



**DOJ INSPECTOR GENERAL ANNOUNCES
NEW WHISTLEBLOWER OMBUDSPERSON**

***New Position will Emphasize Key Role and
Protections of Agency Whistleblowers***

Department of Justice Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today that he has created a Whistleblower Ombudsperson position within the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG), which we understand is one of the first such positions in the federal government. Horowitz has hired an experienced federal prosecutor as Counselor to the Inspector General to help lead the new effort.

"Whistleblowers play a critical role in uncovering waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement," said Horowitz, "and this new position will enable the OIG to continue its leadership as a strong and independent voice within the Department of Justice on whistleblower issues." Horowitz, who was sworn in as Inspector General on April 16, 2012, noted, "In just my first three months on the job, I have seen first-hand how whistleblowers have advanced the OIG's efforts to address wasteful and improper spending, improve the Department's operations, and protect the public's safety."

The OIG Whistleblower Ombudsperson will focus on training and educating employees within the Department about the role and importance of whistleblowers in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's operations, as well as their legal rights and protections against retaliation. The OIG Whistleblower Ombudsperson also will be responsible for alerting Department officials and managers to the possible repercussions of retaliation against those who make protected disclosures. In addition, the OIG Whistleblower Ombudsperson will:

- Ensure that whistleblower complaints are reviewed and addressed by the OIG in a prompt and thorough manner;
- Communicate with whistleblowers about the status and resolution by the OIG of those complaints;
- Monitor investigations of retaliation claims that are within the jurisdiction of the OIG; and
- Serve as the OIG liaison to other U.S. agencies with whistleblower responsibilities, such as the Office of Special Counsel, and to non-governmental whistleblower organizations and advocacy groups.

Horowitz noted that Members of Congress and leading private sector organizations have recognized the important role that an ombudsperson can play in dealing with whistleblower issues. "The creation of an ombudsperson position is being recognized as a best practice in this area, and I want the OIG to be at the forefront on these important matters," said Horowitz.

For further information about the new OIG Whistleblower Ombudsperson, please contact OIG Chief of Staff Jay Lerner, or Counselor to the Inspector General Robert P. Storch at (202) 514-3435.