



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 11 ,2010

CONTACT: Robert Weissert
Director of Communications &
External Relations
850-222-5052, ext. 20
robert@floridataxwatch.org

Briefing: " Strengthening the Role of the Office of Inspector General Will Improve State Operations and Reduce Costs" Released

Inspectors general, the "internal watchdogs" in state government agencies, need stronger independence, oversight, and resources to better do their jobs. That's the conclusion of a new research briefing released today by Florida TaxWatch, a taxpayer research institute and state government watchdog group.

To improve the effectiveness of the activities performed by the Office of Inspector General (OIG), the non-partisan, non-profit group recommends that the duties of the Governor's OIG be expanded to ensure sufficient oversight of state-level processes and that findings and recommendations are communicated directly to the Governor and the Cabinet.

"In these times, Floridians and their families deserve assurance that there is an effective internal government watchdog monitoring state activities. Reviews and evaluations by our Inspectors General in state agencies can serve to identify more cost-effective processes to achieve the state's objectives and reduce the burden on taxpayers," said Dominic M. Calabro, President and CEO of Florida TaxWatch. "Florida TaxWatch began the crusade for more independent review of state activities and the need for internal auditors in 1983 and we will continue to fight more independence of the Office of Inspector General until it can properly carry out its duties to improve effectiveness of state operations and help protect the citizens of Florida from waste and abuse," Calabro said.

The report notes that with today's operating environment of diminishing revenues and increasing needs, it is more important than ever to have strong independent reviews and evaluations of state agency activities. It is the purpose of the Office of the Inspector General to conduct these objective reviews of agency operations and compliance. However, the role of Inspector General in state agencies has become increasingly diluted and subject to political pressures preventing them from fulfilling the duties of independent and objective evaluations of state activities. The preservation and strengthening of the Office of the Inspector General the report says, is imperative to hold accountable state agencies and encourage practices that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency in government.

The Florida TaxWatch report makes these recommendations to help strengthen the independence of the OIG:

- **Expand the duties of the Governor's OIG**
 - The responsibilities of the Governor's OIG should be expanded to include the requirement to conduct an annual assessment of state-level risks with the greatest threat to the accomplishment of the state's objectives. The results of the risk assessment, along with the proposed work plan, should be presented to the Cabinet for review and approval.
 - The results of each Governor OIG assessment, as well as assessments completed by state agency OIGs should be provided to each member of the Cabinet, as well as appropriate legislative committees. Also, the Governor's Inspector General should be required to present results of assessments that could have a significant impact of state operations to the Cabinet and appropriate legislative committees.
 - Finally, the Governor's OIG should be required to develop performance metrics for state agency OIGs.

- **Ensure independence of OIG assessments**
 - State agency Inspector Generals should be required to be qualified to serve as the agencies' Chief Audit Executive.
 - All agency inspector general appointments and terminations should be subject to approval by the Cabinet.

[Click here to view the full Briefing, *Strengthening the Role of the Office of Inspector General Will Improve State Operations and Reduce Costs.*](#)

###

Florida TaxWatch is a statewide, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 30 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Its mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies and programs and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida state and local government. Its support comes from homeowners and retirees, small and large businesses, philanthropic foundations, and professional associations. On the web at www.FloridaTaxWatch.org.