

Updated November 15, 2018

# Office of the House of Representatives Inspector General

Since 1992, the House of Representatives has included an Inspector General (IG) among its officers. Today, the Office of the House of Representatives Inspector General conducts audits of the financial and administrative functions of House officers and joint entities. The first House IG was appointed in the first session of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress (1993-1994).

## Background and History

Following the House banking scandal of 1991, the House of Representatives instituted numerous administrative reforms, including shutting down the House bank and hiring a nonpartisan administrator. As part of the reform efforts, the House created an Inspector General (IG) to provide periodic reports to the House leadership on audits of House officers.

Initially proposed in the 100<sup>th</sup> Congress (1987-1988), the Office of the Inspector General was first created in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress (1991-1992) with the adoption of H.Res. 423, the House Administration Reform Resolution of 1992.

The resolution creates the position of House inspector general, charged with conducting audits of ... financial operations [of the House].

... [T]he inspector general is to be jointly appointed by the Speaker the majority leader, and the minority leader.

Any audits performed by the House inspector general will be shared with the leaders of both parties, and reported to a newly created bipartisan House Administration Subcommittee on Oversight, which would be responsible for the inspectors general's overall policy direction and oversight.

—Rep. Richard Gephardt, *Congressional Record*, April 9, 1992 [p. 9041]

The office is led by the Inspector General, who is jointly appointed by the Speaker, the Majority Leader, and the Minority Leader each Congress.

## Past House Inspectors General

The first House IG—John W. Lainhart IV—was selected in the first session of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress (1993-1994). On February 15, 2018, Michael Ptasienski was appointed as the fifth House IG. In total, there have been five IGs appointed by congressional leadership. **Table 1** provides the name and term of service for the past and current House IGs.

**Table 1. House of Representatives Inspectors General**

Name	Term of Service
John W. Lainhart IV	11/14/1993 to 3/31/1999
Steven A. McNamara	3/13/2000 to 5/26/2005
James J. Cornell	3/2/2006 to 1/2/2010
Theresa M. Grafenstine	7/30/2010 to 9/2017
Michael Ptasienski	2/15/2018 to Present

**Source:** U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Inspector General, “Background and History,” at <https://oig.house.gov/about-the-oig/background-and-history>.

**Notes:** The Office of the House IG is managed by an acting IG until a new IG is appointed by the House leadership. For example, the current IG, Michael Ptasienski, served as acting IG from October 2017 until his appointment in February 2018 (Speaker of the House of Representatives, “Speaker Ryan Announces Appointment of Mike Ptasienski as House Inspector General,” press release, February 15, 2018, at <https://www.speaker.gov/press-release/speaker-ryan-announces-appointment-mike-ptasienski-house-inspector-general>).

## Current Status

Since its initial authorization, the House IG has been reauthorized by the House for each succeeding Congress. Currently reauthorized by H.Res. 5 in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress (2017-2018), the House IG's authority is found in House Rule II, clause 6. The House IG is also subject to the policy direction and oversight of the Committee on House Administration.

## House IG Duties

Pursuant to House Rule II, clause 6, the House IG has five main duties:

- (1) provide audit, investigative, and advisory services to the House and joint entities in a manner consistent with government-wide standards;
- (2) inform the officers or other officials who are the subject of an audit of the results of that audit and suggesting appropriate curative actions;
- (3) simultaneously notify the Speaker, the Majority Leader, the Minority Leader, and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on House Administration in the case of any financial irregularity discovered in the course of carrying out responsibilities under this clause;
- (4) simultaneously submit to the Speaker, the Majority Leader, the Minority Leader, and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on House Administration a report of each audit conducted under this clause; and

(5) report to the Committee on Ethics information involving possible violations by a Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, officer, or employee of the House of any rule of the House or of any law applicable to the performance of official duties or the discharge of official responsibilities that may require referral to the appropriate Federal or State authorities under clause 3(a)(3) of rule XI.

Further, in accordance with government-wide standards for Inspectors General, the results of the audits are simultaneously provided to the subject of the audit and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the House, the Minority Leader of the House, and the chair and ranking minority members of the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on House Administration. In the event that financial irregularities or ethics violations are identified, the report is forwarded to the chair and ranking member of the Committee on House Administration and the Committee on Appropriations, or the Committee on Ethics, as necessary.

### Amendments to IG Authorities

Since the House Inspector General was created in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress, its authority has been amended several times.

On January 4, 2001, the rules package for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress (2001-2002) provided the Committee on House Administration with policy direction and oversight over the Inspector General [H.Res. 5, §2(g)].

On January 6, 2009, the rules package [H.Res. 5, §2(a)] for the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress (2009-2010) amended Rule II, clause 6(c)(1), to require that the Inspector General “provide audit, investigative, and advisory services to the House and joint entities in a manner consistent with government-wide standards.”

On January 3, 2013, the rules package [H.Res. 5, §2(f)] for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress (2013-2014) amended Rule II, clause 6(c)(4) to require that Inspector General reports be sent to the chair and ranking member of the House Committee on Appropriations in addition to the chair and ranking member of the House Administration Committee, the Speaker, the Majority Leader, and the Minority Leader.

### Reporting Fraud, Waste, or Abuse

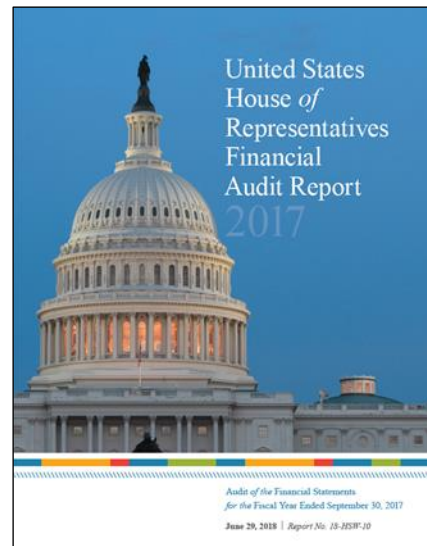
The House IG is authorized to accept alleged violations of law or misconduct by House employees and to investigate contract fraud, bribery and acceptance of gratuities, mismanagement and waste of funds, conflicts of interest, abuse of authority, theft or abuse of government property, computer crimes, purchase card fraud, improper use of House resources, and violations related to administration of the House. Should the IG receive information outside of its authority, it is to refer the information to other House entities (e.g., the House Ethics Committee), or

noncongressional entities (e.g., the Department of Veterans Affairs), as appropriate.

### Publications

The Office of the House IG produces numerous audits, management advisory opinions, and investigative reports for the Committee on House Administration and the House leadership. Among the House IG’s reports is an annual financial audit of the House of Representatives. **Figure 1** shows the cover of the most recent audit of the House’s financial statements. Copies of the most recent audits are available on the House IG’s website.

**Figure 1. United States House of Representatives Financial Audit Report, 2017**



**Source:** U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Inspector General, “Financial Audit Reports,” at <https://www.house.gov/the-house-explained/officers-and-organizations/inspector-general>.

### Contact Information

The Office of the House Inspector General is located in room 386, Ford House Office Building. The office may be contacted by telephone (6-1250), by fax (5-4240), through its hotline (202-593-0068), or by email (HouseIG@mail.house.gov). Additional information on the office of the Inspector General, including publicly available reports, is available from the office’s public website at <https://www.house.gov/the-house-explained/officers-and-organizations/inspector-general>. The Inspector General also maintains an internal website available through Housenet at <https://oig.house.gov/>. Housenet is available only within the internal House of Representatives network.

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