

April 23, 2012

Chairman Joseph Lieberman, Ranking Member Susan Collins, and Members
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and Senators:

We the undersigned organizations write with our strong support for the Non-Federal Employee Whistleblower Protection Act of 2011, S. 241, introduced by Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO), which is planned for markup by this committee on Wednesday. S. 241 would bridge the wide gaps in current coverage and comprehensively apply best-practice whistleblower protections to all federal funds recipient employees.

Studies show that whistleblowers are the best defense against waste, fraud, and abuse. Modeled after the whistleblower protections in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which had a relatively low incidence of fraud, S. 241 would go a long way to protect taxpayer dollars.

S. 241 specifically would prohibit reprisals for disclosures to appropriate federal entities related to the implementation or use of federal funds regarding gross mismanagement, gross waste, substantial and specific danger to public health and safety, abuse of authority, or a violation of a law, rule, or regulation. It would protect the most common disclosures made by employees seeking to fix a problem—those made to a supervisor or internal compliance program. Inspectors General would investigate claims, and when reprisal is confirmed, the whistleblower would have effective remedies, including compensatory damages. If administrative remedies have been exhausted, the whistleblower would have access to district court.

In sum, S. 241 would ensure strong protections for those on the front lines against waste, fraud, abuse of taxpayer dollars, and threats to public health and safety. We urge you to support and pass this extremely effective public policy that will result in far more accountability.

Sincerely,

Government Accountability Project (GAP)
The Liberty Coalition
National Taxpayers Union (NTU)
OpenTheGovernment.org
Project On Government Oversight (POGO)
Taxpayers Protection Alliance