

United States Senate

January 22, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Mr. James Springs
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
8601 Adelphi Road, Room 1300
College Park, MD 20740-6001

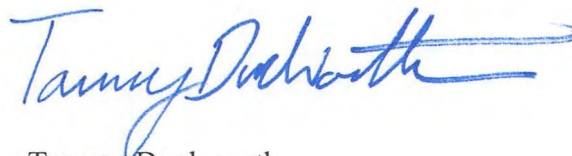
Dear Inspector General Springs:

I am writing to request that the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) launch a comprehensive independent investigation into NARA's disturbing decision to alter a photographic Getty image NARA featured in the agency's public exhibition, "Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote."

Conducting an independent investigation will advance the NARA OIG mission to prevent waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement, while bringing particularly serious problems, abuses or deficiencies to the immediate attention of Congress. A NARA OIG investigation is necessary to inform the public and Congress about precisely why this alteration was made and to determine whether the censorship was an isolated incident or part of a broader pattern by NARA under the Trump administration to alter records for politically-motivated or propaganda purposes. The NARA OIG investigation should also produce recommendations that include corrective actions to guard against future editorial abuse by NARA.

NARA publicly acknowledged that its manipulation of the photograph to censor material critical of the President of the United States was wrong. NARA deserves credit for promptly apologizing for its error and committing to preventing future mistakes. However, given the significance of NARA's violation of professional standards and the high risk of losing public trust, it is vital that an independent investigative entity – NARA OIG – conduct a thorough investigation into this act of censorship. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my urgent request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator