

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to ask you to immediately rescind your nomination of T. March Bell as Inspector General (IG) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).¹ Bell's history of ethical lapses and obfuscation at the expense of Virginia taxpayers is incompatible with the inspector general's mission to provide independent oversight and accountability at HHS.

In 1997, Bell was forced to resign from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for mishandling taxpayer funds by directing improper payments to a former colleague, who had himself resigned over attempting to orchestrate a "deceptive media campaign against a legislative committee."² At the time, the Virginia auditor of public accounts found that Bell had violated Virginia policy by approving nearly \$8,000 in compensatory payments with *no* documentation, violating not only "internal procedures" but also Commonwealth-wide policies designed to protect taxpayer funds.³ That disregard for basic transparency and accountability requirements was part of what the Daily Press described as a DEQ leadership-wide pattern of "[thinking] the law doesn't apply to them" —a pattern obviously at odds with the serious work of an inspector general.⁴

Further, Bell's recent behavior suggests that he *continues* to believe that he should not be beholden to Virginia law, Virginia taxpayers, or the standards that Virginians expect of public officials. In 2022, Bell was hired as a senior advisor to the Virginia Secretary of Public Safety, drawing a \$125,000 annual salary from Virginia taxpayers.⁵ Unfortunately, little is known about that position. Despite taking a position ineligible for the limited exceptions to Virginia's open records law,⁶ Bell secured the Governor's support in improperly blocking the release of any information regarding his taxpayer-funded role.⁷ While willing to draw a salary from Virginians,

¹ [Trump nominates Republican once accused of mishandling taxpayer funds as HHS watchdog | AP](#)

² [DEQ Deputy Ousted After Report | Daily Press](#)

³ [Environment Official Ousted from VA. Post | Washington Post](#)

⁴ [Bell's Departure | Daily Press](#)

⁵ [Youngkin administration blocks the release of calendar, advisor's emails | VPM](#)

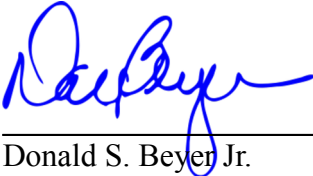
⁶ [§ 2.2-3705.7. Exclusions to application of chapter; records of specific public bodies and certain other limited exclusions. | LIS](#)

⁷ [Youngkin administration blocks the release of calendar, advisor's emails | VPM](#)

Bell was apparently unwilling to disclose exactly *why* he was drawing that salary, either voluntarily or in accordance with Virginia law.

Appointing an official clearly unconcerned with ethics, transparency, or accountability is directly at odds with the mission of an office that last year recovered more than \$7 billion for American taxpayers.⁸ We ask that you therefore immediately rescind the nomination of T. March Bell as HHS IG.

Sincerely,



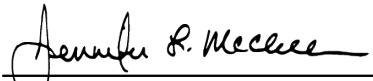
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



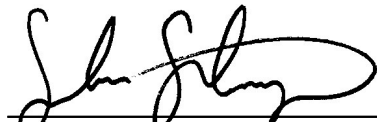
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress

CC:

Senator Mike Crapo, Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance
Senator Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Finance

⁸ [HHS-OIG's Efforts Result in \\$7.13 Billion in Expected Recoveries and Receivables, According to Fall 2024 Semiannual Report | HHS OIG](#)