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OSC Achieved Historic Results for Whistleblowers in FY 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C./June 12, 2018 – The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) today [released](#) its fiscal year (FY) 2017 Annual Report to Congress, highlighting the agency’s great successes and record-breaking favorable actions on behalf of whistleblowers. OSC provides a safe channel for federal employees to report fraud, serious waste, mismanagement and abuse, as well as dangers to public health and safety. The agency also safeguards the employment rights of federal employees and returning members of the uniformed services and enforces the Hatch Act.

“The more the federal community learns about and gains confidence in OSC, the more it turns to OSC for assistance,” said **Special Counsel Henry J. Kerner**. “OSC protects the public, stands up for taxpayers, and increases public confidence in their government. My predecessor, Carolyn Lerner, and the talented staff here at OSC should be very proud of the great results achieved last year. And I’m happy to report that OSC is continuing to build on these successes in the current fiscal year.”

Favorable actions include stays, corrective actions, disciplinary actions, and systemic changes to agency practices. Corrective actions may include reinstatement of an employee who has been fired, back pay, compensatory damages, and other forms of relief. Stays delay adverse employment actions against federal employees while OSC investigates their whistleblower reprisal claim. Disciplinary actions involve measures taken against supervisors who committed prohibited personnel practices (PPP), including whistleblower retaliation.

Favorable Actions:

- Last year, OSC obtained 323 favorable actions, an agency record and a 16 percent increase over FY 2016 levels. This translates into improved accountability and fairness in government, as well as jobs saved, whistleblowers protected, and rights restored.
- Out of these, 241 involved instances of whistleblower retaliation, a top priority for OSC.
- OSC negotiated 44 stays with agencies to protect employees from premature or improper personnel actions.
- OSC obtained 15 stays or stay extensions from the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).
- OSC negotiated 16 disciplinary actions, upholding accountability and sending a warning to supervisors about the serious repercussions for unacceptable conduct.

Performance Highlights:

In FY 2017, OSC continued to see elevated levels of new cases. For the third year in a row, OSC received around 6,000 new matters, a substantial portion of which concerned scheduling and patient care revelations at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. While operating with just a modest increase in resources to perform its mission, OSC has skillfully enhanced accountability, integrity, and fairness in the federal workplace.

OSC continues to set records in achieving favorable results. In PPP cases this past year, the 323 favorable actions are more than triple the number in an average year. During FY 2016-17, OSC obtained favorable results in 459 whistleblower retaliation actions, which is also triple the rate of an average two-year span. Further, OSC achieved a record 47 systemic corrective actions in FY 2017, which will result in significant policy changes or larger training efforts to proactively prevent future violations at the agencies involved.

The full report can be [found here](#).

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: The Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC's primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and to serve as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing. For more information, please visit our website at www.osc.gov.