's attack on government. But this lawsuit, from eight of the Inspectors General that Trump fired on January 24, has been much anticipated. [docket]

That's partly because Congress *just* strengthened the laws protecting Inspectors General, in response to Trump's firing of some in his first term, as the suit lays out.

63. Congress responded in 2022 by further amending the IG Act. The Securing Inspector General Independence Act of 2022, see *supra* ¶16, enacted by overwhelming margins in both houses of Congress, procedural protections before an IG can be removed or placed on nonduty status, designated that a "first assistant" would automatically replace an IG in the event of a vacancy, and required the President to communicate reasons for not making a formal nomination to fill an IG vacancy after a certain period of time.

64. The 2022 amendments also strengthened the procedural safeguards on removing an IG. Prior to the amendments, the IG Act had required the President to provide 30 days' notice to both houses of Congress and "reasons for any such removal." The 2022 amendments require the President to provide 30 days' notice to both houses of Congress, including appropriate congressional committees, and to "communicate in

writing the substantive rationale, including detailed and case-specific reasons, for any such removal.” 5 U.S.C. §403(b). With the 2022 amendments included, the relevant provisions now reads as follows:

An Inspector General may be removed from office by the President. If an Inspector General is removed from office or is transferred to another position or location within an establishment, the President shall communicate in writing the substantive rationale, including detailed and case-specific reasons for any such removal or transfer to both Houses of Congress (including to the appropriate congressional committees), not later than 30 days before the removal or transfer. Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a personnel action otherwise authorized by law, other than transfer or removal.

65. These procedural provisions ensure that Congress or members of Congress can, if it or they deem it appropriate, seek to persuade the President not to go forward with a noticed removal. Indeed, the legislative history of the Inspector General Reform Act indicates that Congress added the notice requirement to “allow for an appropriate dialogue with Congress in the event that the planned transfer or removal is viewed as an inappropriate or politically motivated attempt to terminate an effective Inspector General.” See S. Rep. No. 110-262, at 4 (2008)

If Congress has any power to limit how the President fires someone, then this suit will uphold that power (a large team from Wilmer Cutler, led by former Solicitor General Seth Waxman, are representing the plaintiffs).

But it's also because the plaintiffs in this suit embody everything Trump claims he wants to do with DOGE. Elon Musk claims he's hunting for waste, fraud, and corruption in government agencies he's wildly unfamiliar with. These civil servants have been doing this, some of them, for four decades.

Indeed, one thing the suit lists, for each of the plaintiffs, is how much material impact they have had in their role (with one exception, exclusively in the IG position from which they were fired, which the report explains is:

"Monetary impact" describes the estimated financial savings or losses that could result from implementing recommendations made in an IG's audits, inspections, or evaluations, essentially quantifying the potential cost-benefit of addressing issues like waste, fraud, and abuse in a government agency or program. See CIGIE, Toolkit for Identifying and Reporting Monetary Impact, at 1 (June 18, 2024), <https://www.ignet.gov/sites/default/files/files/Toolkit%20for%20Identifying%20and%20Reporting%20Monetary%20Impact.pdf>.

Some monetary-impact estimates reported herein also consider monetary benefits associated with IG investigations.

And while there's some inconsistency in the reporting (for example, Sandra Bruce included stuff from when she was Acting IG during Trump's first term whereas some of the others left out substantial terms in other IG roles, Larry Turner's number – for Department of Labor – seems quite high, and Mike Ware does not include \$30 billion seized or returned pursuant to investigations he oversaw), the Inspectors General describe identifying \$183.5 billion in material impact.

Name	Tenure	Agency	Impact
Robert Storch	25	DOD	10,800,000,000
Michael Missal	103	VA	45,000,000,000
Christi Grimm	35	HHS	18,500,000,000
Cardell Richardson	8	State	17,000,000
Sandra Bruce	37	Education	1,200,000,000
Phyllis Fong	266	Agriculture	19,000,000,000
Larry Turner	37	Labor	75,000,000,000
Mike Ware	81	Small Business	14,000,000,000
			183,517,000,000

As noted in this post, that includes substantial work cleaning up after COVID relief rolled out by Trump, particularly from Mike Ware, work which lead *DOGE Treasury Official* Thomas Krause relied on to suggest that DOGE could be effective. In Ware testimony to Congress that Krause cited, Ware described up to \$200 billion in fraud just in Small Business related relief alone.

Using OIG's investigative casework, prior OIG reporting, advanced data analytics, and additional review procedures, we estimate SBA disbursed more than \$200 billion in potentially fraudulent COVID-19 EIDLs and PPP loans. This estimate represents approximately 17 percent of disbursed COVID-19 EIDLs and PPP funds – specifically, more than \$136 billion COVID-19 EIDLs and \$64 billion in PPP funds. Since SBA did not have an established strong internal control environment for approving and disbursing program funds, there was an insufficient barrier against fraudsters accessing funds that should have been available for eligible business owners adversely affected by the pandemic.

That's what Trump did by firing Ware and the others: halt proven efforts to do what DOGE is incapable of – and only pretending – to do.

Which is another reason to keep an eye on this lawsuit.