

President Biden,

The mission of DHS OIG is to provide independent oversight and promote excellence, integrity, and accountability within DHS. Our work ranges from southwest border immigration, cyber security, domestic terrorism, airport security, to emergency management. The results of our reviews and the recommendations we make affect the American people at every level. Therefore, the highest priorities of an inspector general are integrity and independence. IG Cuffari and his inner circle of senior leaders have fallen short in these areas time and time again.

Providing effective oversight of the newest and third largest Cabinet department is difficult enough, it should not be made more difficult by our own leadership. After years of poor decision-making by IG Joseph Cuffari, PhD, and his front office staff, we can no longer hope that the ship will right itself. We were hopeful that IG Cuffari would make meaningful change after GAO completed its review of our office, when whistleblowers came forward to sound the alarm, when the CIGIE integrity committee opened an investigation. But here we are and the situation is the same.

We need help. We can no longer be silent when faced with continuous mismanagement of DHS OIG at its highest levels. IG Cuffari has made it clear that he wishes to remain in his position, even in the face of prolonged, deserved criticism in the media, from Congress, from other oversight entities, and from his own staff. A true leader would recognize the effect of his actions on his workforce and understand the right thing to do would be to step aside. However, IG Cuffari is not a true leader. He instead acts to weaken and undercut his career staff at every step.

He no longer has the support of his workforce.

Staff do not trust IG Cuffari and his senior leadership to make the right decisions.

He has permanently damaged the reputation of DHS OIG, which had already suffered public scandals and mismanagement.

He has interfered with and weakened the ability of career staff to do their jobs.

Staff rightfully fear retaliation if they speak up.

At every step, he has made decisions that have demoralized his staff and damaged the organization, including:

- Refusing to move forward with important proposed work without reason.
- Ending the input of staff and assessment of risk in the planning process, so that only he and his inner circle assign most reviews completed by program offices without justification.
- Delaying the release of audits, inspections and investigations, sometimes for months or even years.
- Significantly editing reports to remove key findings, which weakens the impact of the reports.
- Interfering with staff efforts to gather information necessary to perform independent oversight.
- Limiting program office involvement in key decisions and communications regarding their work.

His most recent demoralizing act was releasing a letter in May 2022 responding to congressional concerns related to two projects. In this letter, he refused to take responsibility for his own actions and instead undermined his own career staff. This letter and the manner in which it was released (via email to all employees and DHS OIG's Twitter) served as a warning to all employees of what would happen if they push back against or question the IG and his team. This letter deeply impacted his entire workforce and fully demonstrated his

inability to be a servant leader. Instead this letter reinforced to his staff that he cares about no one but himself and his survival.

His actions do not represent his 700-plus workforce. His actions continue to damage his own, and DHS OIG's, reputation. His actions are not the actions of a true leader. His actions embarrass the entire agency. His actions impede and greatly hinder our mission.

We cannot complete our mission with IG Cuffari in his position. In order to do our jobs successfully and with honor, we ask for your help to ensure that IG Cuffari and his senior staff (namely Kristen Fredericks) step aside. He is unwilling to fulfil his mission. DHS OIG will continue to fail under his disastrous leadership. The missions of DHS and the OIG are too important to remain in the hands of IG Cuffari and his front office. You are the only one who can help us before DHS OIG are forever damaged by IG Cuffari.

We need help.

Signed,

Concerned DHS OIG employees representing every program office at every grade level (for fear of retaliation, we cannot identify ourselves)

CC: Congressional Oversight Committees  
Chris Currie, Government Accountability Office  
Liz Hempowicz and Nick Schwellenbach, Project on Government Oversight  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington  
Eileen Sullivan, New York Times  
Lisa Rein and Maria Sacchetti, Washington Post