



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2003

## Grassley Repeats Concerns About Whistleblower Case Backlog

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today repeated his concerns to the Office of Special Counsel about a backlog of whistleblower cases. Grassley's follow-up letter to the Office of Special Counsel follows.

September 16, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE: (202) 653-5151

ORIGINAL BY U.S. MAIL

William E. Reukauf

Acting Special Counsel

Office of Special Counsel

1730 M Street, NW

Washington, DC 20036-4505

Dear Mr. Reukauf:

Thank you for your letter, dated August 15, 2003, in response to my concerns about the backlog of 628 whistleblower cases at the Office of Special Counsel (OSC). Your letter did little to allay my concerns that the serious problems at OSC will be addressed promptly.

After many years in the Senate, I am accustomed to the oft-heard lament that more money is the solution to all problems. Nevertheless, it is disappointing that OSC appears to have no formal action plan to address the backlog issue, other than hoping that OSC's budget request for more funding and staff resources comes through. If OSC does have a plan or is developing a plan, it was not shared with me.

According to OSC's FY 2004 budget request, "OSC is not seeking the level of resources that would be necessary to meet [OSC's] statutory 15-day period. Instead, [OSC] is seeking the resources for the [Disclosure] Unit to operate in a viable manner." Frankly, I am appalled that OSC's goal is less than the statutory requirement even in light of real-world budgetary constraints.

The implication is that OSC has never and likely will never reach the statutory requirement. Please advise whether OSC has ever fulfilled its statutory requirements.

With regard to OSC's priority system, please advise whether each of the 31 cases involving dangers to public health or safety were reviewed within OSC's 15-day statutory period and how many days it took for each to be reviewed. In addition, please provide the same information for each other category of disclosures that met the statutory "substantial likelihood of wrongdoing" threshold.

In closing, I will continue working to address OSC's budgetary constraints; however, I repeat my request that OSC develop a realistic plan of action to reduce the backlog in the short term. In this post-September 11 world, it may be necessary to elevate the status of and allocation of funds to OSC's Disclosures Unit, so that disclosures involving dangers to national security are reviewed immediately and certainly before the statutory deadline.

Thank you in advance for your response by October 6, 2003. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman

cc: Travis Elliott  
Director, Legislative & Public Affairs