

LETTERS

Place for Whistleblowers

The April 16 commentary by Joe Carson, "Lack of protection for whistleblowers imperils us all" cites out of date information and circumstances to criticize the Office of Special Counsel.

Upon becoming special counsel in 2004 I found a cumbersome bureaucracy with an inexcusable backlog of cases. During my confirmation hearing, members of both parties sternly instructed me to clean up OSC. A 2004 Government Accountability Office report echoed their criticism. That was then.

I took on the case backlog, and we dropped whistleblower and prohibited personnel practice case backlogs by 82 percent by the end of fiscal 2004. We reorganized, flattening away layers of case review and improving procedures. The referrals of whistleblowers disclosures and prohibited personnel practices claims for further investigation and prosecution were doubled.

In 2005 more than a dozen bipartisan Hill staff members investigated OSC for the then House Government Reform Committee, and we gave them complete access. Committee Chairman Tom Davis and federal work-force subcommittee Chairman Jon Porter wrote in a May 17, 2005, letter: "We appreciate the professional seriousness with which you approached these [GAO] recommendations and reduced the existing backlogs in the year following this report. Unfortunately, this activity, while beneficial to whistleblowers, was regarded with suspicion by activists who claim to work on behalf of whistleblowers ... We are also satisfied that your hard work — and smart work — has resulted in a more responsive Office of Special Counsel. ...

You are providing a great service to the American people and the federal government by protecting whistleblowers from il-

legal reprisals.

Since 2005, progress continues. Despite an increasing caseload, faster and more effective investigations have held down case backlogs. OSC also vigorously enforces the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act (USERRA), to protect the rights of federal employees who serve on active duty in the National Guard and reserve. We have slashed processing times and stepped up public prosecutions for service members, and we have obtained an historic high of corrective actions in more than 25 percent of the cases.

We welcome constructive criticism and laud the author for his whistleblower disclosures that have been substantive in the past. But we note that it would have been appropriate for him to have disclosed that he is a party in litigation brought against OSC.

OSC is the place for whistleblowers.

Scott Bloch, Special Counsel,
Office of Special Counsel
Washington

Editor's note: Joe Carson's litigation against the Office of Special Counsel includes two cases pending before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, according to OSC spokesman James Mitchell.

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