

Statement of Carol Fortine Ochoa
before the
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
concerning
“Nomination of Carol Ochoa to be Inspector General,
U.S. General Services Administration”
June 17, 2015

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper, Subcommittee Chairman Lankford, Ranking Member Heitkamp, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding this hearing today. I am honored to be nominated to serve as the Inspector General at the General Services Administration (GSA). I very much appreciate the time Members of this Committee and their staffs took to meet with me in advance of this hearing. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing that dialogue.

At the outset, I would like to recognize and thank my family who are here today: my husband Jorge, who is my constant support in all things, and many members of the large and loving Fortine, Ochoa, and Collier families. I am very appreciative to be joined as well by my colleagues from the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and friends from my days in the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Columbia.

In addition, I would like to recognize the staff at the GSA OIG, and in particular Deputy Inspector General Robert Erickson who has ably managed the office over the past year when the agency has been without a confirmed Inspector General.

In this time of pressing need to eliminate waste and cut costs for the American taxpayer, the position of GSA Inspector General is an extremely important one. GSA's extensive real property portfolio and government-wide procurement programs put it at the forefront of addressing federal initiatives to achieve greater savings and cost-avoidance, and the GSA Inspector General has a critical role in ensuring that the taxpayer receives maximum value from GSA's operations.

I am confident that my professional experience has equipped me well for this position. I have spent over 25 years as a federal prosecutor and manager in the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General.

As an Assistant United States Attorney, I served for over a decade in the Public Corruption Section in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia. There I was entrusted with some of the office's most sensitive cases, including police corruption matters, allegations of obstruction of justice by

high-ranking public officials, and various other fraud and embezzlement matters.

In the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, I have been privileged for the past twelve years to head the Oversight & Review Division, which is responsible for conducting the most complex, sensitive, and broad-ranging investigations and reviews of Department of Justice operations and personnel, many of them classified matters involving the Department's use of national security authorities.

I have benefited tremendously from working closely with two highly respected Inspectors General: Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz and his predecessor, Glenn Fine. Their leadership, and the work of my extremely talented colleagues at the OIG, has resulted in an IG's office with a strong and well-deserved reputation for independence and objectivity. I believe those qualities are absolutely essential for a successful Inspector General, and if confirmed I would commit to ensuring that under my leadership the GSA OIG will be independent, objective, and as transparent as possible in everything we do.

My experience has also given me a keen appreciation for the statutory dual reporting requirement for Inspectors General. If confirmed, I would strive to maintain open and productive lines of communication with Congress and GSA leadership.

I have a strong memory that when I was sworn in as an Assistant United States Attorney, the U.S. Attorney emphasized Justice Sutherland's admonition that a prosecutor's role is not to win cases but to serve justice, and that a prosecutor may strike hard but not foul blows. Those words were foundational in my development as a prosecutor, and that standard of fairness and impartiality has guided me as well in my work with the Office of the Inspector General. Simply put, I am used to following the facts wherever they lead, closely analyzing their fit with law and policy, and making conclusions based solely on and drawn fairly from those findings. That is the mindset I would bring to this job if confirmed.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.