

Sen. Grassley and Rep. Issa Request Assessment from OMB of Federal Guidelines for Employee Personal Email Monitoring

Request Comes in Wake of Investigation into Monitoring of Communications Between "FDA Nine" Whistleblowers and Congress

Agency may have intercepted passwords to personal accounts to search those accounts, which would be illegal

(WASHINGTON)—Senator Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) have requested that the Obama Administration conduct a complete assessment of federal agency guidelines for the monitoring of employee's personal email accounts. Grassley and Issa are conducting investigations into Food and Drug Administration (FDA) actions against nine employees who were whistleblowers to Congress about inappropriate actions they witnessed inside the agency.

In a letter to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Acting Director Jeffrey D. Zients, Grassley and Issa noted that the "FDA may have intercepted passwords to the personal email accounts of its employees for the purpose of logging in to search for archived messages to and from Congress and the Office of Special Counsel." Although the FDA admitted monitoring the accounts, it also obtained confidential email between the whistleblowers and Congress sent prior to the time that the monitoring allegedly occurred, which raises questions about how the FDA obtained the prior emails.

"The FDA specifically targeted these employees for monitoring after they contacted the Presidential transition team and Congress to blow the whistle. Therefore, the FDA's purpose for conducting surveillance was unlawful, because retaliation against individuals who engaged in protected forms of whistleblowing is illegal," Grassley and Issa they added.

Grassley and Issa wrote to Zients saying that their investigation of FDA's surveillance of whistleblowers had given rise to a broader question about the policies and practices for electronic surveillance at all federal agencies. They asked OMB to address a series of questions regarding parameters for such searches.

A complete copy of the letter and a full list of questions is [here](#).

###

TagTrends™ - Related Articles Tags

No Related Tags