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OSC Reauthorization Act, Whistleblower Appreciation Resolution Pass Senate

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yesterday, the U.S. Senate passed legislation to reauthorize the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC). The Senate also passed a resolution honoring federal employee whistleblowers who call attention to fraud, waste, and abuse.

The Office of Special Counsel Reauthorization Act of 2017 (S. 582) reauthorizes OSC until 2022. Importantly, the bill clarifies OSC's ability to request and receive information from federal agencies. It specifically states that agencies may not assert common law privileges to withhold information from OSC. The Act, passed unanimously by the Senate, also promotes greater efficiency and accountability within OSC, improves protections against retaliatory investigations and other forms of reprisal, and requires managers across government to respond appropriately to disclosures of waste, fraud, and abuse. The House of Representatives passed similar legislation to re-authorize OSC in January 2017, and the bills will now be reconciled.

The Senate yesterday also passed a resolution advanced by the Whistleblower Protection Caucus (S. Res. 231) designating July 30, 2017, as National Whistleblower Appreciation Day. The resolution encourages federal agencies to acknowledge employees who risk their careers to combat fraud, waste, and abuse, and reminds employees of their legal rights as whistleblowers.

OSC applauds the bipartisan leadership demonstrated by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Senate Whistleblower Protection Caucus, and their continuing efforts to protect government whistleblowers.

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 and Reemployment Rights Act. OSC's primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially whistleblower retaliation, and to serve as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing. For more information, please visit our website at www.osc.gov.