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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

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March 18, 2015

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Stacia A. Hylton
Office of the Director
United States Marshals Service
United States Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Director Hylton:

I write with some concern regarding whistleblower allegations of the misuse of Assets Forfeiture Fund (AFF) resources by the United States Marshals Services (USMS).¹ Information obtained by the Committee suggests that the USMS Asset Forfeiture Division (AFD), at the direction of Assistant Director Kimberly Beal, wasted AFF resources on extravagant office decorations and misused funds provided for Joint Law Enforcement Operations (JLEO).

Accordingly, please provide the Committee with the following information no later than March 27, 2015:

¹ As a reminder, denying or interfering with employees' rights to furnish information to Congress is unlawful, 5 U.S.C. § 7211 ("The right of employees, individually or collectively, to petition Congress or a Member of Congress, or to furnish information to either House of Congress, or to a committee or Member thereof, may not be interfered with or denied."), and obstructing a Congressional investigation is a crime, 18 U.S.C. § 1505 ("Whoever corruptly, or by threats or force, or by any threatening letter or communication influences, obstructs, or impedes or endeavors to influence, obstruct, or impede . . . the due and proper exercise of the power of inquiry under which any inquiry or investigation is being had by either House, or any committee of either House or any joint committee of the Congress" "[s]hall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 5 years or, if the offense involves international or domestic terrorism (as defined in section 2331), imprisoned not more than 8 years, or both."). Furthermore, federal officials who deny or interfere with employees' rights to furnish information to Congress are not entitled to have their salaries paid by taxpayers' dollars. Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, Pub. L. No. 113-235, § 713, 128 Stat. 2130 (2014).

1. Regarding AFD offices at Crystal Mall 4, please answer the following questions:
 - a. Did AFD purchase a conference table that exceeded \$10,000 in cost? If so, what was the cost and why was a less expensive table not considered?
 - b. Did AFD replace window treatments already provided for in the office lease with expensive custom window treatments? If so, why and what was the cost?
 - c. Did AFD install custom wallpaper, artwork, crown moldings, and chair rails in its offices? If so, why and at what cost for each of these installations?
 - d. Does AFD intend to expend similar amounts to decorate and furnish new office space it anticipates moving into in the near future? What will happen to the furnishings and decorations after AFD moves out?
2. Regarding the Asset Forfeiture Training Academy in Houston, TX, please answer the following questions:
 - a. Including rent and/or purchase of equipment, office furnishings, and decoration, how much has AFD spent in total to establish the facility?
 - b. In fiscal year 2014, how many days was the facility used for asset forfeiture related training? Please support your response with documentation showing training agendas and other evidence that training occurred.
 - c. What was the cost of the facility's custom window treatments and, if there is an annual maintenance contract for those window treatments, how much does it cost?
 - d. What was the total cost of installing granite in the facility? How much did the granite cost per square foot?
3. As you are aware, section 524(c)(1)(I) of title 28, United States Code, authorizes the Attorney General to use the AFF for the "payment of overtime salaries, travel, fuel, training, equipment, and other similar costs of State or local law enforcement officers that are incurred in a joint law enforcement operation with a Federal law enforcement agency participating in the Fund."
 - a. Can you confirm that the USMS AFD AFF allocation for JLEO has not been used to directly support any USMS employee?
 - i. Specifically, has AFD used the JLEO AFF allocation to pay for circuit costs or database services used by any USMS employees?
 - b. Can you confirm that the non-JLEO AFD AFF allocation has not been used to directly support the costs of State or local law enforcement officers who participate in a joint law enforcement operation?

- i. Specifically, have non-JLEO AFF funds been diverted or transferred in any way to the JLEO account for the District of Arizona?

Should you have questions, please contact DeLisa Lay of my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

Cc: The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General