

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Tim Ryan
Chairman, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 210515

Dear Chairman Ryan and Ranking Member Beutler:

As you work to finalize Fiscal Year 2021 funding for the Legislative Branch agencies, we urge the subcommittee to include \$1,000,000 in funding for the House Office of the Whistleblower Ombudsman.

As Co-Chairs of the bipartisan House Whistleblower Protection Caucus, we strive to champion the rights of whistleblowers, who risk their careers to report waste, fraud, abuse, and threats to public health and safety. Our Caucus is dedicated to protecting these individuals in order to promote good governance.

The House of Representatives took an important step in 2019 to help whistleblowers by including a new House Office of the Whistleblower Ombudsman in the Rules Package for the 116th Congress. Under that authority, the Speaker, in consultation with Chairs and Ranking Members of the Committees on House Administration and Oversight and Reform, appointed Shanna Devine as Director of the new office. The nonpartisan, independent Ombudsman office is tasked with developing best practices for House offices regarding whistleblower intake and assistance training.

Congress plays a critical role in both learning from, and protecting, whistleblowers. Additionally, our constitutionally mandated oversight work very often relies on vital disclosures from federal workers and employees within the private sector. However, when interacting with whistleblowers, some Congressional offices may mishandle whistleblower disclosures or dismiss them entirely due to lack of training. When this happens, it could inadvertently result in retaliation against a whistleblower as well as the continuation of the often fraudulent and wasteful activities that the whistleblower is attempting to illuminate.

Now that a Director of the Office has been appointed, we understand that current funding will allow for the hiring of additional staff, as well as the establishment and upkeep of a website, development of educational resources, and initial training. In order to ensure that the House Office of the Whistleblower Ombudsman is successful, continued funding for Fiscal Year 2021 is needed.

Therefore, we request that the subcommittee continues to support the Office of the Whistleblower Ombudsman by providing \$1,000,000 in dedicated Fiscal Year 2021 funding.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and again urge you to ensure that this essential funding is allocated for the benefit of the American taxpayer and in the interest of ensuring good governance.

Sincerely,



Jackie Speier
Whistleblower Protection Caucus
Co-Chair



Mark Meadows
Whistleblower Protection Caucus
Co-Chair



Kathleen M. Rice
Whistleblower Protection Caucus
Co-Chair