

Dorgan, Wyden call for resignation of GSA administrator

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

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WASHINGTON, D.C. "As evidence of serious alleged ethics and possibly legal violations at the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) continue to mount, U.S. Senators Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and Ron Wyden (D-OR) on Monday called for the resignation or firing of GSA Administrator Lurita Doan. Doan has held the top GSA job since May 31, 2006, and has come under fire from bipartisan congressional critics.

Lurita Doan, GSA Administrator Wyden said two incidents have troubled him the most: Doan's efforts to undermine the Office of the Inspector General of the GSA and her riding roughshod over career professionals and the IG to award a questionable contract, thus ignoring the recommendations of critical members of her staff and wasting millions of taxpayers' dollars.

"What these incidents come down to is a complete disregard for the principals of responsible government and government accountability," Wyden said. "While Congress mandated Inspectors General to fight waste, fraud and abuse in the executive branch nearly 30 years ago, Ms. Doan has disregarded three decades of oversight in less than a year on the job. It doesn't matter what your politics are. Taxpayers should be outraged." Wyden continued, "I have always believed that an Administration deserves a broad berth to put its own people in federal agencies. But when someone spends their time holding political workshops on how to elect Republicans to office, that is so far over the line, I want them replaced."

"Having a White House aide make a presentation at a government agency about what that agency can do to help elect Republicans is way out of bounds," Dorgan said. "It goes well beyond anything I am aware of, by any administration of either party, and likely violates the law. It tears at the fabric of professionalism and nonpartisan civil service in our government. We need to hold those who thought it appropriate to hold such a meeting accountable, and to learn where else in the federal government similar presentations may have been made." Other alleged ethics or legal violations include:

Doan's overruling and removal of several career GSA contract negotiators who questioned the GSA's awarding of a contract to Sun Microsystems. Another contract

Doan's attacks on the GSA's Office of the Inspector General, which has included drastic budget cuts and her referring to the IG's investigators as terrorizing her. Individual Offices of the Inspector General independently investigate waste, abuse and fraud in federal agencies.

Doan's participation in a January 26, 2007, political briefing for GSA employees on how the GSA could promote Republican congressional candidates in 2008. Speakers allegedly included Doan and J. Scott Jennings, the White House deputy political affairs director. The federal Hatch Act of 1939 prevents federal government and agency employees from using their jobs for political purposes.

A \$20,000 no-bid contract Doan awarded to a close personal friend for a 24-page report on diversity even though the GSA has its own communications and public relations staff. By law, the contract should have been competitively bid.

U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) and U.S. Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) also have been investigating the allegations against Doan.

Wyden said while some people might think the GSA allegations are a routine "Inside the Beltway" story, the impact of scandal at the agency on taxpayers could be far reaching: the GSA operates 8,300 government-owned or leased buildings and 205,000 vehicles around the country. Through its contracts and purchases, it manages more than one-fourth of the government's total procurement dollars. Altogether, it manages about \$56 billion in contracts.

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