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OSC Applauds President Signing Bill to Help Protect Whistleblowers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C./June 25, 2018 – Special Counsel Henry J. Kerner today released the following statement after President Trump [signed into law](#) the Whistleblower Protection Coordination Act, to permanently reauthorize a “Whistleblower Protection Coordinator” at each agency’s Office of Inspector General (OIG). The position, previously referred to as Whistleblower Protection Ombudsman, is tasked with educating agency employees about prohibitions against retaliation and with assisting the OIG in coordinating with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC), Congress, and other relevant entities to ensure allegations are handled appropriately.

Special Counsel Henry Kerner: “I am pleased the President and Congress are taking seriously the importance of protecting whistleblowers. By signing this important legislation into law, whistleblowers will now have a dedicated official permanently at each agency to educate the workforce and work with OSC to protect against retaliation. This is an important step to ensure whistleblowers who disclose waste, fraud, and abuse know their rights and are protected.”

Whistleblower disclosures can save lives, taxpayer dollars, and play a critical role in holding our government accountable. Federal law should strongly encourage employees to disclose wrongdoing while simultaneously protecting whistleblowers from retaliation. Pursuant to the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012, each OIG designated a Whistleblower Protection Ombudsman to educate their agency’s employees about prohibitions on retaliation for whistleblowing, as well as employees’ rights and remedies if anyone retaliates against them for making a protected disclosure. However, authorization for the Ombudsman position was subject to a five-year sunset and expired on November 27, 2017. The [Whistleblower Protection Coordination Act](#) codifies and makes permanent this important function.

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.