

to hide evidence of his misconduct from the Congress.

I have not reached the end of the account of failed management and misconduct by Mr. Zinser. Just last month, the Department of Commerce's Office of Civil Rights issued its findings in an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) case related to age discrimination and retaliation filed by a former Commerce OIG employee. The detailed 282-page report found that the Commerce OIG discriminated against the complainant in violation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and retaliated against him for filing his EEOC complaint "in violation of non-retaliation provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and "in violation of the EEOC regulations prohibiting retaliation." In sworn testimony to EEOC investigators regarding the monitoring and examination of the former employee's e-mails and files, the EEOC also found that Mr. Zinser's "testimony does not fully mesh with the documentary evidence. . . ."

The Commerce OIG has been ordered to compensate the employee for "backpay to remedy the change to lower grade he took due to the hostile work environment" in the IG's office; expunge its official files of the inaccurate interim performance appraisal the employee was coerced into signing and any related document; provide all supervisors in the Commerce OIG, including the IG and Deputy IG, with at least 8 hours of EEO training and require IG Todd Zinser to sign and post (for 60 days) a notice to all OIG employees that the office has been found in violation of age discrimination and retaliated against former Commerce OIG employee. The notice states that the OIG will abide by federal requirements, equal employment opportunity laws and will not retaliate against employees who file EEO complaints in the future. The notice is supposed to be placed in center within the IG's office or on the OIG intranet and is required to be signed by IG Zinser. Mr. Zinser refused for two solid weeks to sign that notice. Only after my friend, Mr. Honda, asked IG Zinser about this matter during an appearance before the Appropriations Committee did Mr. Zinser finally sign the notice on February 25.

Not for the first time, Mr. Zinser is going to rely on the taxpayer to cover the costs of his misconduct. There are more claims out there that will also cost the taxpayer to defend against and settle. In fact, during the last two years six employees in the IG's office have filed complaints of retaliation with the Office of Special Counsel. The Department of Energy's OIG, which is nearly twice as large as the Commerce IG's office has had zero complaints of retaliation filed with OSC during this same period. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) OIG, which has a staff of more than 1,200 people and is nearly seven times the current size of the Commerce OIG had a single alleged case of retaliation filed with OSC in the same time frame.

The issues I have identified reveal an endemic failing in Mr. Zinser's leadership. There is a sustained pattern of misconduct and malfeasance that would be unacceptable in any senior federal official but is particularly troubling for an Inspector General. Based on the exhaustive work by Committee staff, as well as Mr. Zinser's representations to other Members, we have convincingly shown that:

During his Senate confirmation for the Commerce IG post, Mr. Zinser failed to disclose a

significant case against him involving his personal retaliation against a whistleblower;

Over a period of many years, Mr. Zinser and his closest staff have engaged in efforts to identify and retaliate against whistleblowers in his office;

Mr. Zinser has repeatedly misled the Congress about his conduct, and took steps to obstruct the Committee's investigation into allegations of misconduct;

Mr. Zinser has been disingenuous in his official correspondence with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) regarding inappropriate hiring in his office;

Mr. Zinser has failed to conduct himself by ethical standards expected of an Inspector General;

Mr. Zinser has engaged in inappropriate hiring practices that undermine the integrity of federal hiring; and,

Mr. Zinser has failed to establish policies and procedures in his office that would guarantee accountability and efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, how can this person still hold a high position of public trust? His continued presence in Federal service stands as a blot on our record, in that we have tolerated such conduct by an IG. We could impeach him, and I believe there is adequate information to justify that. However, it would be time consuming and expensive, and while we worked through that process, the taxpayer would still be paying the senior leadership of DOC OIG, and whistleblowers would still be legitimately worried for their careers. That is unacceptable.

We could ask CIGIE to redo the investigation my staff and the Committee did in the 113th Congress. I respect the CIGIE, but the cold truth is that CIGIE's Integrity Committee is slow moving, and their prior failure to do diligent work into a serious allegation against Mr. Zinser leads me to question their responsiveness—or at least the responsiveness they displayed four years ago. And as with impeachment, it would be slow and expensive and whistleblowers would stand in danger every day the process dragged on.

The law provides that the President can remove an IG without any requirement that CIGIE has first done an investigation. If an IG conducts themselves in an outrageous and disreputable way, it would be irresponsible to leave them in office once that has been established. I believe that Mr. Zinser's wide-ranging misconduct, supported by just a tiny coterie of current senior staff, is sufficient in and of itself to justify immediate removal. I intend to ask the President to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have established the need for immediate change in the senior leadership of this office. The current leadership must be replaced with individuals who can serve as beacons of integrity and stewards of appropriate and diligent federal oversight. If any Member wants a fuller recounting of the evidence in this case, I will be happy to provide them with additional information.

That information provides as much documentation for my account as we can provide without compromising the position of whistleblowers whose careers still stand at risk so long as Mr. Zinser and his closest senior leaders remain in their positions. I will extend that same offer to the President as I believe that his role under law complements my own obligations as a Member to reveal significant violations of law that I believe we have uncovered.

## THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH RATE

(Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I haven't been in this office very long, but it doesn't take long to pick up certain patterns of my Republican colleagues. They find a way to hamstring immigration reform or prevent women from getting the right to choose at every possible opportunity. In the case of the SGR fix, a very important bill that I am proud to have also voted for, Republicans have chosen the latter.

At the risk of pointing out the obvious, Mr. Speaker, this is 2015. We can talk to our TV remotes. We have phones that show us in 3-D the nearest restaurants, and printers that print prosthetic limbs.

In 1973, Motorola gave us the world's first mobile phone. But 1973 was also the last time there was any question of whether or not a woman had the right to make her own decisions about her health, according to the U.S. Supreme Court.

I am not the youngest Member of Congress, but I am one of the newest. So I would like to take this opportunity to invite my Republican colleagues to join me in the 21st century. Moving forward, I urge my colleagues to stop waging war on women's right to make their own choices.

## 194TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 194th anniversary of Greek independence, to recall the day that the Greek people established modern Greece as a free and independent nation.

America's Founding Fathers drew upon the example of the ancient Greeks in forming our constitutional Republic. The relationship between Greece and the United States is based on shared democratic values and respect for individual freedom. The spirit that guided the Greek people in securing their freedom nearly 200 years ago resides with them still.

Today Greece faces tremendous challenges. We all acknowledge that. But I am confident that Greece will ultimately overcome its economic and humanitarian crisis and thrive again. A strong Greece will be able to take full advantage of new opportunities that are emerging in the eastern Mediterranean and move forward as a vital economic and cultural resource for a critical region of the world.

As we say each year when celebrating Greek Independence Day, long live Greece, long live America, long live freedom—Zito Ellada, Zito Ameriki, Zito Eleftheria.