

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

Majority (202) 225-6051
Minority (202) 225-5074

July 21, 2008

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Mr. Chairman:

I write to restate my request the Committee investigate the unethical, and quite possibly illegal, activities of U.S. Special Counsel Scott Bloch and that you join me in calling for Mr. Bloch's immediate resignation or removal from this critical position.

According to recent reports, Mr. Bloch's top deputy, James Byrne, resigned because, as he told the Associated Press, Mr. Bloch has taken to putting "political agendas and personal vendettas" ahead of the agency's mission and independence. In his letter of resignation, Mr. Byrne said, "Upon my departure, I am obligated to note that the mission, independence and very existence of the Office of Special Counsel are – and shall remain – at risk unless and until this agency is afforded a presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed leader who is capable of putting OSC's mission and OSC's people ahead of political and personal vendettas." For those of us dedicated to an ethical, open government workplace in which employee rights are protected, that ought to be all that needs to be said to trigger an in-depth investigation and a call for new leadership at the OSC.

As you know, Mr. Bloch's second-in-command is just the latest in a long line those within the agency who are uncomfortable with their leader's policies and practices. A group of current and former agency employees filed a complaint against Bloch in 2005, accusing him of retaliation through intimidation and involuntary transfers. His office is under federal investigation reportedly for destroying evidence that he retaliated against his own staff. Officials also want to know why he brought in a private firm with no previous connection to government IT work to perform an extensive wipe on the hard drive of his computer. He also is accused of pursuing an anti-gay agenda, refusing to protect federal workers from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Hon. Henry A. Waxman

July 21, 2008

Page 2 of 2

Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I wonder if we are approaching the point where people will have to question why the Committee has turned a blind eye to Mr. Bloch's apparent transgressions when others have become targets of the Committee's investigative attentions based on far less substantial claims. Surely, his cooperation in the Committee's prosecution of GSA Administrator Doan should not earn Mr. Bloch permanent immunity from scrutiny of his own misdeeds. Notwithstanding what other committees may decide to do, this matter is under our direct jurisdiction. The Bloch cover-up is a lingering embarrassment and damages the Committee's credibility.

Please focus the Committee's oversight on restoring integrity to the Office of Special Counsel. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Tom Davis
Ranking Member