

Ryan Sweazey, Lt Col, USAF (retired)
210 Bunting Point Rd
Yorktown, VA 23693

29 August 2022

Representative Elaine Luria
412 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Luria,

Thank you for your support of the Fiscal Year 2023 Intelligence Authorization Act which outlines several remedial measures that the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) must take in order to eliminate what the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence labeled “a permissive environment for management abuses.”

In reviewing the circumstances which led to the IAA being passed, one major contributing factor has not yet been addressed: the unequivocal failure of the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoDIG) system. In the years leading up to the DIA affair, literally dozens of witnesses and victims came forward to raise concerns of abuse, discrimination, gross mismanagement, and reprisal to the DIA IG. Those cases languished open for literally years while the DoD spectated. My DIA reprisal case is no different, now entering its third year being open.

Without exaggeration, very few, perhaps none, of my colleagues retain any faith in the DoDIG Whistleblower Reprisal Investigation system. Time and time again, we have witnessed what transpired in DIA: investigations are delayed, sometimes intentionally, and/or not carried out in good faith, resulting in zero appreciable action at the end of what many would label as “farces” of investigations.

The spirit of Whistleblower Reprisal law 10 USC 1034 is three-fold: to hold perpetrators accountable, to offer restitution for victims, and, ultimately, deter future acts of reprisal. The system in its current state accomplishes none of these three aims. Investigations move glacially and because of the exorbitant time and lack of due process, as seen in the DIA affair, even in the case of a rare substantiation, there is little chance any of the three aforementioned aims are achieved. In the end, victims are left without recompense, perpetrators not held accountable, and future acts of reprisal are not deterred. The ultimate second-order effect which we now see: **members of the military have completely lost faith in the DoDIG system.**

Furthermore, victims of reprisal in the military are afforded no counsel which translates to them having to go out-of-pocket for legal representation. This is an incongruous gap in the military justice system since that very system affords counsel to military members for even the slightest of administrative functions and infractions.

My request of you is twofold:

-- First, the DoDIG system must be retooled. Reprisal investigations throughout the DoD are not carried out in the spirit of 10 USC 1034 as they run exorbitantly long and have little chance of substantiation. Timelines for investigations must be accelerated from months to weeks and there must be accountability for Inspectors General who do not carry their mission out with the DoDIG credo of "integrity and efficiency."

-- Secondly, the military justice system must allow for victims to receive counsel when they are the victim of reprisal, just as they are afforded counsel now for a myriad of other administrative issues.

Thank you for your engagement in this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ryan Sweazey", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Ryan Sweazey, Lt Col, U.S. Air Force (retired)
Founder and President, Walk the Talk Foundation

cc:
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence