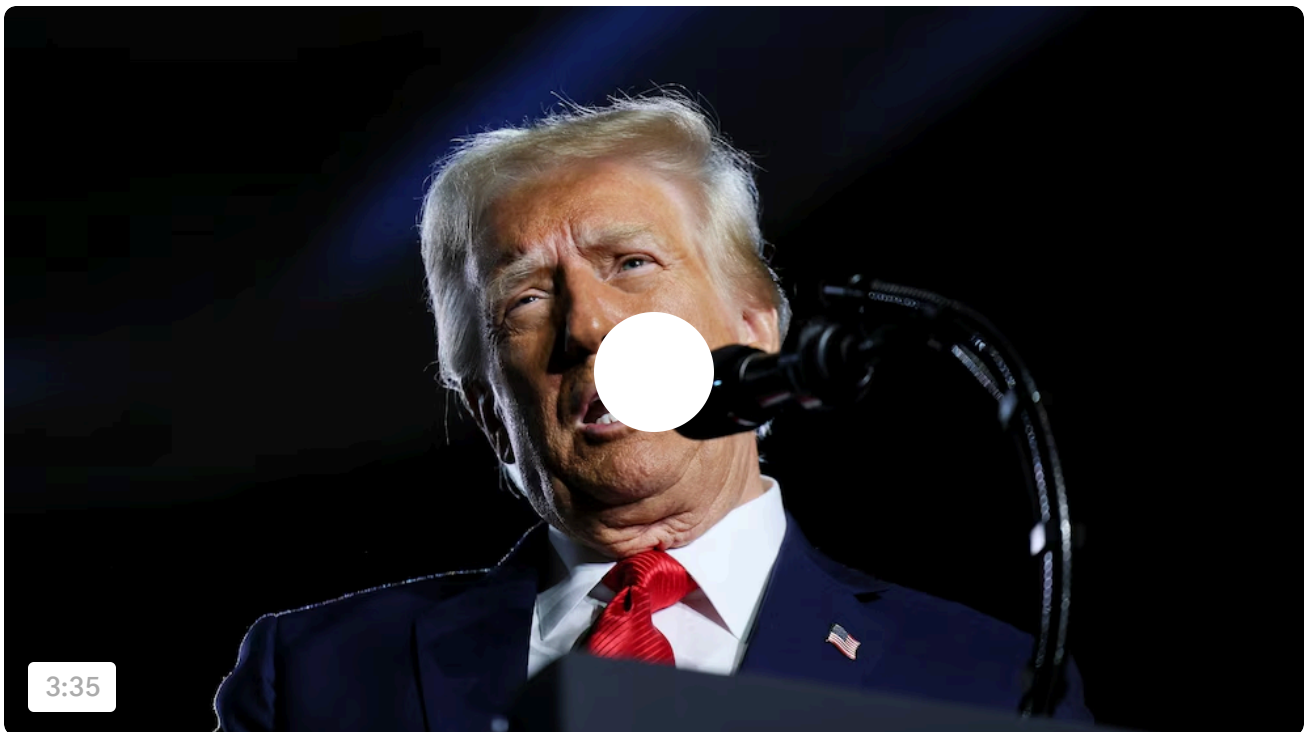


Trump administration cites 'changing priorities' in emails that fired inspectors general

The way the wave of terminations was done surprised many in the IG community.

By [Katherine Faulders](#), [Sasha Pezenik](#), and [Benjamin Siegel](#)

January 26, 2025, 3:45 PM



Trump fires 17 independent watchdogs Plus, President Donald Trump's tour around the country, confirmations of Pete Hegseth, Kristi Noem, and the latest on immigration reform.

Leah Millis/Reuters

The email ousting at least one top federal watchdog from their post was so short, it could fit in a tweet.

The two-sentence long letter to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Inspector General Christi Grimm cited "changing priorities" under the President Donald Trump's new administration, according to a copy of the note obtained by ABC News.

"On behalf of President Donald J. Trump, I am writing to inform you that due to changing priorities your position as Inspector General... is terminated, effective immediately. Thank you for your service," the email read.

MORE: Trump fires 17 independent watchdogs at multiple agencies in late-night move →

The email addressed the inspector general by her first name -- "Dear Christi" -- with no customary courtesy title, such as "the Honorable," or even "Ms."



President Donald Trump looks on as reporters ask questions aboard Air Force One during a flight from Las Vegas, Nev., to Miami, Fla., Jan. 25, 2025.

Leah Millis/Reuters

The same email template was used for the other inspector general firings, sources said.



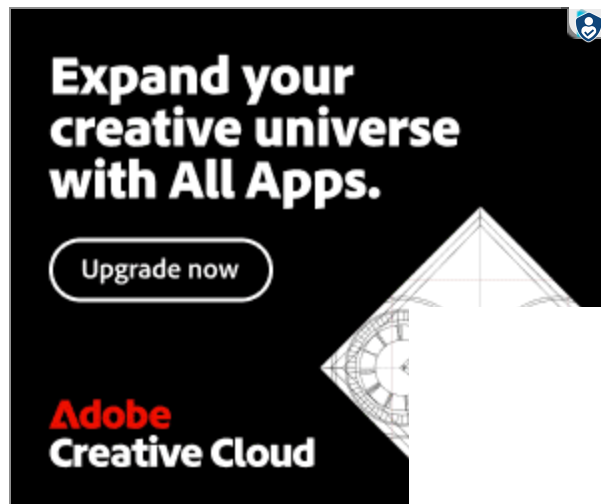
Late Friday night, Trump fired at least 17 inspectors general at multiple federal agencies.

While inspectors general can be fired by the president, it can only happen after communicating with Congress 30 days in advance. In 2022, Congress strengthened the law requiring administrations to give a detailed reasoning for the firing of an IG.

Trump classified the firings as a "common thing to do" as he talked to reporters aboard Air Force One on his way from Las Vegas to Miami Saturday evening.

"It's a very standard thing to do, very much like the U.S. attorneys," Trump said.

The email to Grimm came in at 7:48 p.m. Friday night, and the way the wave of terminations was done surprised many across the inspector general community, even though there had been signs that a firing event like this could happen -- as ABC News reported [last week](#).



Among recommendations in the Project 2025 conservative blueprint for a second Trump term was replacing inspectors general under the new administration. As recently as last week, Mick Mulvaney, who was one of Trump's chiefs of staff in his first term, wrote in an [op-ed](#) specifically that “a good place for Trump to start” cleaning out the "Deep State" would be with firing inspectors general.

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Still, the HHS Office of Inspector General -- and inspectors general's offices in most every government agency -- had prepared a transition book for the incoming administration laying out what the independent agency does, and to identify areas of focus to make the departments and their programs healthier, more efficient and more effective, according to multiple sources.

On a call Saturday afternoon among the inspector general community, not only was there note-comparing about who got fired, what their email said, and what happens now -- there was also discussion of encouraging those acting inspectors general who are remaining to stay independent and not shy away from difficult facts or unflattering findings, according to a source familiar with the call.

There's a concern among the inspector general community now, given the language about "changing priorities" in the firing emails, that the new administration is cleaning house in order to install personnel aligned with Trump's political leanings, rather than

those who champion the agencies' guiding mission of independence and oversight, multiple sources said.

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