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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
 WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

June 2, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Christopher Fox
 Inspector General
 Office of the Intelligence Community Inspector General

Dear Inspector General Fox:

On May 13, 2026, the Senate Homeland Security & Government Affairs Committee held a hearing regarding whistleblowers and the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ During the hearing, James Erdman III, a career Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operations officer, made several allegations regarding attempts by members of the intelligence community to obfuscate the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CIA's "refusal to comply with lawful oversight," and whistleblower retaliation.² Through my own oversight, I have also raised concerns about COVID's origins and federal grants sent to entities in China.³

In his testimony, Mr. Erdman stated that the "CIA illegally monitored the computer and phone usage of [Director's Initiative Group] personnel, their investigations, and contact with whistleblowers."⁴ According to Mr. Erdman, "whistleblowers are almost never protected" within the intelligence community and "whistleblower protections always seem to protect the agency. Every time the CIA investigates itself, they coincidentally find no wrongdoing."⁵

I have long championed whistleblowers as the public's greatest assets and allies in the fight against waste, fraud, and the abuse of power.⁶ Whistleblowers often risk it all for the sake of simply telling the truth. In Mr. Erdman's situation, the CIA has publicly discredited his appearance before Congress by saying he was "not appearing as a whistleblower."⁷ I'll always protect and defend whistleblowers, and the CIA's discrediting this whistleblower who came

¹ Committee Hearing, *Whistleblower Testimony on the COVID Coverup*, Sen. Homeland Security & Government Affairs Comm., (May 13, 2026), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/whistleblower-testimony-on-the-covid-coverup/>.

² *Id.*

³ Floor Remarks, Sen. Charles E. Grassley, *Grassley on COVID's Origins and Oversight of Grants Sent to China*, (June 8, 2021), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/remarks/grassley-on-covids-origins-and-oversight-of-grants-sent-to-china>; Letter from the Hon. Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee, to the Hon. Xavier Becerra, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, and Dr. Francis Collins, Director, National Institutes of Health, (May 26, 2021), [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2021-05-26%20CEG%20to%20HHS%20NIH%20\(COVID%20Origins%20Follow%20Up\).pdf](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2021-05-26%20CEG%20to%20HHS%20NIH%20(COVID%20Origins%20Follow%20Up).pdf); Letter from the Hon. Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee, to the Hon. Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence, and Mr. Norris Cochran, Acting Director, Department of Health and Human Services, (March 8, 2021), [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2021-03-08%20CEG%20to%20ODNI%20HHS%20\(COVID%20Origins\).pdf](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2021-03-08%20CEG%20to%20ODNI%20HHS%20(COVID%20Origins).pdf).

⁴ Committee Hearing, *Whistleblower Testimony on the COVID Coverup*, Sen. Homeland Security & Government Affairs Comm., (May 13, 2026), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/whistleblower-testimony-on-the-covid-coverup/>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ See Letter from the Hon. Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, to the Hon. Scott Bessent, Secretary, Department of the Treasury, (January 14, 2026), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_treasury_-_minnesota_fraud.pdf.

⁷ Liz Lyons (@CIASpox), X, (May 13, 2026, 10:07 AM), <https://x.com/CIASpox/status/2054564144943104008>.

forward is wrong.⁸ Should these allegations made by Mr. Erdman prove true, all those who engaged in whistleblower retaliation or misconduct must be held accountable.

The public deserves to know whether the allegations raised by Mr. Erdman are true and accurate. Therefore, so that Congress may conduct oversight of this matter, I urge you to review the allegations made by Mr. Erdman that the “CIA illegally monitored the computer and phone usage of [Director’s Initiative Group] personnel, their investigations, and contact with whistleblowers,” and that intelligence community leaders downplayed the possibility that the COVID pandemic originated as a result of a lab incident. The purpose, of course, is public transparency on these matters of great public interest. Please provide a response no later than June 16, 2026.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please contact Brian Randolph or Ross Berg on my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

⁸ See e.g., Floor Statement, Sen. Charles E. Grassley, *Grassley Condemns Democrat Attacks Against Whistleblowers*, (May 13, 2026), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/remarks/grassley-condemns-democrat-attacks-against-whistleblowers>; Press Release, Sen. Charles E. Grassley, *Grassley Welcomes Resolution for 10 FBI Whistleblowers Following Years of Retaliation*, (Aug. 26, 2025), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-welcomes-resolution-for-10-fbi-whistleblowers-following-years-of-retaliation>.