

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

August 29, 2018

Ms. Tammy L. Whitcomb
Acting Inspector General
United States Postal Service
1735 N. Lynn Street
Alexandria, VA 22209-2029

Dear Acting Inspector General Whitcomb:

We write to request that your office conduct an investigation into the reported release by the United States Postal Service of a former employee's unredacted Standard Form 86 (SF-86) and any other related personal information that was released in violation of privacy statutes and other laws and regulations.

On August 28, 2018 the *New York Times* reported that the Congressional Leadership Fund, a political action committee (PAC), obtained the federal security clearance application, SF-86, of Abigail Spanberger, the Democratic candidate for the Commonwealth of Virginia's 7th Congressional District.¹ Press reports indicate that an unredacted copy of Ms. Spanberger's SF-86 was obtained by America Rising, a political research firm, through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Postal Service, which then shared it with the PAC. It was also reported that the Postal Service provided America Rising with Ms. Spanberger's entire personnel file.² It is unclear whether any of these disclosures conformed with laws and regulations including FOIA or the Privacy Act.

The release of Ms. Spanberger's unredacted SF-86 to any individual or entity without her permission in violation of the law would call into question the Postal Service's processes for responding to FOIA requests. We request that your office investigate the Postal Service's role in the release of Ms. Spanberger's SF-86 and related personnel information and, at a minimum, address the following questions:

- (1) Did anyone at the Postal Service disclose Ms. Spanberger's SF-86? If so, who and what were the circumstances of the disclosure?

¹ *C.I.A. Officer-Turned-Candidate Says PAC Obtained Her Security Application*, New York Times (Aug. 28, 2018) (online at www.nytimes.com/2018/08/28/us/politics/cia-officer-house-election-super-pac.html).

² *In an Unprecedented Move, the US Postal Service Released a Former CIA Officer's Security Application to a Republican Group*, BuzzFeed News (Aug. 29, 2018) (online at www.buzzfeednews.com/article/gracewylter/usps-releases-cia-officer-security-clearance-application).

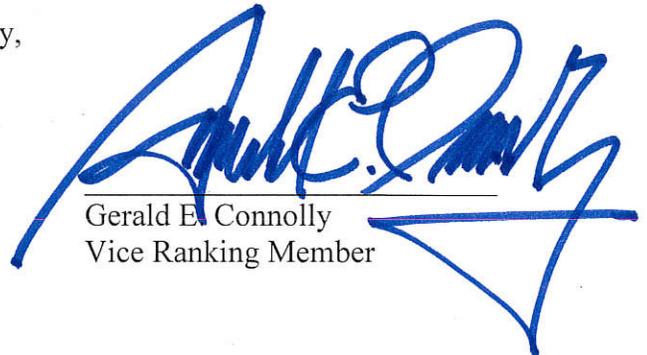
- (2) Did the disclosure of Ms. Spanberger's SF-86 or any other documents provided under America Rising's FOIA request violate any laws, regulations, or policies governing disclosure of such materials?
- (3) What, if any, information provided under America's Rising's FOIA request should not have been provided?
- (4) Why did the Postal Service not seek a privacy waiver from Ms. Spanberger before releasing her personnel file and SF-86 pursuant to a FOIA request?
- (5) Were any individuals in the Postal Service who handled America Rising's FOIA request aware of Ms. Spanberger's candidacy for Virginia's 7th Congressional District or the political nature of America Rising's request?
- (6) Does the Postal Service have adequate procedures in place to process FOIA requests and prevent disclosure of protected information?
- (7) What actions, if any, has Postal Service management taken to prevent unauthorized and impermissible disclosures of such information in the future?

Thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member



Gerald E. Connolly
Vice Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Trey Gowdy, Chairman