

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 22, 2015

The Honorable Ashton B. Carter
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Carter:

We are writing to express concern about the way a senior Department of Defense (DOD) official is being treated after reporting finance and accounting irregularities at the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA).

The official in question is Mr. Jimaye Sones, a member of the Senior Executive Service. Mr. Sones served as the DISA Comptroller from March 2005 to June 2013. After reporting two troublesome finance and accounting issues, Mr. Sones was apparently reassigned to positions of decreasing responsibility: 1) In June 2013, he became DISA Inspector General (IG) but served in that post for just five months; 2) In November 2013, he became DISA's Director of Information Readiness and Security and served in that position for 15 months; 3) In February 2015, he was reassigned to co-chair a Pentagon working group on "Internal Use Software." He serves in that post today.

We understand Mr. Sones first noticed irregularities in a September 2012 SF-133 Report on Budget Execution and Budgetary Resources for DISA's Working Capital Fund, which showed a negative unobligated balance of \$323 million. For any comptroller, negative unobligated balances, over-obligations, and/or negative cash balances normally set off alarm bells. Consistent with his responsibilities as Comptroller, Mr. Sones attempted to address the funding issues by recommending appropriate corrective action. He laid out a standard set of options for addressing the negative funding balance. He briefed the proposed remedies up the chain of command to the DISA Director, Lieutenant General Ronnie Hawkins, and then to the DOD Comptroller's office. In the end, his proposals were rejected by top officials. Furthermore, Mr. Sones was criticized by his superiors for bringing the negative cash balance "to the attention of the DOD leadership," and they allegedly instructed him to remove all references to the negative balances in briefing materials being prepared for Congress.

After reporting the negative balances in late 2012, Mr. Sones was removed as the DISA Comptroller and reassigned to the post of DISA IG. Then while Mr. Sones was serving as IG, the agency implemented a new policy known as the "Accrued Billing Process." Because this policy was viewed as a potentially improper remedy for increasing cash reserves to possibly cover the negative balances, the DISA IG initiated an audit of the new practice. As the former Comptroller directly responsible for the suspected over-obligation, Mr. Sones had a potential conflict of

interest and recused himself from this audit. Mr. Jim Gribble, the Deputy IG, directed the audit. The final report, dated April 4, 2014, concluded that billing process "violated" DoD Financial Management Regulations (FMR) and should be "discontinued."

Further, in the midst of the above-mentioned audit, Mr. Sones was summarily removed as IG. We are not unaware of any adverse reports on Mr. Sones' record that might shed light on the reassignments. To our knowledge, Mr. Sones has a record of distinguished government service.

We urge you to have the appropriate official in your office examine all the facts bearing on Mr. Sones' recent reassignments and to make a determination as to the appropriateness of his treatment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


CHUCK GRASSLEY
United States Senator


MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator