

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

120 HUYSHOPE AVENUE
SUITE 401
HARTFORD, CT 06106
(860) 549-8463

<http://murphy.senate.gov>

February 6, 2020

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington DC 20508

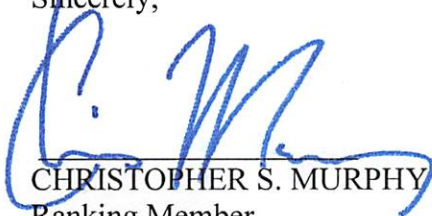
Dear Mr. Dodaro:

Protecting United States Classified National Security Information is of paramount concern for all individuals entrusted with the safety and security of our country. As cyber and espionage threats to our classified systems become more complex, maintaining the integrity of the classification process remains more important than ever. However, the organization responsible for overseeing executive branch policies for managing this information, the National Archives and Records Administration's Information Security Oversight Office, reports that the current system for managing such information "relies on antiquated policies from another era that undercut its effectiveness today." Critical to this process is ensuring that finished intelligence and national security information provided to the Congress is appropriately aligned to the classification of the original source information.

The United States Senate Office of Senate Security is in possession of a number of classified documents provided by executive branch departments and agencies. Much of this information appears to be marked at classification levels that are properly aligned with the nature of the information contained in them. However, some documents contain information that is classified at a level that appears inconsistent with the nature of the material. It is critical to ensure that information provided to the Congress is properly classified, when it must be classified at all. I request that GAO compare a sample of classified documents held by the Office of Senate Security to the original classified versions and underlying source materials held by the respective executive branch departments and agencies to determine the extent to which the classification levels are the same. I also request that GAO determine whether there is an existing process available to a Member of Congress seeking to challenge the classification status of information.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter and I look forward to hearing the results.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
Ranking Member
Legislative Branch Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate