

# **U.S. Rep. Sensenbrenner: Inspector General Report Strengthens Argument for Serious Federal Asset Forfeiture Reform**

Posted on Thursday, Mar 30, 2017

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*“Reform Is Necessary To Strengthen Faith In Law Enforcement, Tamper Abuse, And Protect Citizens’ Constitutional Rights”*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - Today, Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner released the following statement in response to the newly released [Inspector General \(IG\) report](#) on its investigation into the Department of Justice's (DOJ) forfeiture practices, particularly its use of cash forfeitures:

**Congressman Sensenbrenner:** "The release of the Inspector General's report highlights a serious problem that must be addressed. Civil asset forfeiture is an essential tool in the overall effort to fix our broken criminal justice system, but reform is necessary to strengthen faith in law enforcement, tamper abuse, and protect citizens' Constitutional rights. It's imperative to our justice system and the health of our nation to enact serious reform, which is why I've introduced the DUE PROCESS Act. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and move forward with solutions that work for the people, not the government."

The investigation brought to light several weaknesses in the federal asset forfeiture program. The report's key findings include:

- The DOJ does not aggregate data in order to meaningfully study the extent seizures aid criminal investigations or risk civil liberty violations.
- Only 29 of 85 cash interdiction seizures reviewed by the DOJ were part of an investigation or led to further investigation, arrest, or prosecution. Simply put, in approximately two-thirds of cases where cash was seized, there was no attempt to confirm that the money was related to criminal activity.
- The DOJ has insufficient training of federal law enforcement, as well as state and local law enforcement, of who are effectively deputized to enforce federal law.

Earlier today, Congressman Sensenbrenner [reintroduced legislation](#) aimed at reforming federal asset forfeiture laws.

The DUE PROCESS Act, which was first introduced in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, builds upon changes made in the 2000 Civil Action Forfeiture Reform Act by increasing transparency in the civil asset forfeiture process, adding protections for innocent property owners, and implementing additional protections to ensure property owners have the opportunity to contest seizures. The legislation also improves the notice that the government must give property owners and makes it easier for them to be heard by a judge. Additionally, the DUE PROCESS Act entitles property owners to an initial hearing, where they can retrieve confiscated property immediately if it was not seized according to the law. It increases the availability of attorney fees for innocent owners, places a higher burden of proof on the government, and allows for owners of confiscated animals to retrieve their pets faster.