

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Gary C. Peters
Nomination Hearing
October 23, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to all of the nominees and congratulations on your nominations.

I'd like to start with the nomination we are not considering today.

I am glad that Paul Ingrassia's nomination to lead the Office of Special Counsel has been withdrawn.

The racist messages Mr. Ingrassia reportedly sent in a private chat are absolutely disgusting. Now Mr. Ingrassia has said that he is being smeared unfairly and those messages lack context.

There is no context that makes the use of racial slurs okay. And even without these messages, we also have the hundreds of racist, sexist, and antisemitic statements Mr. Ingrassia has made publicly during his short but prolific career.

His clear pattern of bigoted and inflammatory rhetoric – along with his complete lack of any relevant experience – is wholly disqualifying. Paul Ingrassia never should have been nominated for such a critical oversight role, but this instance exemplifies the Trump Administration's outright contempt for independent oversight.

Since taking office, this Administration has attacked every key institution charged with rooting out government waste, fraud, and abuse.

In January, President Trump illegally fired 18 Inspectors General without any explanation to Congress, and dismissed another IG last week, again without the legally-required justification.

Last month, the Administration withheld funding for the Inspector General community, literally shutting down online portals for whistleblowers to report corruption, fraud, or wasteful spending. When Congress pushed back, a spokesperson for the Office of Management and Budget said that IGs have become partisan and corrupt.

The President has fired top officials at the Office of Special Counsel and the Merit Systems Protection Board – agencies charged with protecting whistleblowers who expose waste, fraud, and abuse.

This Administration has repeatedly attacked the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office, just last month saying it "shouldn't exist."

These are the agencies that Congress created to hold the President and the executive branch accountable, to ensure that the federal government is serving the American people and not the whims or pocketbooks of the President and his political allies.

To the three Inspector General nominees here today – I am concerned about your ability to conduct effective oversight given the President’s attacks on IG independence.

Congressman D’Esposito in particular has made no effort to address concerns that he is a partisan operative – he even submitted an opening statement to this Committee that includes a pledge to carry the President’s agenda forward as Inspector General. This betrays a deep misunderstanding of the role of IG. To say nothing of the laundry list of misconduct allegations made against him throughout his career.

To the other nominees – I also have concerns and questions about the important roles you have been nominated for. Unfortunately, a hearing with eight nominees and five minutes for questions severely limits Members’ and nominees’ ability to have meaningful exchanges and limits public transparency into the Committee’s nominations process.

Still, I thank all the nominees for being here today and look forward to hearing from you.