

January 8, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Committee on Rules and Administration
U.S. Senate
305 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing in response to an NPR news story dated December 31, 2018, which included a previously unpublished "interim report" of an investigation of me signed by GPO's then-Acting Inspector General, Mr. Stephen Roy, that was sent to you as Chairman of the Joint Committee on Printing on June 21, 2018.

Over the past several months I requested this document repeatedly from GPO's Office of the Inspector General (OIG), only to be refused each time. Now that I have obtained a copy, it is readily apparent why it was not released to me. In addition to containing false and misleading statements, the "interim report" irresponsibly fails to include other pertinent, exculpatory information in violation of the standards for OIG reports as established by the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE). As a result, it presents a false and misleading picture to Congress.

I deny Mr. Roy's accusation of "misconduct." Ms. Travis's employment – to develop video messaging supporting GPO's employee communications – was based solely on her academic qualifications, which included an M.A. in film and television from the Savannah College of Art and Design, plus prior experience at the Library of Congress. This information inexplicably was excluded from the "interim report." Ms. Travis's qualifications are the only reason I hired her, and not "as a favor" to House Appropriations Committee staffer Charles "Chuck" Turner, as Mr. Roy claims. Mr. Turner died in 2015, long before Ms. Travis's service at GPO ended.

In hiring Ms. Travis, I was not aware – and no one in GPO's offices of Human Resources, Finance, Acquisitions Services, General Counsel, or Inspector General ever made me aware – that she did not meet the standard of "expert" upon which Mr. Roy's accusation is based. In my view, she had the necessary expertise for the job. Mr. Roy fails to explain how possession of an advanced academic degree plus prior Federal Government experience did not make her an "expert."

Mr. Roy's claim that contractors should not be used to perform work at the GPO is misleading. GPO has contractors in Finance, Human Capital, Acquisitions, Security and Intelligent Documents, and other areas; its police force is supplemented by contract security aides; the agency has standing blanket purchase agreements to hire contractors to perform various facilities maintenance and improvement projects; and it has contractors who work on its govinfo.gov site and related digital functions. GPO's OIG at one time even employed a writer/editor on a

personal services contract just to author its semi-annual reports to Congress. Presumably, these contractors are all well qualified for the work they are hired to perform, though I can't personally attest to how "expert" each of them may or may not be.

More to the point, GPO has an extensive history of hiring personnel to perform agency work using personal services contracts, a fact that Mr. Roy fails to mention even though such information is readily available in GPO's records (in FY 2007-08, for example, GPO was required to report such contracts to the House Committee on Appropriations). To the best of my knowledge, the procedures used to hire Ms. Travis were no different than those used in previous personal services contracts.

Additionally, for every year where Ms. Travis's contracts exceeded \$50,000 (FY 2016-18), they were included in GPO's annual spending plans that were approved by the Joint Committee on Printing. Mr. Roy fails to include this pertinent information.

Mr. Roy's claim that the money paid to Ms. Travis was "wasted" is absurd. She provided value to GPO in creating and posting countless video messages, including messages about employee safety. She also operated the Virtra3000 video system, which is used to train GPO's police officers (and other Federal police forces) in how to respond to emergency incidents, including "active shooter" incidents.

Mr. Roy's claim that I dismissed Ms. Travis from GPO in early June "after being aware that the OIG was investigating Travis" is false. Mr. Roy told me that GPO's personal services contracts were being investigated – or audited, or investigated; his story kept changing – several weeks earlier. The fact is that Ms. Travis was dismissed for reasons having nothing to do with her contract status and the timing of the dismissal was purely coincidental. Mr. Roy fails to provide any evidence to support his claim that Ms. Travis's employment "contributed to an overall decline in employee morale."

There may be a need to tighten up GPO's procedures for personal services contracts. (For example, GPO's Acquisitions Service at one time was under the impression that such contracts cannot be extended beyond one year. However, it was discovered subsequently that GPO was exempted from this statutory limitation by legislation enacted in 1999.) But to call what I did "misconduct" is untrue and unfair. As a GPO employee and manager with an unblemished record of service for 38 years, I had absolutely no intent to disobey any law, regulation, or agency directive.

As you know, on June 29, 2018, Mr. Roy sent a letter to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and the House Committee on House Administration asserting that as GPO's Acting Deputy Director GPO I had no authority to appoint a new Inspector General. This claim contradicted longstanding opinions of GPO's Office of General Counsel, opinions that Mr. Roy had an affirmative responsibility to consult before sending such a letter to Congress. As a result,

his letter was false and misleading and both Committees wisely rejected it, with the Senate Committee's action following legal review by the Government Accountability Office. In sending that letter, Mr. Roy did a great disservice to the credibility of GPO's OIG.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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