

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0803

September 5, 2018

Ms. Tammy L. Whitcomb
Acting Inspector General
United States Postal Service
Office of Inspector General
1735 N. Lynn Street
Alexandria, VA 22209-2029

Dear Acting Inspector General Whitcomb:

I am writing to request that your office conduct an investigation into the release by the United States Postal Service of a former employee's unredacted responses to the Questionnaire for National Security Positions, Standard Form 86 (SF-86) and any other related personal information and determine if the information was released in violation of privacy statutes and/or other laws and regulations.

On August 28, 2018, the New York Times reported that the Congressional Leadership Fund, a political action committee (PAC), obtained a copy of an unredacted SF-86 completed by Abigail Spanberger, the Democratic candidate for the Commonwealth of Virginia's 7th Congressional District. Press reports indicated that the form was obtained by America Rising, a political research firm, through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Postal Service, which then shared it with the PAC. It was also reported that the Postal Service provided America Rising with Ms. Spanberger's entire personnel file.

On August 30, 2018, another New York Times report confirmed the Postal Service released the information and stated "[the Postal Service] deeply regrets our mistake in inappropriately releasing" the official personnel file of Abigail Spanberger and has requested that a Republican-aligned super PAC return the file. The Postal Service also acknowledged the possibility of additional inappropriate disclosures.

The release of Ms. Spanberger's unredacted SF-86 to any individual or entity without her permission appears to be a violation of the law and calls into question the Postal Service's processes for responding to FOIA requests and maintaining sensitive personnel files. I request that your office investigate the Postal Service's role in the release of Ms. Spanberger's SF-86 and related personnel documents and, at a minimum, address the following questions:

1. What were the circumstances of the disclosure of Ms. Spanberger's SF-86 and personnel file?

2. Did the disclosure of Ms. Spanberger's SF-86 and/or any other documents provided under America Rising's FOIA request violate any laws, regulations, or policies governing disclosure of such materials?
3. What, if any, information provided under America Rising's FOIA request should not have been provided?
4. Should the Postal Service have requested a privacy waiver from Ms. Spanberger prior to releasing her Official Personnel File (OPF) and/or SF-86 or any other documents? If yes, why did the Postal Service not seek a privacy waiver from Ms. Spanberger?
5. Were any individuals in the Postal Service who handled America Rising's FOIA request aware of Ms. Spanberger's candidacy for Virginia's 7th Congressional District or the political nature of America Rising's request?
6. The Postal Service stated they have asked America Rising to return Ms. Spanberger's personal information. Has America Rising returned Ms. Spanberger's personal information? If not, what is the status of the request?
7. During the time of the disclosure, did the Postal Service have adequate procedures in place to process FOIA requests for information contained in an OPF or SF-86 and prevent disclosure of personally identifiable and sensitive information?
8. The Postal Service stated they have since addressed the issue by providing clear instructions and guidance to employees tasked with the responsibility for handling SF-86 and OPF FOIA requests. Evaluate these instructions and guidance and determine if they are adequate in preventing unauthorized and impermissible disclosures of such information in the future. In addition, make recommendations, if necessary.
9. Did the Postal Service issue any disciplinary action against employee(s) involved in disclosing Ms. Spanberger's SF-86 or any other documents? Please elaborate.
10. Has the Postal Service inappropriately disclosed information about any other current or former employee? Please explain.
11. What is the status of Ms. Spanberger's opposition research firms December 2017 FOIA request for her personnel information?

Thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent request and if you have any questions, please contact John Kilvington at (202) 224-1548.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Carper