

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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October 20, 2017

The Honorable Robert Kolasky  
Acting Deputy Under Secretary  
National Protections and Programs Directorate  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Deputy Under Secretary Kolasky:

Last month, the Department of Homeland Security reportedly notified election officials in 21 states that Russian government hackers had targeted those states during the 2016 election.<sup>1</sup> We are writing to request copies of these notifications and additional documents, as well as a briefing from top Department officials on these matters.

The Department's notifications to these states came nearly a year after the election and three months after the Department publicly disclosed that individuals connected with the Russian government sought to hack voter registration files and public election sites in 21 states.<sup>2</sup> They also came after numerous other reports that Russia engaged in a multifaceted campaign to disrupt the 2016 election, including widespread cyber-attacks on state-election infrastructure systems.<sup>3</sup>

The Department's recent convening of the Government Coordinating Council for the Election Infrastructure Subsector, with representatives from the Election Assistance Commission, the National Association of Secretaries of State and state and local election officials, will hopefully facilitate the sharing of information and expertise.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *DHS Tells States About Russian Hacking During 2016 Election*, Washington Post (Sept. 22, 2017) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/dhs-tells-states-about-russian-hacking-during-2016-election/2017/09/22/fd263a2c-9fe2-11e7-8ea1-ed975285475e\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.55b916d66ca3](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/dhs-tells-states-about-russian-hacking-during-2016-election/2017/09/22/fd263a2c-9fe2-11e7-8ea1-ed975285475e_story.html?utm_term=.55b916d66ca3)).

<sup>2</sup> *Russians Tried to Hack Election Systems in 21 States, U.S. Officials Say*, Chicago Tribune (June 21, 2017) (online at [www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-homeland-security-chief-intelligence-panel-20170621-story.html](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-homeland-security-chief-intelligence-panel-20170621-story.html)).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Department of Homeland Security, *Joint Analysis Report: GRIZZLEY STEPPE—Russian Malicious Cyber Activity* (Dec. 29, 2016) (online at [www.us-cert.gov/sites/default/files/publications/JAR\\_16-20296A\\_GRIZZLY%20STEPPE-2016-1229.pdf](http://www.us-cert.gov/sites/default/files/publications/JAR_16-20296A_GRIZZLY%20STEPPE-2016-1229.pdf)); Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Background to "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections": The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution* (Jan. 6, 2017) (online at [www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA\\_2017\\_01.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf)).

<sup>4</sup> Department of Homeland Security, *DHS and Partners Convene First Election Infrastructure Coordinating Council* (Oct. 14, 2017) (online at [www.dhs.gov/news/2017/10/14/dhs-and-partners-convene-first-election-infrastructure-coordinating-council](http://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/10/14/dhs-and-partners-convene-first-election-infrastructure-coordinating-council)).

We request that you produce, by October 31, 2017, copies of the notifications sent by the Department to these 21 states, as well as all accompanying materials relating to Russian government-backed attempts to hack state election systems.

We also request a briefing from appropriate Department officials within the same timeframe on the following issues:

- (1) the types of voting equipment that were attacked;
- (2) the timeline by which the Department provided information to these states and the reasons for not sharing additional information sooner;
- (3) services and trainings offered to states to detect and prevent cyber-attacks;
- (4) plans to work with states to detect and prevent future cyber-attacks; and
- (5) the operational plans and goals of the newly convened Election Infrastructure Coordinating Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Daehn with the Democratic Committee staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and  
Government Reform



Robin Kelly  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on  
Information Technology

cc: The Honorable Trey Gowdy, Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Will Hurd, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Information Technology