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October 18, 2017

The Honorable Elaine C. Duke
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

The Committee is increasingly concerned about foreign threats to U.S. election systems. While we have seen no evidence that votes were changed during the 2016 elections, it is clear that Russian cyber actors were working to infiltrate voter systems. Those same cyber actors also likely were positioned to cause disruptions on Election Day, to include possibly removing voters from databases.

Ensuring the security and integrity of our elections will require critical attention from all levels of government. States have the primary mandate to administer elections, but we would never ask any state, county, or municipal election official to stand alone against a persistent and determined foreign adversary with vast resources. We must bring together the expertise of the states and the financial and intelligence resources of the Federal Government to meet this challenge. With the 2017 general elections mere weeks away, and the elections in 2018 and 2020 rapidly approaching, we ask that you commit to do the following:

1. Reinforce with states their primacy in running elections and seek out the insight of state, county, and municipal election officials on election systems;
2. Offer technical and other forms of assistance to the states to help them secure their networks against cybersecurity threats, with special attention to voter databases, poll books, voting machines, and tabulating machines;
3. Urgently process security clearances for appropriate state election officials and technical personnel in each state, so that they may be fully briefed on any potential threats;
4. Inform Congress of your policy for promptly sharing cybersecurity threats and incidents with appropriate state election officials; and

- 5. Inform Congress within 30 days of receipt of this letter and every 90 days thereafter until the 2018 U.S. elections of the progress you have made to secure state election systems, to include any resource shortfalls.

Federal and state Governments must work together to protect our democracy and ensure the integrity and security of every vote. We look forward to hearing from our state officials about how the partnership with DHS is progressing.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark R Wener

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