

Section 5(a)(21)(B) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (IG Act) requires OIG to report “incidents where the establishment has resisted or objected to oversight activities of the Office or restricted or significantly delayed access to information, including the justification of the establishment for such action.” During this reporting period, Secret Service has resisted OIG’s oversight activities and continued to significantly delay OIG’s access to records, impeding the progress of OIG’s January 6, 2021 review.

Specifically, Secret Service interviewees regularly indicate they will not provide documents directly to OIG without the documents first going through an internal review. Secret Service implemented this process without stating any authority supporting delaying or withholding requested information from OIG. This practice also leaves unclear whether OIG has received the full spectrum of requested documents. The practice continues despite multiple previous discussions between OIG and the Secret Service regarding the limited grounds for withholding information under the IG Act. Such a posture amounts to resistance to OIG’s oversight activities, for which justification has not been provided.

Additionally, Secret Service does not identify the reviewers processing OIG’s requests for information, which significantly delays information access by requiring OIG to take additional steps when following-up on overdue requests. On multiple occasions, when documents were finally produced after upwards of a month, they contained redactions. Secret Service did not indicate who approved or applied the redactions or why such redactions were originally made, thereby requiring OIG to waste valuable time making inquiries. Although OIG’s follow-up eventually yielded unredacted documents, in each instance these hurdles regularly resulted in avoidable delay.

Further, on February 23, 2022—more than 2 months after OIG renewed its requests for select Secret Service employees’ text messages—Secret Service claimed inability to extract text message content due to an April 2021 mobile phone system migration, which wiped all data. Secret Service caused significant delay by not clearly communicating this highly relevant information at the outset of its exchanges with OIG during this reporting period. Moreover, Secret Service has not explained why it did not preserve the texts prior to the migration.

As outlined above, during this reporting period, the Secret Service has resisted OIG’s oversight activities and delayed the results of its review of the events of January 6, 2021.