



**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / [www.oig.dhs.gov](http://www.oig.dhs.gov)

April 21, 2017

The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Wyden:

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) notified the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) of your April 7, 2017 letter to CBP requesting that CBP conduct an internal review of its issuance of a March 14, 2017 summons to Twitter. I understand that CBP's Acting Commissioner responded to your request on April 11, 2017 notifying you that DHS OIG has opened an investigation into this matter.

While we typically do not comment on open investigations, it has come to my attention that there may be some confusion about the scope of DHS OIG's work relating to this matter. Specifically, we have been asked to clarify which, if any, of the following three issues we are investigating:

- (1) Misconduct on the part of the owner of the @ALT\_USCIS Twitter account, who CBP suspected was a DHS employee;
- (2) CBP's use of its summons authority in this particular case; and
- (3) Use of summons authority across the Department.

Regarding the first issue, we were asked by CBP to assist their efforts to determine whether the tweets at issue disclosed any classified information. To that end, we helped CBP pull the content of @ALT\_USCIS's tweets off the internet and cross-reference that content against data in DHS systems to determine whether the information was classified. We have concluded that no classified information was released via the @ALT\_USCIS Twitter account.

I'd like to make clear that DHS OIG has not played any role in attempting to identify the owner of the @ALT\_USCIS Twitter account, and only learned of the issuance of the March 14, 2017 summons when it was reported in the media. Our investigation protocol includes controls for situations in which First Amendment activity is implicated, and we strive



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to ensure that our work does not have a chilling effect on individuals' free speech rights. I can confirm that DHS OIG is not investigating, and will not investigate, any alleged misconduct on the part of the @ALT\_USCIS account owner relating to his or her use of the Twitter account.

Regarding the remaining two issues, I can confirm that DHS OIG is investigating whether the investigation conducted by CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility relating to the @ALT\_USCIS Twitter account was improper in any way, including whether CBP abused its authority in issuing the March 14, 2017 summons to Twitter. DHS OIG is also reviewing potential broader misuse of summons authority at the Department and/or its components.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me or Diana Shaw, Acting Director of External Affairs, at (202) 254-4100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Roth".

John Roth  
Inspector General

cc: Kevin K. McAleenan, Acting Commissioner  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection