

# NASA inspector general comes under fire

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At least two U.S. senators are pushing for NASA Inspector General Robert Cobb to resign after records show a steep drop in investigations during his tenure.

Records show the number of investigations into employee and contractor fraud and waste at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has dropped each year since Cobb assumed office in 2002, from 508 that year to 68 in 2007, USA Today reported Friday.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., urged Cobb in June 2007 to resign. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, said he asked the Government Accountability Office in September to look into whether Cobb has blocked investigations.

"I thought he'd be gone by now," said Grassley.

At the June 2007 hearing two former NASA employees, Lance Carrington and Debra Herzog, said Cobb interfered with search warrants during investigations.

The President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency said in 2007 Cobb created a hostile workplace and seemed too close with top NASA officials, the newspaper said. NASA Administrator Michael Griffin said the PCIE report "does not contain evidence of a lack of integrity" but the PCIE said disciplinary action, including removal from official, could be appropriate.

Cobb, a former White House lawyer, declined to discuss the criminal investigations, the GAO probe or the calls for him to quit, USA Today said.

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