



# JPOIG Overview

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

## JEFFERSON PARISH OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

### Parish Council poised to pass legislation silencing Office of Inspector General and eroding oversight.

Five Parish Councilmembers have joined to sponsor legislation to silence the OIG. They have proposed amendments to the Inspector General ordinance which, if adopted, would:

- Prohibit the OIG from making public statement made outside of a **courtroom**, “extrajudicial statement,” which is to prohibit **all** public statements since the OIG does not make statements inside a courtroom.
- Prohibit the Inspector General from making any public comment that could lead to public condemnation of any individual or entity under investigation **or** included in a report, which, if adopted, would constrain the Inspector General’s authority to question acts of any elected officials, as mere questioning could result in public criticism.
- Critically damage the Inspector General’s ability to recruit new employees.

These sweeping provisions will threaten the Inspector General’s authority to:

- Publish reports without interference or threat of reprisal.
- Provide the public with updates on ongoing audits and evaluations.
- Respond to inquiries about its published work products.
- Communicate with the public about published work products.
- Communicate with appropriate authorities about potential violations of law.

Inspectors General from coast to coast, north to south, have spoken out against these proposed Jefferson Parish amendments saying:

*The Proposed Amendment represents government at its worst – it seeks to cancel the watchdog’s public reveal of their findings, effectively immunizing public officials from scrutiny of their constituents. Such circumstances breed suspicion, fraud and corruption. The Parish Council must do better.* ~ Denise S. Wolf, Esq. Inspector General, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority.

*I am a licensed attorney, currently serving as the Inspector General of the Chicago Housing Authority, as well as the President of the Illinois Chapter of the Association of Inspectors General. I previously worked in the legal department of the City of Chicago OIG for nearly 10 years. In my entire career in this field, I have never seen a similar legislative provision attempting to limit the specific statements of an IG. The amendment would make Jefferson Parish an outlier in this area and reflect a clear effort to weaken its own government oversight.* ~ Kathryn Richards, Inspector General, Chicago Housing Authority.

*More concerning is that the amendments limit the public’s right to a transparent and accountable government, which are key to maintaining public trust in democracy.* ~ Claudette Biemeret, Inspector General, BART Office of Inspector General, Oakland, CA.

*I strongly urge you to reconsider this proposal... It would negatively impact the Office of Inspector General in its ability to conduct efficient and independent operations.* ~ John Carey, Inspector General, Palm Beach County, FL.

Visit [JPOIG.net](http://JPOIG.net) to read nine Inspectors General letters identifying proposed legislation and worst practices.