

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 9, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Honorable Mark Esper
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense

The Honorable Rick Perry
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary of Interior
U.S. Department of Interior

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury

The Honorable William Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice

The Honorable Gina Haspel
Director
Central Intelligence Agency

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services

The Honorable Ben Carson
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development

The Honorable Eugene Scalia
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The Honorable Joseph Maguire
Acting Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National
Intelligence

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer
U.S. Trade Representative

Mr. Chris Pilkerton
Acting Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration

Dear Members of the Cabinet:

In recent weeks, the American people have learned of multiple, credible allegations of wrongdoing on the part of administration officials, including the President of the United States. These allegations were brought to light by whistleblowers who sought the help and protection of inspectors general. As former attorneys general we know the importance of ensuring that all relevant evidence is preserved and witnesses are protected. We call on you to take immediate action to identify and preserve all relevant evidence and cooperate with ongoing and future investigations.

The whistleblowers allege deeply troubling activities and attempts by the Administration to withhold information from Congress and the American public. In the case of the Intelligence Community whistleblower, who provided evidence that the president solicited foreign interference in our upcoming elections, Trump administration lawyers authorized the acting Director of National Intelligence to withhold the complaint from Congressional intelligence committees. The president has referred to the Intelligence Community whistleblowers as partisans and traitors, which is a clear attempt to intimidate them and additional whistleblowers from coming forward. Just as whistleblowers should not be threatened by administration officials, inspectors general should not be interfered with or intimidated.

Your leadership is needed to maintain the American people's faith in the rule of law. Your departments must fully comply with the demands from Congressional oversight committees, and inspectors general must be permitted to carry out any current or future investigations free from undue political interference. To that end, we urge you to immediately take the following steps:

1. Order all department personnel to identify, preserve and collect records related to on-going investigations. This must include the recovery and preservation of all relevant communications on personal devices by government officials.
2. Provide all information and documents within your respective department in relation to any operation or investigation over which Congress or the respective inspector general has responsibility, unless explicitly prohibited by law.
3. Report any effort within your department or the White House to interfere with, intimidate, or otherwise obstruct an investigation by the relevant inspector general or Congress.

We ask that you answer the following simple questions no later than October 16, 2019:

1. The Department of Defense ordered its staff to assist with "identifying, preserving, and collecting documents and other records" related to said investigations. Have you or your departments issued similar directives? If not, why?

2. What efforts have been made to obtain relevant communications that took place on personal devices? If none, why?
3. Has the president or anyone at the White House ever made a request or suggestion, whether implied or explicit, that you or other department personnel ignore or fail to comply with any inspector general request, audit, review or investigation?
4. Has the president or anyone at the White House ever made a request or suggestion, whether implied or explicit, that you or other department personnel interfere with the transmission to Congress of materials related to an inspector general audit, investigation or any other work product?

Allowing anyone in your department to destroy evidence, intimidate whistleblowers, or interfere with independent inspector general investigations would all be additional evidence of obstruction of justice. It is your responsibility to direct all personnel in your department to cooperate with on-going investigations. This is critical to the proper functioning and the faith of the American people in their government, especially now. We look forward to your timely reply.

Sincerely,



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator