

RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN, CHAIRMAN

JOHN McCAIN, ARIZONA
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO
RAND PAUL, KENTUCKY
JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA
MICHAEL B. ENZI, WYOMING
JOHN HOEVEN, NORTH DAKOTA
STEVE DAINES, MONTANA

CLAIRE McCASKILL, MISSOURI
THOMAS R. CARPER, DELAWARE
JON TESTER, MONTANA
HEIDI HEITKAMP, NORTH DAKOTA
GARY C. PETERS, MICHIGAN
MARGARET WOOD HASSAN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
KAMALA D. HARRIS, CALIFORNIA

United States Senate

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

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

September 8, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to follow up on my February 17, 2017, letter to you requesting hearings and an investigation into Russia's attempts to infiltrate and influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election by attacking the nation's election infrastructure. As you know, I repeated this request at our July 19 hearing, explaining that this matter is of grave national importance and squarely falls within the Committee's jurisdictional prerogative.

On August 2, 2017, my office issued a memo highlighting information provided by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) about the designation of election infrastructure as a critical infrastructure subsector. As part of my oversight responsibilities as Ranking Member of our Committee, I wrote to DHS Secretary John Kelly on March 7, 2017, seeking information on the critical infrastructure designation. My staff compiled the response and submitted documents into a public memo to ensure that the American people understand what the DHS is doing to secure our nation's elections.

Additionally, the Committee received a classified briefing on July 12, 2017, from DHS discussing Russia's efforts to interfere in the 2016 election. The briefing raised numerous questions that demand consideration in a public, transparent setting. The American public should know whether states and localities are prepared to thwart similar attacks prior to the upcoming gubernatorial elections in 2017 and nationwide elections in 2018. Reports indicate that although DHS testified in June that 21 states' voting systems were targeted by the Russians, some state election officials say no federal entity has notified them as to whether or not their state was affected.¹ Similarly, the public interest demands a discussion about what role the federal government and the private sector should play in helping states and localities secure their election infrastructure. Whatever that role that is, we have a duty as legislators to determine whether DHS is prepared and has sufficient resources to fulfill its responsibilities.

¹ *U.S. state election officials still in the dark on Russian hacking*, Reuters (Aug. 25, 2017) (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-cyber-election/u-s-state-election-officials-still-in-the-dark-on-russian-hacking-idUSKCN1B5145>).

The Honorable Ron Johnson
September 8, 2017
Page 2

I was encouraged to hear that you announced you would “hold a hearing in my committee on this subject in the near future.”² Our democracy is underpinned by confidence in the nation’s free and fair elections. Fulfilling our Committee oversight responsibilities to enhance the security of election infrastructure and DHS’s role in providing support must remain paramount. I encourage you to schedule hearings examining Russian interference in the 2016 election and the appropriate federal response as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member

² Interview of Senator Ron Johnson by Wolf Blitzer, CNN (June 23, 2017) (available at <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1706/23/wolf.02.html>).