



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Office of Inspector General (OIG) Management Advisory Report - 2023-0003-INVM-P – Architect of the Capitol (AOC) Lacks Policy to Govern Capitol Office Moves and Places AOC Funds at Risk

Executive Summary

This management advisory served to notify AOC management that the agency had no policy in place to guide House of Representatives office moves in the U.S. Capitol Building. The OIG also identified the potential for duplicative office moves, which would be a waste of AOC resources and taxpayer funds.

Background

In January 2023, during the multiple votes to elect the Speaker of the House for the 118th Congress, the OIG received complaints requesting an investigation into AOC “allowing” the Speaker Designate, Representative Kevin McCarthy, to move into the Speaker’s Offices in the U.S. Capitol Building. The complainants pointed out that Rep. McCarthy had not been elected Speaker, and at the time, given the multiple ballots, there was no guarantee he would be elected. The AOC does not “allow” anyone to occupy the Speaker’s Offices, and the 2023 Speaker’s election was unusual by historical standards, but the complaints did raise concern about whether AOC resources were properly used to conduct leadership office moves based on an election that was in doubt. Further, if the Speaker Designate were to lose an election, it might cause a chain-reaction of additional office moves.

Complaint Testing

The OIG tested the complaints to determine whether the conduct alleged had occurred, and if so, whether it constituted a violation of law, regulation or AOC policy. The OIG complaint testing determined that AOC works with the Office of the House Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and other offices to facilitate congressional leadership moves in the U.S. Capitol Building following the political parties’ internal leadership elections prior to the start of a new Congress. In this case, the AOC, CAO and the other supporting offices moved the Speaker Designate as well as the other majority and minority leadership officers and their staff into offices in the U.S. Capitol Building between December 27 and December 30, 2022. Further investigation revealed that the AOC had no policy or written procedures to govern these moves. The AOC’s role in these moves is based on historical precedent, requests from the out-going Speaker and Speaker Designate and verbal agreements between the support offices.

The OIG complaint testing found no violations of law or regulation. Similarly, the OIG found no violation of AOC policy or procedures because none exist.



Management Advisory

Conclusion

While the OIG understands that the AOC exists to support Congress and ensure that the People's business can proceed efficiently, the AOC also has an obligation to prudently spend American taxpayer funds. The financial commitment from the AOC to assist in the office moves for the five House leadership positions was approximately \$2,650 in AOC employee labor costs. The OIG recommends the AOC create a written policy and procedures for future moves. This policy should be created keeping in mind the AOC's role in supporting congressional efficiency as well as avoiding expending AOC resources to make repeated office moves based on internal congressional elections or other factors.

As noted above, no violations by AOC personnel were identified, and as Rep. McCarthy was ultimately elected Speaker of the House, no funds were misspent or identified as Funds for Better Use.

OIG Recommendation

To better manage AOC resources and protect taxpayer funds while supporting the work of the Congress, on March 21, 2023, the OIG issued a Management Advisory and recommended the following:

1. The Architect of the Capitol establish written policies or procedures to govern the role of AOC personnel in House leadership office moves within the U.S. Capitol Building.

AOC's Response

On May 19, 2023, AOC responded to the management advisory by notifying OIG that the Capitol Building Superintendent's Office had established Standard Operating Procedures to provide guidelines to AOC employees executing leadership offices moves in the U.S. Capitol following Congressional elections. A copy of the procedures was provided to the OIG.

OIG Response

We reviewed the AOC's management comments and determined they address the recommendation; we consider this recommendation closed.