

## S 579

Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015

**Congress:** 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

**Policy Area:** Government Operations and Politics

**Introduced:** Feb 26, 2015

**Current Status:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 68.

**Latest Action:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 68. (May 5, 2015)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/579>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Grassley, Chuck [R-IA]

**Party:** Republican • **State:** IA • **Chamber:** Senate

### Cosponsors (20 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Johnson, Ron [R-WI]	R · WI		Feb 26, 2015
Sen. McCaskill, Claire [D-MO]	D · MO		Feb 26, 2015
Sen. Baldwin, Tammy [D-WI]	D · WI		Mar 4, 2015
Sen. Ernst, Joni [R-IA]	R · IA		Mar 23, 2015
Sen. Cornyn, John [R-TX]	R · TX		Sep 10, 2015
Sen. Collins, Susan M. [R-ME]	R · ME		Sep 21, 2015
Sen. Mikulski, Barbara A. [D-MD]	D · MD		Sep 21, 2015
Sen. Ayotte, Kelly [R-NH]	R · NH		Oct 19, 2015
Sen. Carper, Thomas R. [D-DE]	D · DE		Oct 19, 2015
Sen. Kirk, Mark Steven [R-IL]	R · IL		Oct 22, 2015
Sen. Lankford, James [R-OK]	R · OK		Oct 22, 2015
Sen. Fischer, Deb [R-NE]	R · NE		Dec 2, 2015
Sen. Wyden, Ron [D-OR]	D · OR		Dec 7, 2015
Sen. Enzi, Michael B. [R-WY]	R · WY		Jan 27, 2016
Sen. Manchin, Joe, III [D-WV]	D · WV		Feb 12, 2016
Sen. Peters, Gary C. [D-MI]	D · MI		Mar 1, 2016
Sen. Portman, Rob [R-OH]	R · OH		Apr 4, 2016
Sen. Isakson, Johnny [R-GA]	R · GA		Apr 27, 2016
Sen. Blunt, Roy [R-MO]	R · MO		May 10, 2016
Sen. Alexander, Lamar [R-TN]	R · TN		Jun 6, 2016

### Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee	Senate	Reported By	May 5, 2015

## Subjects & Policy Tags

### Policy Area:

Government Operations and Politics

### Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 HR 6450	Related bill	<b>Dec 16, 2016:</b> Became Public Law No: 114-317.
114 HR 2395	Related bill	<b>Jun 22, 2016:</b> Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.
114 S 3011	Related bill	<b>Jun 6, 2016:</b> Read the second time. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 505.

## **Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015**

This bill makes changes to the Inspector General Act of 1978 to expand the responsibilities and independence of the Offices of Inspectors General.

(Sec. 2) This section amends the Inspector General Act of 1978 to eliminate the role of federal agencies as supervisors of their Inspectors General.

The President or the head of a designated federal entity may not place an Inspector General in a paid or unpaid, nonduty status unless, within 48 hours, the President or the agency head communicates in writing to Congress the reasons for such action, which shall be limited to evidence that the continued presence of the Inspector General in the workplace may: (1) pose a threat to an employee or others, (2) result in the loss of or damage to federal property, or (3) otherwise jeopardize the legitimate interests of the federal government.

An Inspector General may not be placed on such status for more than 10 days, unless the Integrity Committee of the Council of the Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (Council) submits to the President or the agency head a written recommendation for additional time that is acted upon by the President or the agency head and communicated immediately to Congress.

(Sec. 3) This section grants Inspectors General additional subpoena authority to compel the attendance and testimony of certain witnesses, including current and former federal government contractors, subcontractors, or grantees, and former federal employees, necessary in the performance of functions assigned by such Act. An Inspector General must: (1) submit a request for approval to issue such a subpoena to a Subpoena Panel, (2) notify the Department of Justice (DOJ) of the intent to issue the subpoena, and (3) report to the Council on the number of times the Inspector General has issued a subpoena.

(Sec. 4) ) The Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, rather than the Inspector General of the Office of the Director of National Security, shall be a member of the Council.

The Council must report on its activities to specified congressional committees and review and mediate disputes regarding an audit, investigation, inspection, evaluation, or project that involves the jurisdiction of more than one Office of Inspector General.

The membership structure of the Integrity Committee of the Council is modified to eliminate the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation as Chairperson of the Committee and the Special Counsel of the Office of Special Counsel as a Committee member. The Committee must elect one of the Inspectors General on the Committee as Chairperson to serve for a term of two years.

The Committee, not later than seven days after receiving an allegation of wrongdoing against an Inspector General or Inspector General staff member, must refer such allegation to a representative of DOJ, the Office of Special Counsel, and the Committee for review. If an allegation of wrongdoing is referred to the Committee, the Committee must decide within 15 days to refer the allegation to the Chairperson to initiate an investigation.

This section sets forth further requirements for investigations of allegations of wrongdoing, including: (1) requiring an agency to provide necessary resources to the Committee during its investigation; (2) requiring the Chairperson of the

Committee to complete the investigation of the allegations within 120 days; (3) allowing concurrent investigations by the Committee, DOJ, and the Office of Special Counsel; and (4) requiring reports to Members of Congress of the results of any investigation.

The Committee may also receive, review, and refer allegations of wrongdoing against the Special Counsel or Deputy Special Counsel (officials appointed to investigate prohibited personnel practices and government waste and abuse).

This section also authorizes appropriations for the Council for FY2016-FY2021.

(Sec. 5) This section sets forth reporting and other requirements under the Act, including by requiring: (1) the Government Accountability Office to study and report on prolonged vacancies in the Offices of Inspector General; (2) the Council to conduct and report on an analysis of critical issues that involve the jurisdiction of more than one Office of Inspector General; (3) the Office of Inspector General of each federal agency and department to submit to specified congressional committees reports on investigations of misconduct by federal employees paid at level 15 of the General Schedule or above who were not prosecuted, on instances of whistleblower retaliation, on attempts to interfere with the independence of the Office of Inspector General, and on undisclosed investigations, evaluations, and audits; and (4) an Inspector General to disclose any work product that makes a recommendation or otherwise suggests corrective action.

(Sec. 6) This section makes: (1) technical and clerical corrections to the Act, and (2) a distinction between a federal agency and a designated federal entity for purposes of the Act.

## **Actions Timeline**

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- **May 5, 2015:** Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. Reported by Senator Johnson with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. With written report No. 114-36.
- **May 5, 2015:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 68.
- **Mar 4, 2015:** Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.
- **Feb 26, 2015:** Introduced in Senate
- **Feb 26, 2015:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.