



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / www.oig.dhs.gov

July 13, 2022

The Honorable Gary C. Peters, Chairman
The Honorable Rob Portman, Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman
The Honorable John Katko, Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

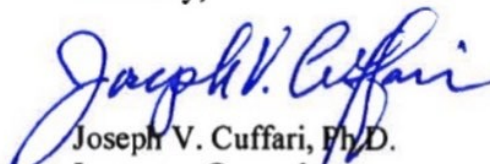
Dear Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Portman, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Katko:

The Inspector General Act provides that an Inspector General shall have timely access to all Department records and other materials related to Department programs overseen by the Inspector General. I am writing to offer a briefing regarding ongoing records access issues that we have been experiencing with the Department of Homeland Security. There are two specific issues that we would like to address with your respective committees.

First, the Department notified us that many U.S. Secret Service (USSS) text messages, from January 5 and 6, 2021, were erased as part of a device-replacement program. The USSS erased those text messages *after* OIG requested records of electronic communications from the USSS, as part of our evaluation of events at the Capitol on January 6. Second, DHS personnel have repeatedly told OIG inspectors that they were not permitted to provide records directly to OIG and that such records had to first undergo review by DHS attorneys. This review led to weeks-long delays in OIG obtaining records and created confusion over whether all records had been produced.

I will make myself and my staff available at your convenience. Please call me with questions, or your staff may contact Kristen Fredricks, Chief of Staff, at (202) 981-6000.

Sincerely,


Joseph V. Cuffari, Ph.D.
Inspector General