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Landmark Whistleblower Legislation Becomes Law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C./November 27, 2012 –

President Obama signed the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act (WPEA) into law today, thereby strengthening protections for federal employees who blow the whistle on waste, fraud, and abuse in government operations. The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) applauds the U.S. Congress and all who worked hard in the 13-year effort to strengthen whistleblower rights for federal employees. OSC also commends the bill's sponsors for their leadership in promoting government accountability.

The WPEA's reforms will provide OSC additional tools to protect federal employees from unlawful retaliation. This legislation will:

- Overturn legal precedents that narrowed protections for government whistleblowers;
- Give whistleblower protections to employees who are not currently covered, including Transportation Security Administration officers;
- Restore the Office of Special Counsel's ability to seek disciplinary actions against supervisors who retaliate;
- Hold agencies accountable for retaliatory investigations, among other improvements.

Section 109 of the WPEA, which expands coverage of the Whistleblower Protection Act to all employees of the Transportation Security Administration, becomes effective immediately. The remaining provisions will take effect on December 27, 2012.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: the Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC's primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing. For more information, please visit our website at www.osc.gov.