

September 20, 2018

U.S. Government Accountability Office
Office of Inspector General
441 G Street NW
Room 1808
Washington, DC 20548
202.512.5748

Re: Complaint Concerning Bias Threat for GAO Auditors

Inspector General Trzeciak,

We write to your office today to inform you of Project Veritas's findings in an investigation into the Government Accountability Office. Project Veritas is a national journalism organization dedicated to undercover reporting to expose corruption, fraud, waste, and abuse. In its most recent undercover project, it spoke with employees of the GAO to sort out how principled staffers were in abiding by GAO ethical requirements. Our findings leave much to be desired and we write to ask that an investigation into these findings occur.

The GAO holds a great responsibility in keeping government agencies accountable to the American people. GAO auditors must be independent and adhere to a strict ethical code to ensure the GAO's mission is achieved. Given the results of our current investigation, serious noncompliance with controlling ethics rules appears to be the norm.

In investigating the GAO, Project Veritas learned of the accounts of Natarajan Subramanian—an auditor in your employ. Subramanian is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America. The DSA describes itself as the “largest socialist organization in the United States.” During Project Veritas's investigation, it learned that many DSA members in the Washington, DC area are employed by the federal government and that the organization is taking organized action to thwart administration policies.

In this investigation, Subramanian admitted that “everything that I am doing with DSA is stuff that I am not supposed to be doing for work” and to spending six hours of government time in a day performing DSA related activities. In sum, Subramanian acknowledged performing ten to twenty hours of DSA per week. He also explained that he purposefully included vague or misleading statements on his annual disclosure forms to avoid ethical concerns.

GAO auditors are governed by a strict code of ethics found in the Yellow Book and the GAO Ethics Code. Under the GAO Ethics Code, GAO employees may not use government resources for non-governmental purposes during work hours. In addition, outside engagements that may cause embarrassment or criticism of the GAO may be prohibited. Under the Yellow Book, employees may similarly not use government resources for non-governmental work during work hours. More importantly, the Yellow Book requires that bias threats be eliminated in an auditor's work. Political, ideological, or other convictions that may cause an auditor to lose objectivity triggers ethical concerns. Likewise, undue influence from external sources may also trigger similar ethical concerns. *See generally* YELLOW BOOK, §§ 3.12-3.15.

It is clear that at least one GAO auditor, and likely numerous others, are actively impeding the mission of the GAO. By dedicating large amounts of time to personal and political projects, these employees deprive the GAO of the expertise, resources, and objectivity necessary to complete its tasks.

Beyond GAO-specific ethical requirements, purposefully providing false, misleading, or vague answers on annual disclosure forms may form the basis for a criminal violation of 18 USC § 1001. By evading requirements of truthfulness in completing these forms, the mission of GAO is compromised in ensuring the objectivity and integrity of its auditors. America's first line of government accountability is accordingly compromised.

Because Project Veritas's investigation suggests many members of the DSA are employed across numerous federal agencies and are impeding the federal government's operations, we urge an investigation in this matter. We encourage you to review the following link for confirmation. <https://www.projectveritas.com/video/the-deep-state-unmasked-federal-employee-admits-to-breaking-rules-every-day/>

Project Veritas makes itself available to assist the Office of Inspector General in reviewing this matter. Please contact the undersigned for additional details.

Respectfully,

/s/ Benjamin Barr
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