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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

September 15, 2014

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The Hon. Dana Boente
US Attorney
Eastern District of Virginia
2100 Jamieson Ave
Alexandria VA 22314

Dear Mr. Boente:

I am writing to request that you open a criminal investigation into the reported time and attendance abuses at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO). For your reference, I have attached several *Washington Post* articles, a related Commerce Inspector General report and two internal PTO reports regarding this matter. These reports describe allegations that certain telework employees have defrauded the federal government by getting paid for and/or receiving bonuses for time they had not worked. To date, I am not aware of any employee or manager involved in this scandal being fired.

I am one of the strongest supporters in Congress of the federal workforce. I regularly speak out on the House floor in defense of federal employees and was once a federal employee myself. I know the overwhelming majority of federal employees – whether at the PTO or elsewhere across the federal government – are honest and hardworking civil servants.

I also have been one of the champions in Congress of telework. I was the author of legislation authorizing and encouraging telework options in the federal workforce and have included language in a number of appropriations bills penalizing agencies for failing to make telework available to federal employees. I strongly believe – and studies have shown – telework increases productivity, reduces overhead costs, creates family-friendly work environments and relieves traffic congestion.

Telework, however, should not be abused. The fraudulent activity at PTO has the potential to undermine telework programs throughout the federal government. There must be a zero tolerance policy for fraud and abuse; federal employees who defraud the government must be held accountable.

While I have spoken with Commerce Secretary Pritzker and understand that she has launched an outside review of these abuses, I believe it is important for federal prosecutors to independently review these allegations for criminal wrongdoing as well. A clear message must be sent to anyone in the government that fraudulent activity is unacceptable and will be met with punishment.

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Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (202) 225-5136 if you have any questions.

Best wishes.



Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress