



United States Senate
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Senator Susan M. Collins, Chairman

For Immediate Release

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Statement of Senator Susan M. Collins
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
On the nominations of Richard Skinner, to be Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security
and Brian Miller, to be Inspector General, General Services Administration
July 18, 2005

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Today, the Committee will consider the nominations of Richard Skinner to be Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security and Brian Miller to be Inspector General of the General Services Administration.

Congress enacted the Inspector General Act of 1978 in response to growing concerns that federal agencies did not have sufficient internal protections against waste, fraud, and abuse. The Act has been amended several times to add new

IGs and to clarify reporting requirements, but the basic tenets have remained constant: to provide independent voices in promoting the “economy, efficiency, and effectiveness” of programs and operations.

Billions of dollars have been recovered or saved based upon IG recommendations, and thousands of prosecutions have resulted from IG investigations. In recent years, the responsibilities of IGs have expanded in response to new challenges. IGs today play an increasingly vital role within their agencies by conducting financial audits, reporting on Results Act compliance and accountability, and assessing information security efforts.

Nowhere is the role of the Inspector General more important than at the Department of Homeland Security. This relatively new and extraordinarily large department poses management and other challenges that demand oversight like few others. The execution of the DHS mission is crucial to our nation, and effective, ongoing internal oversight is essential. As the Department begins to adopt the restructuring proposed in Secretary Chertoff’s just-completed Second Stage Review, this oversight will be even more important.

Our nominee’s willingness to work closely with the Committee will be critical to our continued oversight of the Department. Richard Skinner became the first Deputy Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security on March 1st, 2003, the date that office was established. He assumed the role of Acting Inspector General on December 8th, 2004.

Prior to joining DHS, Mr. Skinner was with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, where he served as both Deputy and Acting Inspector General. And prior to that, he served in the Office of Inspector

General at the departments of State, Commerce, Justice, and Agriculture. In all, he has dedicated more than 36 years to good government as a member of the audit and Inspector General community.

Mr. Skinner is no stranger to this Committee. He has provided informed and valuable testimony at two hearings so far this year – in January on DHS management challenges, and in May, on FEMA’s disaster relief efforts last year in Florida. Welcome back, Mr. Skinner.

Another federal agency at which effective, ongoing internal oversight is paramount is the General Services Administration. As the provider of office space, equipment, supplies, telecommunications, and information technology throughout the federal government, GSA is the gateway for nearly \$66 billion in federal spending. The agency also has a central role in the management of some \$500 billion in federal assets, including more than 8,300 government-owned or leased buildings, a fleet of more than 170,000 vehicles, and computer systems worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

With the financial stakes so high, it is imperative that GSA provide taxpayers with the best possible return on investment, in terms of value, efficiency, and integrity. As this Committee knows all too well, this is not always the case. From our investigations of federal real estate, purchase cards, and agency vehicle fleets, we have seen that GSA has not kept sufficient track of these valuable taxpayer-owned assets.

GSA faces significant challenges. From his responses to our written questions, it appears that this Inspector General nominee, Brian Miller, knows how serious these challenges are. He recognizes that much of what GSA does has a tremendous impact across every agency of government, and thus has a great impact upon the American people. He has stated his commitment to strengthening GSA performance by conducting independent and objective audits and investigations, and by seeking legislative and regulatory remedies when needed.

Mr. Miller currently is Counsel to the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. Prior to that, he served as Senior Counsel to the Deputy Attorney General, an Assistant U.S. Attorney, and a Senior Attorney-Advisor at the Department of Justice. During that time, he has supervised audits and investigations of procurement, grant, and healthcare fraud. He has worked with Inspector Generals in prosecuting criminal and civil cases, and, in fact, has provided training to the Inspector General community on conducting effective investigations.

I welcome Mr. Miller to the Committee. I look forward to the testimony of both of these nominees. We will begin with Mr. Skinner.

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