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February 2, 2010

Mr. Richard L. Skinner
Inspector General
Department of Homeland Security
Office of Inspector General
245 Murray Drive, SW, Bldg. 410
Washington, DC 20538

Dear Inspector General Skinner:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has received information from Federal Air Marshals (FAMs) raising disturbing allegations of widespread discrimination, retaliation, and other inappropriate conduct at the Cincinnati and Orlando Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) field offices.

I have written separately to Secretary Napolitano, requesting the Department to initiate a review of employment practices in the FAMS to determine the extent of the reported problems, whether they are limited to the Cincinnati and Orlando field offices, and whether additional steps should be taken to ensure that the Federal Air Marshal Service is fully complying with all Federal anti-discrimination laws (attachment).

I understand from news reports that your office has been made aware of allegations concerning a highly inappropriate "game board" that was on display in the Orlando field office, and that you referred the allegations for review by the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Office of Inspection. As you may know, a Federal Air Marshal from Orlando has alleged that Orlando management "made a game of targeting African Americans, Hispanics, females, veterans and men and women of alleged homosexual sexual orientation." The TSA has confirmed the existence of this "game board." Given that the alleged activity took place within the TSA, I believe it would be more appropriate for an investigation to be conducted by the Office of Inspector General, and request that your office undertake this investigation.

Mr. Richard L. Skinner
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I thank you for your attention to these matters, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edolphus Towns". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "T".

Edolphus Towns
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Darrell Issa
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform