

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

DAVID M. WEINBERG, STAFF DIRECTOR
WILLIAM E. HENDERSON III, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
LAURA W. KILBRIDE, CHIEF CLERK

October 15, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

As Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, I write to request additional information regarding the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) participation at a cybersecurity conference in Atlanta, Georgia on Election Day.

Over the past several months, foreign adversaries have sought to undermine confidence in our election through a series of cyberattacks aimed at the electoral process. Those efforts have included incursions into campaign infrastructure, hacks into government servers, and attempts to interfere with the electoral process more generally.¹ Just last month, federal authorities announced that Iranian intelligence services had successfully hacked into President Donald Trump's campaign servers and turned over sensitive documents to associates of the Biden-Harris campaign.²

The American public is appropriately concerned with the integrity of our election system. Fair and free elections are a hallmark of our democracy. Yet, the American people's confidence in the value of their vote is dependent upon faith in the election infrastructure on which ballots are cast.³ However, I have recently become aware that a delegation of senior leadership of DHS, CISA, FBI, and various other federal agencies plan to spend Election Day and several days thereafter in Atlanta, Georgia at a homeland and cybersecurity conference hosted by the Armed Forces

¹ See, e.g., Zachary Cohen and Sean Lyngaas, *Cyberattack forces Georgia county to sever connection to state voter registration system*, CNN (Apr. 26, 2024) (highlighting recent hack into Georgia county election infrastructure by unknown malign actor), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/26/politics/georgia-coffee-county-cyberattack-voter-system/index.html>; Christopher Bing and Gram Slattery, *The Iranians who hacked Trump's campaign have deep expertise*, Reuters (Aug. 23, 2024), <https://www.reuters.com/world/trump-campaigns-iranian-hackers-have-dangerous-history-deep-expertise-2024-08-23/>.

² Press Release, Joint ODNI, FBI, and CISA Statement (Sept. 18, 2024) (highlighting efforts by Iranian intelligence services to interfere with federal presidential election by hacking President Trump's campaign servers), <https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/joint-odni-fbi-and-cisa-statement-091824>.

³ See, e.g., Pew Research, *Elections in America: Concerns Over Security, Divisions Over Expanding Access to Voting* (Oct. 29, 2018) (noting that fewer than half of Americans are "very or somewhat confident that election systems are secure from hacking").

Communications & Electronics Association (AFCEA).⁴ Rather than monitoring cyberthreats that may occur relative to the election, senior federal officials plan to spend Election Day participating in a four-hour “Critical Infrastructure Tabletop” led by CISA staff, followed by a networking reception.⁵ Federal officials are also expected to participate in a “large scale cybersecurity exercise” on Election Day.⁶

I am deeply concerned about federal resources being diverted to support participation in an election-day cybersecurity conference in Atlanta, Georgia. It is well-known the State of Georgia is perceived as a critical swing state.⁷ The Georgia electorate has endured years of election-day-related rumors, intrigue, and litigation. The presence of DHS, CISA, and other senior administration leadership in Georgia on Election Day may contribute to the efforts of those who would seek to undermine the perception of electoral fairness. On Election Day and in the days thereafter, the Administration should seek to give the public confidence in the fairness, safety, and security of our election system. That begins with ensuring that agencies and their staff are singularly focused on what matters, not on tabletop exercises and networking events during Election Day.

For this reason, I request you provide the following information no later than 5:00 PM ET on October 29, 2024:

1. Unredacted copies of all DHS and/or CISA records, related to the November AFCEA conference in Atlanta, Georgia including, but not limited to, any invitations, confirmations, speaking engagements, panels, or exercises.
2. The names and corresponding titles of each DHS and/or CISA employee that plan to attend the November AFCEA conference in Atlanta, Georgia in their official capacity.
3. Unredacted copies of all DHS and/or CISA records related to pre-conference events.
4. Unredacted copies of all records and communications between DHS, CISA, and the following organizations related to the November AFCEA conference:
 - a. FBI
 - b. FirstNet Authority
 - c. U.S. Army
 - d. U.S. Air Force
 - e. Georgia National Guard
 - f. Georgia Cyber Center of Excellence
 - g. Georgia Tech Authority
 - h. Georgia Emergency Management Agency

⁴ See 2024 Agenda, Homeland Security Conference 2024, https://www.fbcinc.com/source/Event_Agendas/Homeland_Security_Conference_Agenda_2024.pdf.

⁵ *Id.* at 1.

⁶ 2024 Homeland Security Critical Infrastructure Conference, AFCEA Atlanta Chapter, <https://atlanta.afceachapters.org/2024-homeland-security-critical-infrastructure-conference>.

⁷ Jennifer Agiesta, et al., *CNN polls across six battlegrounds find Georgia and Pennsylvania are key toss-ups*, CNN (Sept. 4, 2024) (describing Georgia as “central to each candidate’s path to the White House”), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/09/04/politics/cnn-polls-battleground-states/index.html>.

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- i. The City of Atlanta's Office of Emergency Preparedness
5. Unredacted copies of any presentations, speaking notes, or preparatory materials created by DHS or CISA related to cybersecurity, misinformation/disinformation/malinformation, and/or emerging technologies at the AFCEA conference.
6. Unredacted copies of all records, including travel, accommodation, event registration, and related expenses, associated with DHS or CISA participation in the AFCEA conference.
7. Unredacted copies of all ethics reviews, clearance documents, or approvals issued for DHS or CISA personnel in connection with their participation in the AFCEA conference, particularly considering the event's overlap with Election Day responsibilities.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this time-sensitive and important matter.

Sincerely,



Rand Paul, M.D.
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
& Governmental Affairs

cc: The Honorable Joseph V. Cuffari
Inspector General
Department of Homeland Security