

May 26, 2016

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson,

The undersigned organizations, which include leadership of the Make It Safe Coalition<sup>1</sup>, support the bipartisan whistleblowers protections included in the Bolster Accountability to Drive Government Efficiency and Reform Washington Act that is being championed by the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. From stronger penalties for retaliation against whistleblowers, to additional prohibited personnel practices and improved training, we share your commitment to protect whistleblowers through passage of these important reforms.

We are pleased to see the following bills included in the larger government accountability package -

- S. 2450, The Administrative Leave Act of 2016 would create safeguards to prevent agency abuse of paid leave, and would save the federal government millions in taxpayer dollars while encouraging agencies to efficiently make personnel determinations. Importantly, it makes the use of administrative leave a personnel action when applied to retaliate against a whistleblower.
- S. 579, The IG Empowerment Act of 2015 would reform the Inspector General Act of 1978. Specifically, it would strengthen IG independence, improve how misconduct by OIG officials is investigated, and promote more transparency and cooperation between OIGs and Congress. It also includes specific safeguards to prevent increased IG authority from being used to retaliate against whistleblowers.
- S. 2127, The Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2016 would strengthen whistleblower protections for employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Specifically, it would make improper access of medical records (a common tactic used to retaliate against whistleblowers) a prohibited personnel practice, add protections for probationary period employees, increase Office of Special Counsel authority to investigate prohibited personnel actions, enhance whistleblower rights trainings, and strengthen penalties for retaliating against whistleblowers.

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<sup>1</sup> The Make It Safe Coalition is a non-partisan, trans-ideological network of more than 75 member organizations whose missions span taxpayer protection, homeland security, scientific integrity, natural disasters, consumer hazards, and corruption in government contracting and procurement. We are united in the cause of protecting those in government and the private sector who honor their duties to serve and warn the public.

- S. 795, A Bill to Enhance Whistleblower Protection for Contractor and Grantee Employees would strengthen and make permanent the contractor whistleblower pilot program. Specifically, it would make best-practice whistleblower protections permanent for federal contractors, subcontractors, personal service contractors and grantees outside of the intelligence community.
- S. 2968, The Office of Special Counsel Reauthorization Act of 2016 would strengthen the OSC's ability to protect the merit system generally, and to implement the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012's mandate in particular, through responsible and balanced measures.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to strengthen rights for those employees who bravely disclose waste, fraud and abuse through the aforementioned government accountability measures.

Sincerely,

Government Accountability Project

National Taxpayers Union

Project On Government Oversight

Public Citizen

Taxpayers Protection Alliance