
DHS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General is charged with safeguarding the public's tax dollars by preventing and detecting fraud, waste, and abuse within the various DHS programs and operations. In our view, the DHS Inspector General should have a greater, not smaller, presence at a time when DHS components like U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) could receive funding increases in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019. Detecting fraud, waste, and abuse will be critical considering the proposed allocation of taxpayer dollars for a "wall system," hiring new ICE and CBP agents, and implementing costly technologies.

Topline Messages

- **More, Not Less, DHS Oversight Needed Today.** The DHS Office of Inspector General is a critical safeguard against fraud, waste, and abuse. The DHS Inspector General should have an increased, not decreased, presence at a time when DHS could receive significant funding to award construction contracts for building a "wall system," outsourcing key ICE and CBP hiring functions to outside consultants, and continuing to implement costly digital technologies like USCIS ELIS, among others.

What's in the President's FY 2019 Budget?

- The President's FY 2019 budget would **cut funding** to the DHS Inspector General by about 20 percent – about \$30 million – from the FY 2018 DHS appropriation.
- The President's FY 2019 budget would also **eliminate full-time positions** at the DHS Inspector General office by a quarter, down to 613 from 854. This represents fixed funding for 241 fewer staff to help conduct critical transparency and oversight functions.
 - Dipping into FEMA Money. The President's FY 2019 budget would appear to "offset" some of the 241-staff differential by raiding a frequently variable funding source – the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund (DRF). By drawing from the DRF the Administration could save 102 of the 241 jobs, but it is unclear that raiding the DRF is a viable permanent solution for those 102 positions in future years.
- At the end of 2017, **John Roth stepped down** as DHS Inspector General. Critically, Mr. Roth was on a term- appointed position, meaning that he was at the DHS before the Trump Administration took over. It has been reported that he stepped down from the post following his criticism of the Administration's unwillingness to release the complete contents of a DHS Inspector General **report on the botched implementation** of the travel ban. John V. Kelly is the Acting DHS Inspector General.

DHS Inspector General Reports Pertaining to ICE, CBP, and USCIS (Since January 2017)

- [Special Report: Challenges Facing DHS in Its Attempt to Hire 15,000 Border Patrol Agents and Immigration Officers \(07-27-17\)](#). In this report the DHS Inspector General found that CBP and ICE have not demonstrated what operational purpose the hiring surge will address. According to the DHS Inspector General, neither CBP nor ICE could provide complete data to support the operational need or deployment strategies for the additional 15,000 agents and officers [5,000 CBP and 10,000 ICE] they were directed to hire by the Trump Administration.
- [ICE's Training Model Needs Further Evaluation \(01-25-18\)](#). The DHS Inspector General is conducting an ongoing audit to determine whether DHS has training strategies and capabilities in place to train the 15,000 new agents and officers (10,000 at ICE alone) it plans to hire to meet the President's proposed hiring surge. As part of this audit, the DHS Inspector General found that more thorough analysis is needed on ICE's efforts to decentralize the training of its agents. It notes that ICE's efforts to disrupt current training practices may prove counterproductive.
- [\[Concerns with\] ICE Deportation Operations \(04-13-17\)](#). Casting further doubt on ICE's readiness to absorb an unprecedented hiring influx, the DHS Inspector General found that ICE does not effectively manage its non-detained docket, and has failed to, among other things: (i) clearly and widely communicate deportation priorities to deportation officers; (ii) issue up-to-date, comprehensive, and accessible procedures; (iii) provide sufficient training, and (iv) collect and analyze data about employee workloads to allocate staff judiciously and determine achievable caseloads.
- [CBP Continues to Improve Its Ethics and Integrity Training, but Further Improvements are Needed \(05-31-17\)](#). The DHS Inspector General acknowledges some gains in CBP integrity and accountability measures, but finds that CBP has not effectively communicated or followed up with its field offices on its overall "Integrity and Personal Accountability Strategy," which is intended to ensure that ethics and integrity training is provided for all CBP employees. The DHS Inspector General warns that if employees have not received or do not understand the importance of the integrity strategy, CBP cannot succeed in achieving this important initiative.
- [CBP Spends Millions Conducting Polygraph Examinations on Unsuitable Applicants \(08-04-17\)](#). Questioning the agency's ability to hire 5,000 new border patrol agents as ordered by President Trump, this report finds that between FY 2013 and FY 2016 CBP spent about \$5.1 million completing more than 2,300 polygraphs for applicants with significant pre-test admissions of wrongdoing (including felony bribery convictions). The DHS Inspector General recommended that CBP improve its screening by establishing an in-person pre-security interview process, and discontinue testing of unsuitable applicants.
- [Unclear Rules Regarding Executive Protection Details Raise Concerns \(09-14-17\)](#). Because of whistleblower complaints, the DHS Inspector General examined the use of personal transportation details by DHS component leadership, and determined that ICE and CBP, specifically, have created their own internal authorizations for these transportation details, and staffed and funded them without clear legal authority. The DHS Inspector General notes that these services give the appearance to some observers of being more related to executive convenience and status than protection, and raise questions of impropriety.

- [CBP's IT Systems & Infrastructure Did Not Fully Support Border Security Operations \(09-28-17\)](#). In reviewing CBP's information technology systems and infrastructure, the DHS Inspector General found that those systems did not fully support CBP's border security objectives. These are costly systems, whose deficient performance and network instability hampered, according to the DHS Inspector General, CBP operations nationwide.
- [USCIS Has Been Unsuccessful in Automating Naturalization Benefits Delivery \(11-30-17\)](#). In yet another example of concerns with the roll-out of USCIS ELIS – this time as it pertains to the naturalization applications – the DHS Inspector General found that ELIS did not have the “critical functionality necessary for end-to-end Form N-400 processing.” It also discovered repeated system outages and underperformance. At a time when ELIS was designed to help expedite naturalization processing times, today naturalization processing times exceed one year in some USCIS field offices including Atlanta, Baltimore, and San Francisco.
- [Concerns about ICE Detainee Treatment and Care at Detention Facilities \(12- 11-17\)](#). The DHS Inspector General conducted a review of ICE detention facilities, and found several concerns warranting remedial action by ICE. The DHS Inspector General's review uncovered, among other things, that: (i) detainees were housed incorrectly based on their criminal history; (ii) in violation of standards, all detainees entering one facility were strip searched; (iii) available language services were not always used to facilitate communication with detainees; and, (iv) in some facilities staff reportedly deterred detainees from filing grievances and did not thoroughly document resolution of grievances.
- [\[ICE\] Did Not Follow Federal Procurement Guidelines When Contracting for Detention Services \(02-18-18\)](#). The DHS Inspector General found that ICE improperly modified an existing Intergovernmental Service Agreement with the City of Eloy in Arizona to establish the 2,400-bed South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas, more than 900 miles away. This accounting trick not only netted the City of Eloy, in its role as middleman, about \$438,000 in annual fees, but it also may have meant ICE overpaid for the detention facility services in Dilley, Texas.