

**Wadelton, Joan S**

---

**From:** Wadelton, Joan S  
**Sent:** Friday, August 01, 2008 4:56 PM  
**To:** Kennedy, Patrick F; Geisel, Harold W (OIG); Boswell, Eric J  
**Cc:** Dent, Lynwood M  
**Subject:** HR abuses

**I want to bring to your attention longstanding problems that I have had with current and former officials in HR. I believe that these problems are not limited to me, but rather are widespread and damaging to our institution. In my own case, these abuses will soon end my career.**

**Over the last eight years, current and former senior HR officials have, inter alia, attempted to place me on disciplinary leave without pay without cause, directed my assignment to a post well below my experience and status at that time, and attempted to forcibly retire me although I am below the 65 year mandatory retirement age (the Senate Foreign Relations Committee intervened to prevent this). There have been a host of other punitive measures that have resulted in severe, permanent damage to my career.**

**Most importantly, however, although I believe that I have been promoted repeatedly over the last several years, I am facing forcible retirement in September -- ostensibly for not crossing the senior threshold. Two weeks ago, I filed a motion with the Foreign Service Grievance Board (FSGB) for a stay of my retirement, which the Department is fighting.**

**In 2006 the FSGB ordered the Department to reconvene promotion boards for me for the years 2003 and 2004; under the circumstances the Department volunteered to reconvene a board for 2005. The 2003 grievance disputed a low-ranking statement that I received for my creation of the Department's highly successful Congressional Liaison Office. The 2004 grievance was based on the late arrival of my performance review from my first posting in Baghdad to the annual summer promotion boards. The 2005 grievance was based on the absence from my file when it went before the annual promotion boards of two awards that I received as the Iraq advisor to the Under Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs.**

**The State Department fought reconvening the six boards for over a year, but, as noted, eventually did so in 2006. When my lawyers and I received the results of those six boards, we were struck by their extreme implausibility. According to the rankings provided by HR, I had come in dead last five times, and second to last once. These results were suspicious for several reasons: first, I have a very good record; second, State promotion board results are notoriously inconsistent. It is hard to imagine that six different boards, composed of six sets of independent judges, reviewing six different**

batches of files, over three years of performance, would deliver virtually identical results.

These suspicions were confirmed by the uncovering of evidence of illegal tampering with the results of these boards. This evidence points to falsification of the promotion boards' rankings of me, unauthorized use of promotion board members' signatures, and the production of the purportedly official results of the promotion boards without board members' knowledge and/or concurrence. Manipulating official USG proceedings and altering official USG documents constitutes criminal conduct under 18 U.S.C. 1001. The Office of Special Counsel deemed this evidence to be sufficiently credible to launch an investigation that is ongoing.

My case is not unique. Credible stories of illicit additions to, and removals from, Foreign Service promotion lists abound. In addition, my law firm recently received documents from a grievance proceeding involving another FSO that bear the hallmarks of my own adulterated documents.

State has resisted all calls for an investigation into this matter for several years. My own requests to State's IG, as well as multiple inquiries to the IG from Congress (including from the then-Chairman of State's oversight Committee, Henry Hyde) have been repeatedly rebuffed. More recently, my July 18, 2008, filing to the FSGB asked that Diplomatic Security open an investigation; this also was turned down. The Department has instead proposed that HR/G itself investigate the matter, despite the fact that it is HR/G which is currently being investigated by the OSC in connection with my allegations that HR/G committed criminal acts by tampering with my reconvened boards. This is absurd. It is, however, consistent with the Department's pattern of suppressing information responsive to my claims.

I believe that my case is the tip of the proverbial iceberg. I have been emphatic in my conversations with the OSC, and with the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, that a sweeping and systemic overhaul of our personnel system will be needed to set this to rights. Until that happens, our institution, and US foreign policy, will suffer.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this further and to provide additional information regarding my case.

## **Wadelton, Joan S**

---

**From:** Wadelton, Joan S  
**Sent:** Monday, December 29, 2008 11:29 AM  
**To:** Koch, Ronald J (OIG)  
**Cc:** McAboy, Jeffrey W (OIG); Dillinger, Michael J (OIG); Burch, James B (OIG); Geisel, Harold W (OIG)  
**Subject:** RE: Looking for an update on my case

What you describe does not appear to constitute a thorough investigation. Two and half years have passed since the promotion panels in question were reconvened and witness testimony will no longer be entirely reliable. This case is about falsified documents and unless you have taken steps to obtain evidence thru means other than documents produced by HR (for example, relevant e-mails pulled out of the archives by someone other than HR) you will produce a result with no credibility whatsoever.

---

**From:** Koch, Ronald J (OIG)  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 18, 2008 12:05 PM  
**To:** Wadelton, Joan S  
**Cc:** McAboy, Jeffrey W (OIG); Dillinger, Michael J (OIG); Burch, James B (OIG)  
**Subject:** RE: Looking for an update on my case

Ms. Wadelton,

I'm sorry you feel that way. However, I assure you that my office is conducting a thorough, professional investigation, and we are taking all logical and practical steps to come to a conclusion. We have talked to witnesses, and gathered documentary information from the Department which included documents provided to them by the Office of Special Counsel (OSC). I understand that OSC conducted their own investigation into this matter at your request.

I believe we have performed the necessary due diligence regarding your investigation; as all of our investigations require and deserve.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season.

Regards,

**Ron Koch**  
Special Agent in Charge  
Office of Investigations  
Office of Inspector General  
U.S. Department of State

email: [kochr@state.gov](mailto:kochr@state.gov)  
Office: (703) 284-1942  
Cell: (202) 812-0668

---

**From:** Wadelton, Joan S  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 16, 2008 5:20 PM  
**To:** McAboy, Jeffrey W (OIG); Dillinger, Michael J (OIG); Koch, Ronald J (OIG)  
**Subject:** Looking for an update on my case

What - if anything -- are you doing on my request for an investigation?

When we had our preliminary meeting in August (convened at the request of U/S Kennedy) you seemed committed to doing an investigation. However, at our second meeting in September, you informed me that -- having talked to the same people in HR that I am accusing of some very serious things -- you saw no need to interview my witnesses. You also told me that you had "looked at" documents HR claimed were originals and that "they seemed fine." Nor did you see any need to search cyberspace for HR e-mails and other archived HR documents that might confirm what I was saying.

Further, you informed me that HR told you that I had "personality issues" -- although you did not specify what those might be. You also said that HR had told you that my performance reviews for the disputed years 2003, 2004 and 2005 contained "code words" that indicated that I should not be promoted; you were unable to explain what exactly those "code words" were. Finally, you advised me that if I "kept this up, people would think that I was just a crazy old broad that didn't want to retire."

Not everyone would view this as an acceptable approach to an investigation.

I am aware that you interviewed a member of one of the promotion panels in question and that he confirmed that the ranking that HR produced for me was mathematically impossible. That alone should have triggered an extensive search of the HR archives, document authentication in a laboratory by experts, interviews of multiple key witnesses etc.

I look forward to hearing from you.

LAW OFFICES  
**KALIJARVI, CHUZI & NEWMAN, P.C.**

JUNE D.W. KALIJARVI<sup>1</sup>  
GEORGE M. CHUZI  
ELIZABETH L. NEWMAN  
ELAINE L. FITCH

SUITE 610  
1901 L STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036  
(202) 331-9260

FAX: (866) 455-1504  
EMAIL: GCHUZI@KCNLAW.COM

524 KING STREET  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22320

SUITE 200  
2273 RESEARCH BOULEVARD  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

KATHLEEN C. CALLAHAN<sup>1</sup>  
HEATHER G. WHITE<sup>2</sup>  
ANNETTE M. LABIANO<sup>1</sup>

OF COUNSEL:  
FRANCINE K. WEISS<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ALSO ADMITTED IN VIRGINIA  
<sup>2</sup> ALSO ADMITTED IN MARYLAND

February 13, 2009

<sup>1</sup> ALSO ADMITTED IN CALIFORNIA  
<sup>1</sup> ALSO ADMITTED IN PA AND NJ  
<sup>2</sup> ALSO ADMITTED IN NY

Patrick F. Kennedy  
Under Secretary for Management  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

*by e-mail*  
[KennedyPF@State.gov](mailto:KennedyPF@State.gov)

Harold W. Geisel  
Acting Inspector General  
Department of State  
2121 Virginia Ave, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20037

*by e-mail*  
[GeiselHW@State.gov](mailto:GeiselHW@State.gov)

Re: Joan Wadelton

Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Geisel:

I am writing on behalf of my client, Joan Wadelton, to inform you of my concerns regarding her request for an investigation of allegations she has raised against current and former senior officials in State's Human Resources Bureau. Over the past seven years, Ms. Wadelton has repeatedly alleged (including three times to the OIG) that these officials have engaged in abuses of their authority and possible criminal actions in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001. Ms. Wadelton made her concerns known to Under Secretary Kennedy in a two-page e-mail in August 2008; Under Secretary Kennedy contacted Acting IG Geisel to handle Ms. Wadelton's complaint. Ms. Wadelton was contacted by two investigators from the OIG, who promised to look into her allegations. In addition, we understand that staff from the office of Henry Waxman, then-Chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, contacted the OIG and urged that Ms. Wadelton's complaint be investigated.

Unfortunately that was not to be. OIG investigators contacted Ms. Wadelton in September and told her that they had found no basis for her complaint. Remarkably, the OIG investigators apparently obtained their information from the same HR officials whom Ms. Wadelton was

accusing. During that September meeting, the OIG investigators told Ms. Wadelton that HR had informed them that Ms. Wadelton had "personality issues" (unspecified) that were well known. The investigators also said that three EERs which form the basis for Ms. Wadelton's complaints – while giving the appearance of excellent performance – in fact contained many "code words" (also unspecified) which indicated that the authors in fact did not want Ms. Wadelton to be promoted.

In addition, it emerged from this conversation that the OIG had interviewed none of the witnesses whom Ms. Wadelton had suggested, had done no document authentication (despite the fact that her allegations involve document tampering), had made no effort to look in HR's archives for relevant e-mails and other documents, and had refused to examine a case involving similar HR conduct which has come to the attention of our law firm. Finally, the investigators warned Ms. Wadelton that if she "kept this up, people would say that [she is] just a crazy old broad that doesn't want to retire."

If OIG had not set out to white wash the allegations, this has been the result. Leaving aside the blatantly discriminatory bias reflected in the investigators' comments, OIG's disinterest and lack of investigatory zeal are shocking. Certainly HR's corruption and blatant cronyism have been the subject of allegations for years, and my client has been the object of substantial punitive and retaliatory treatment for her efforts to expose it. Indeed, HR's current frenzied pursuit of Ms. Wadelton through the grievance process is unmatched by anything my firm has seen in 30 years. Even more disturbing is OIG's appearance of not having learned anything from the past eight years of ignoring its obligations and, instead, focusing on shielding Department decisions from scrutiny.

An investigative organization that conducts an investigation merely by consulting with the accused employees needs a thorough housecleaning. OIG's ongoing refusal to conduct a good faith – or any – investigation into Ms. Wadelton's allegations over the last seven years, is appalling. At this point, anything the OIG produces regarding Ms. Wadelton's case will be tainted. We would suggest that the investigation be restarted when a new State Department Inspector General is in place.

Sincerely yours,

*George Chuzi*  
George M. Chuzi

cc: Joan Wadelton