

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

December 6, 2017

CHRISTOPHER R. HIXON, STAFF DIRECTOR
MARGARET E. DAUM, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

The Honorable Rod J. Rosenstein
Acting Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Acting Attorney General Rosenstein:

I understand the Department of Justice (DOJ) is reviewing thousands of electronic text messages sent and received by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) employees Peter Strzok and Lisa Page for production to Congress.¹ These text messages exchanged between Strzok and Page reportedly “expressed anti-Trump political views.”² I write to seek more information about your awareness of these text messages and what actions, if any, you took in response.

Strzok reportedly “helped lead” the FBI’s investigation into former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s handling of classified information through her use of a private email server.³ During the FBI’s investigation of Secretary Clinton, Strzok participated in interviews of Clinton, Huma Abedin, Cheryl Mills, Heather Samuelson, and Jake Sullivan.⁴ In addition, Strzok reportedly edited then-FBI Director James Comey’s statement about Secretary Clinton, changing the description of her actions from “grossly negligent” to “extremely careless.”⁵

After you tapped Robert Mueller as special counsel to examine potential Russian interference in the 2016 election,⁶ Strzok reportedly began “play[ing] a major role” in the investigation.⁷ Mueller removed Strzok from the investigation after becoming aware of the text message allegations.⁸

To understand your awareness of these text messages and the Department’s actions in response, I respectfully request the following information:

¹ See, e.g., Jake Gibson, ‘Over 10,000 texts’ between ex-Mueller officials found, after discovery of anti-Trump messages, Fox News, Dec. 6, 2017.

² Michael S. Schmidt, Matt Apuzzo & Adam Goldman, *Mueller removed top agent in Russia inquiry over possible anti-Trump texts*, N.Y. Times, Dec. 2, 2017.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Fed. Bureau of Investigation, 302s of Clinton Investigation (2015-16) (on file with Comm.).

⁵ Laura Jarrett & Evan Perez, *FBI agent dismissed from Mueller probe changed Comey’s description of Clinton to ‘extremely careless,’* CNN, Dec. 4, 2017.

⁶ Devlin Barrett, Sari Horowitz, & Matt Zapotosky, *Deputy attorney general appoints special counsel to oversee probe of Russian interference in election*, Wash. Post, May 18, 2017.

⁷ Schmidt, Apuzzo & Goldman, *supra* note 2.

⁸ *Id.*

The Honorable Rod J. Rosenstein

December 6, 2017

Page 2

1. When and how did you become aware of the text messages allegedly exchanged between FBI employees Peter Strzok and Lisa Page?
2. When and how did the Special Counsel Robert Mueller notify you of the allegations and the decision to remove Peter Strzok?
3. Did you or the Special Counsel Robert Mueller refer these allegations to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel to pursue a potential Hatch Act inquiry? If not, why not?
4. Is the Department aware of any similar text messages sent or received by Peter Strzok during any other investigation?
5. Is the Department aware of any similar allegations involving other government officials?
6. Please produce all documents and communications sent or received by Peter Strzok and Lisa Page referring or relating to candidates for the 2016 presidential election or indicative of political bias.

Please respond as soon as possible but no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 13, 2017, so that the Committee may begin to receive responsive information.

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized by Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate to investigate “the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of all agencies and departments of the Government.”⁹ Additionally, S. Res. 62 (115th Congress) authorizes the Committee to examine “the efficiency and economy of all branches and functions of Government with particular references to the operations and management of Federal regulatory policies and programs.”¹⁰

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Brian Downey of the Committee staff at (202) 224-4751. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member

Enclosure

⁹ S. Rule XXV(k); *see also* S. Res. 445, 108th Cong. (2004).

¹⁰ S. Res. 62 § 12, 115th Cong. (2017).