

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Urges investigation of retaliation and IRS failure to inform employees of their rights as whistleblowers

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WASHINGTON – On Tuesday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), ranking member of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and U.S. Sen Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee, sent a letter to Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael Horowitz and Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration Russell George and another letter to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Commissioner Daniel Werfel regarding [a recent IRS email](#) instructing employees on how to report potential wrongdoing.

The May 23, 2023 email from IRS Deputy Commissioner Doug O'Donnell to employees failed to include the "anti-gag" provision which informs federal employees of their right to make protected disclosures. It also failed to inform IRS employees of their Constitutional and statutory right to make protected disclosures to Congress. These omissions raise concerns particularly in light of recent reports that IRS employees were removed from the Hunter Biden investigation by the IRS at DOJ's request as retaliation for making protected whistleblower disclosures to Congress.

The senators called on the inspectors general to "fully investigate the allegations of whistleblower retaliation, and the IRS's failure to include the anti-gag provision in the Deputy Commissioner's email to IRS employees."

"The DOJ and IRS must be held accountable for all instances of whistleblower retaliation and misconduct, and federal agencies cannot conceal their wrongdoing

behind illegal nondisclosure agreements and related documents,” **the senators wrote.**

In the letter to IRS Commissioner Werfel **the senators demanded that**, “you immediately transmit an updated guidance informing IRS employees of their Constitutional and statutory rights to make protected disclosures to Congress.”

Watch Sen. Johnson on Mornings with Maria discuss the letters [here](#).

Full text of the letter to Inspectors General Horowitz and George can be found [here](#).

Full text of the letter to Commissioner Werfel can be found [here](#).

Full text of Deputy Commissioner O’Donnell’s email to IRS employees can be found [here](#).