

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 3, 2019

Ms. Karen Tramontano  
Chief Executive Officer  
Blue Star Strategies  
888 17th Street, NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Ms. Tramontano:

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and the Committee on Finance (Committees) are investigating whether certain officials within the Obama administration had actual or apparent conflicts of interest because of Hunter Biden's role in Rosemont Seneca and related entities, or as a board member of Burisma Holdings (Burisma). In addition, the Committees are reviewing whether Hunter Biden or his associates had any role in the formulation of the Obama administration's policies with respect to Ukraine. Recent reports indicate that Blue Star Strategies (Blue Star) sought to leverage Hunter Biden's membership on the board of directors for Burisma in its communications and meetings with various U.S. government officials at the same time his father, then-Vice President Joe Biden, served as the "public face of the administration's handling of Ukraine."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, as part of the Committees' inquiry, we write to request information with regard to Blue Star's work for Burisma.

A recent report indicates that, in November or December 2015, Blue Star officials met with Amos Hochstein, then-senior advisor to Vice President Biden on international energy affairs, and invoked Hunter Biden during a discussion of Burisma.<sup>2</sup> The report describes Mr. Hochstein as "a vocal proponent of Ukraine cracking down on Burisma," and explained that the purpose of the meeting was for "Blue Star Strategies [] to convince Hochstein (but [it] did not) that Burisma was on the level and did not warrant further investigation."<sup>3</sup>

Additional documents demonstrate how Blue Star used Hunter Biden's board membership to gain access and potentially influence matters at the State Department. In a February 24, 2016, email with the subject line "Burisma," a State Department official wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Crabtree, *Joe Biden emerges as Obama's trusty sidekick*, Wash. Examiner, Apr. 25, 2014, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/joe-biden-emerges-as-obamas-trusty-sidekick>.

<sup>2</sup> Tiana Lowe, *Joe Biden adviser Amos Hochstein took meetings with Burisma-hired lobbying firm*, Wash. Examiner, Nov. 7, 2019, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/joe-biden-adviser-amos-hochstein-took-meetings-with-burisma-hired-blue-star-strategies>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

Per our conversation, Karen Tramontano of Blue Star Strategies requested a meeting to discuss with [Under Secretary] Novelli [U.S. Government] remarks alleging Burisma (Ukrainian energy company) of corruption. **She noted that two high profile U.S. citizens are affiliated with the company (including Hunter Biden as a board member). Tramontano would like to talk with U/S Novelli about getting a better understanding of how the U.S. came to the determination that the company is corrupt.** According to Tramontano, there is no evidence of corruption, has been no hearing or process, and evidence to the contrary has not been considered. Would appreciate any background you may be able to provide on this issue and suggested TPs for U/S Novelli's meeting.<sup>4</sup>

On March 1, 2016, Blue Star reportedly met with Under Secretary Novelli, and in April 2016 Blue Star reportedly met with Ukrainian prosecutors.<sup>5</sup> According to what appears to be contemporaneous notes by one of those Ukrainian prosecutors during the April 2016 meeting, Blue Star apologized about allegedly "false information" promoted by the U.S. Government about the prosecutors' handling of the investigation of Burisma.<sup>6</sup>

To assist the Committees' examination of the role that Hunter Biden and individuals within the U.S. government may have played with regard to lobbying for Burisma, we respectfully request the following information:

1. With respect to Blue Star's work for Burisma, please provide:
  - a. A description of how, and through whom, Blue Star first became aware of Burisma;
  - b. Blue Star's contract with and all other documents describing its relationship with Burisma;
  - c. The date Blue Star began work for Burisma;
  - d. The date for when Blue Star ended work for Burisma, if applicable;
  - e. A description of the services Blue Star provided Burisma;
  - f. The names and titles of all Blue Star employees, including contractors, that worked on matters relating to Burisma;

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<sup>4</sup> John Solomon, *Hunter Biden's Ukraine gas firm pressed Obama administration to end corruption allegations, memos show*, johnsolomonreports.com, Nov. 4, 2019, <https://johnsolomonreports.com/hunter-bidens-ukraine-gas-firm-pressed-obama-administration-to-end-corruption-allegations-memos-show/> (emphasis added).

<sup>5</sup> John Solomon, *These once-secret memos cast doubt on Joe Biden's Ukraine story*, The Hill, Sept. 26, 2019, <https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/463307-solomon-these-once-secret-memos-cast-doubt-on-joe-bidens-ukraine-story>; Tiana Lowe, *Joe Biden adviser Amos Hochstein took meetings with Burisma-hired lobbying firm*, Wash. Examiner, Nov. 7, 2019, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/joe-biden-adviser-amos-hochstein-took-meetings-with-burisma-hired-blue-star-strategies>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

- g. The names and titles of Burisma employees that worked with Blue Star employees or contractors;
  - h. The dates and descriptions, including a list of attendees, of all meetings between Blue Star representatives and Ukrainian officials regarding Burisma; and
  - i. The dates and descriptions, including a list of attendees, of all meetings about or related to Burisma between Blue Star representatives and U.S. officials. This includes, but is not limited to, the State Department, the Office of the Vice President, and the Executive Office of the President.
2. Please provide all records<sup>7</sup> between and among Blue Star and U.S. officials relating to its representation of Burisma. This includes, but is not limited to, the State Department, the Office of the Vice President, and the Executive Office of the President.
  3. Please describe Blue Star's document and email retention policies from 2014 to present.

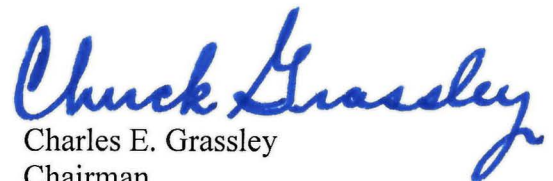
Please provide a response as soon as possible but no later than December 17, 2019. As part of that response, please also confirm in writing Blue Star's ongoing obligation to preserve all records relevant to these matters.

Thank you for your prompt attention. Should you have any questions, please contact Brian Downey or Scott Wittmann of Chairman Johnson's staff at 202-224-4751 and Joshua Flynn-Brown of Chairman Grassley's staff at 202-224-4515.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
and Governmental Affairs



Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on Finance

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<sup>7</sup> "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).