



September 1, 2020

Mr. William R. Evanina  
Director  
National Counterintelligence and Security Center  
LX/ICC-B  
Washington, DC 20511

Dear Director Evanina:

On August 7<sup>th</sup>, you issued a public statement on foreign threats to the 2020 election – a statement that provided too few details on our adversaries’ actions and little information on the steps being taken to protect the election. Then, on August 28<sup>th</sup>, the Director of National Intelligence informed congressional leadership that ODNI would no longer provide critical briefings on election security to Congress, including those by the National Counterintelligence and Security Center. We are alarmed that the Administration has failed to provide the American public with critical information on the threats to our election, and taken steps that conceal facts about attacks on our democracy, including from the people’s representatives in Congress. Given the real and demonstrated dangers of foreign interference, we urge you to swiftly reverse course by reinstating in-person congressional briefings, issuing a new statement that includes concrete details on the actors involved and tactics used in this malign interference, and providing a substantive plan to protect the bedrock of our democracy – free and fair elections.

During the first week of August, Members of Congress received a classified briefing on foreign threats to U.S. elections. We were shocked by the information we received, but even more alarmed that what we heard has not been told in full to the American people. We are concerned, in particular, that vital information about our adversaries’ aims, actions, and agents are being withheld from the public. The Intelligence Community took the extraordinary and important step of identifying one such actor advancing Russia’s interference effort – pro-Russian, Ukrainian parliamentarian Andriy Derkach. However, more can be disclosed without compromising our national security.

The scope and sophistication of Russia’s campaign must be revealed, especially in light of disinformation stemming from Derkach being embraced and amplified by the President of the United States. Transparency is critical to a functioning democracy and a powerful deterrent to those with malign intent. Only thus can American voters, Congress, and the presidential campaigns guard against and reject this foreign disinformation. In its investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence found that it was a mistake to withhold information about election interference from the public, and that ultimately

this decision inadvertently helped the foreign adversary targeting our elections – this is not a mistake we can afford to repeat.<sup>1</sup>

The American public is also owed a comprehensive plan on how the Administration intends to protect our elections. These threats can be defended against, but only if the Administration commits the resources and sends a strong message to our adversaries about interference. In absence of a clear and public plan, we are troubled that Americans will not be confident that their government is truly safeguarding our democracy, or just acting like it.

There are only 63 days until the 2020 U.S. presidential election on November 3, 2020. Time is running out to implement meaningful measures to protect the sanctity of our democratic elections and to assure the American people that they can trust the election results. We urge you to issue a more comprehensive statement on the attempts and tactics used by adversaries to interfere in our elections, resume congressional briefings, and to provide an immediate, public plan to the American people that outlines your strategy and efforts to prevent all election interference.


Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

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<sup>1</sup> Russian Active Measures Campaigns And Interference In The 2016 U.S. Election: Volume 3: U.S. Government Response To Russian Activities. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 2020.  
[https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report\\_Volume3.pdf](https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume3.pdf)