

April 26, 2016

The Honorable Kathleen Rice
U.S. House of Representatives
1508 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jackie Speier
U.S. House of Representatives
2465 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Coffman
U.S. House of Representatives
2443 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rod Blum
U.S. House of Representatives
213 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Rice, Coffman, Speier and Blum:

Our undersigned organizations applaud your establishment of the House Whistleblower Protection Caucus. Our organizations include the leadership of the Make It Safe Coalition (MISC) - a non-partisan, trans-ideological network of more than 75 member organizations and dozens of individuals whose missions span taxpayer protection, scientific integrity, homeland security, 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.

Whether the issue is VA oversight or consumer protections, whistleblowing disclosures are one of the most effective tools to promote government accountability and protect the public. Whistleblowers are Congress's eyes and ears to detect abuses of power that betray the public trust, and they serve as indispensable witnesses during oversight hearings. Whistleblowers also protect taxpayer dollars, as they have helped to recover more than \$40 billion under the False Claims Act since 1986.

For the aforementioned reasons, whistleblower protections have historically enjoyed bipartisan support. More than a dozen gold-standard whistleblower laws have been enacted since 2002, including unanimous passage of the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012. Notwithstanding their essential role in society and in legislation, whistleblowers risk their professional and at times personal freedom when they disclose government misconduct. This must be neutralized through a cultural sea change. Fortunately, the House Whistleblower Protection Caucus, akin to its Senate companion, has the ability to shape how whistleblowers are perceived.

As we understand it, the caucus aims to be a resource for House offices that grapple with whistleblower-related issues or are interested in promoting greater whistleblower protections. Among other activities, it would 1) bring together a bi-partisan coalition of like-minded Representatives to help draw attention to the need for whistleblower protections, 2) offer training and consultation in how House offices can effectively respond to whistleblower disclosures or retaliation allegations, and 3) serve as a clearinghouse for current information on whistleblower issues of interest to the House.

Your leadership in the caucus sends a clear message to taxpayers that you are committed to effective bipartisan oversight in order to fight waste, fraud, abuse, and public health or safety threats.

If we can support your efforts moving forward, please contact the Government Accountability Project's Legislative Director, Shanna Devine at 202.457.0034, ext. 132 or shannad@whistleblower.org and the Project On Government Oversight's Public Policy Associate, Liz Hempowicz at 202.347.1122 or ehempowicz@pogo.org.

Thank you,

Government Accountability Project

Liberty Coalition

National Taxpayers Union

Project On Government Oversight

Public Citizen

Taxpayers Protection Alliance

Union of Concerned Scientists, Center for Science and Democracy