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United States Senate

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

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February 17, 2017

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs
U.S. Senate
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are writing to request that the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee investigate and hold hearings on Russia's attempts to infiltrate and influence the U.S. presidential election on November 8, 2016, by attacking the nation's election infrastructure.

It has been firmly established that Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Russian government unleashed a pervasive influence campaign in the United States designed to sway our recent election. On January 6, 2017, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) released a comprehensive, unclassified report, *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections*, which stated, with high confidence, that "Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump."¹

The ODNI report documented Russia's use of cyber tools to interfere in the election, and confirmed reports from August 2016 that the Russian government had successfully infiltrated at least two state voter databases and stolen voter records.² The report states: "Russia's intelligence services conducted cyber operations against targets associated with the 2016 U.S. presidential election, including targets associated with both major US political parties. We assess with high

¹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections: The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution* (Jan. 6, 2017).

² Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cyber Division, *FBI Flash: Targeting Activity Against State Board of Election Systems* (Aug. 18, 2016); Politico, *FBI Alert Sparks Fears that State Voting Systems are under Digital Assault* (Aug. 29, 2016).

confidence that Russian military intelligence (General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate or GRU) used the Guccifer 2.0 persona and DCLeaks.com to release U.S. victim data obtained in cyber operations publicly and in exclusives to media outlets and relayed material to WikiLeaks. Russian intelligence obtained and maintained access to elements of multiple US state or local electoral boards.”³

An investigation of Russia’s attempts to infiltrate and influence the U.S. presidential election, particularly the attacks on state voter databases, would fall squarely within the jurisdiction of this Committee. The Committee has oversight of the Department of Homeland Security, which plays a vital role in enhancing the cybersecurity of the government’s networks and the nation’s critical infrastructure.⁴ In fact, on January 6, 2017, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that election infrastructure would be designated critical infrastructure, making state and local election entities eligible to receive prioritized cybersecurity assistance from DHS.⁵ As DHS works to stand up the election infrastructure subsector, this Committee should investigate what happened in the 2016 election to ensure that DHS’s assistance is appropriately tailored to prevent infiltration of election boards and other election infrastructure in the future.

The Committee also has jurisdiction over “intergovernmental relations”, and is charged with “studying the intergovernmental relations between the United States and the States.” The Committee is further charged with investigating “aspects of crime and lawlessness within the United States, which have an impact upon or affect the national health, welfare, and safety; including but not limited to investment fraud schemes, commodity and security fraud, computer fraud, and the use of offshore banking and corporate facilities to carry out criminal objectives.” We also carry the important responsibility of overseeing the “effectiveness of present national security methods, staffing, and processes as tested against the requirements imposed by the rapidly mounting complexity of national security problems.”⁶

Last year, you noted that during the 114th Congress, this Committee sent more than 800 letters and issued several reports “pursuant to the Committee’s oversight duties to examine some

³ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections: The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution* (Jan. 6, 2017).

⁴ S. Rule XXV; S. Res. 445 (108th Cong.).

⁵ Department of Homeland Security, *Statement by Secretary Jeh Johnson on the Designation of Election Infrastructure as a Critical Infrastructure Subsector* (Jan. 6, 2017).

⁶ S. Res. 445 (108th Cong.); S. Res. 34 (115th Cong.)

of the most pressing issues facing the nation.”⁷ Russia’s organized campaign to undermine our presidential election and target our election infrastructure is certainly one of the most pressing issues facing our nation. We therefore request that you initiate an investigation, including the issuance of subpoenas to all government and private sector entities as necessary, into these issues, and schedule regular hearings to ensure that the American people are kept apprised of the progress and results of the Committee’s investigation.⁸ We ask that you begin by joining Ranking Member McCaskill’s February 10, 2017, request to FBI Director James Comey for a full briefing on the scope and status of any current FBI investigation related to contacts between the Russian government and individuals affiliated with President Trump’s campaign or Administration.

Only a thorough, transparent investigation will allow the American people to learn exactly what transpired during the 2016 presidential campaign and what changes, if any, are necessary to safeguard our nation’s critical infrastructure from further cyber hacking. Our security is on the line and public confidence in our officials and institutions is at stake.

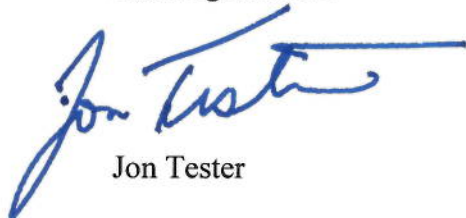
Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member



Tom Carper



Jon Tester



Heidi Heitkamp



Gary Peters



Margaret Wood Hassan



Kamala Harris

⁷ Sen. Ron Johnson, Chairman, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Highlights of Activities of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Interim Report of the 114th Congress* (Oct. 13, 2016).

⁸ See S. Res. 34 (115th Cong.)