United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6250

July 13, 2017

Kathleen McGettigan
Acting Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. McGettigan:

I am writing to request information regarding the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and its management of the Security Assessment and Authorization (Authorization) process. On June 20, 2017, the Office of Personnel Management Inspector General (IG) issued an audit report identifying several deficiencies in the Authorization of the LAN/WAN[1] system, which the IG described as OPM's "most critical general support system" because it provides controls to many of OPM's major information systems and smaller applications.[2]

After a 2015 moratorium on Authorizations, OPM engaged in a 30-day effort (Sprint) to Authorize all systems where the Authorization had previously expired. The IG found significant problems with the Authorization packages prepared during the Sprint and determined that a significant effort is still needed to stabilize the Authorization program. The IG also found that the independent security control testing done was severely limited in time and was further hampered by missing information.[3] The IG stated that OPM's management of its systems Authorization is a material weakness. This conclusion is particularly concerning given OPM's recent history with failing to adequately secure its information systems, leading to multiple, significant data breaches.

The IG made several findings regarding the problems with the Authorization. For example, the LAN/WAN system security plan (SSP) was missing relevant data and did not document all applicable security controls. The limited security controls assessment increases the risk of vulnerabilities not being detected. The IG found that of the 334 LAN/WAN security

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[1] Local Area Network/Wide Area Network General Support System.

[2] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Office of the Inspector General, *Audit of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Security Assessment and Authorization Methodology* (4A-CI-00-17-014) (June 20, 2017).

[3] *Id.*

controls tested, 202 were either not satisfied or only partially satisfied. In addition, the security weaknesses detected during the LAN/WAN Authorization were not appropriately tracked, leading to concerns that weaknesses cannot be corrected in a timely manner if proper information tracking procedures are not in place.[4] Finally, many of the Authorization packages were not complete and failed to include some critical elements that impact other systems.

The IG made several recommendations, including that OPM complete a system security plan with all required elements, perform a thorough security assessment, maintain a complete list of Plan of Action and Milestones, and complete a gap analysis to determine whether there are critical elements missing from all Authorization packages. I understand that OPM concurred with all recommendations. In order to better understand how OPM will correct these deficiencies, I request that you provide the following information:

(1) Describe the specific steps being taken to address the IG's recommendations and the date those actions will be concluded.

(2) Does OPM believe its management of system Authorizations is a material weakness? If no, why not? If yes, how is OPM comprehensively addressing this issue?

(3) Why was the independent security assessment completed on a shortened timeframe? What specific policies and procedures does OPM have in place to determine whether these assessments are sufficient?

(4) Has a more thorough security controls assessment been conducted? If not, when will this be completed?

I request that you provide complete responses to the above on or before August 3, 2017. Please have your staff contact Sarah Garcia with my Committee staff at (202) 224-2627 or Sarah_Garcia@hsgac.senate.gov with any questions. Please send any official correspondence related to this request to Amanda_Trosen@hsgac.senate.gov.

Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member

cc: Ron Johnson
        Chairman

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[4] *Id.*