

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
May 20th Business Meeting**

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS

May 20, 2020

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

We are in the middle of an unprecedented public health and economic emergency. More than 90,000 Americans have died during this pandemic and nearly 36 million Americans are out of work.

This committee has a longstanding, nonpartisan tradition of oversight of our nation's disaster response and safeguarding our homeland security – and that should be our top priority.

We should be working together to hold oversight hearings on the pandemic response efforts with Administration officials. We should be working together to reassure worried families that the federal government is capably moving us towards reopening and getting back to work safely.

At a moment when Americans need us to work together, this extremely partisan investigation is pulling us apart.

We are here today, in close proximity, in the middle of an ongoing crisis that has already cost far too many American lives and cost Americans more jobs than the Great Recession, to cast a single vote on a partisan subpoena to obtain some documents from four years ago – documents that are already being substantially provided to the committee.

This is not a serious, bipartisan investigation in the tradition of this committee, and we should not be going down this dangerous road. We are the Homeland Security Committee. We have jurisdiction over election interference, and we should be working together to strengthen our national security and fight against foreign interference.

Unfortunately, this misguided subpoena risks amplifying efforts of our foreign adversaries to interfere in the 2020 election. This should not be about politics. We need to be focused on national security. I have been requesting, since December, that the members of this committee be briefed by the FBI and the Intelligence Community.

We cannot allow the Committee to be taken advantage of by adversaries seeking to subvert our democracy. I again ask the Chairman to arrange these briefings before we go further down this road.