

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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January 17, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Smith  
Chairman  
House Committee on Science, Space and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Darin LaHood  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
House Committee on Science, Space and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Smith and LaHood:

Last year, we called on you twice, in October and November 2017, to hold a hearing on U.S. election security issues. This hearing would be a follow-up to the Committee's September 13, 2016 hearing titled, "*Protecting the 2016 Elections from Cyber and Voting Machine Attacks.*" At that hearing, Chairman Smith said: "We are here today to discuss the subject of election security. It's hard to imagine a more bipartisan issue. Election security is fundamental to the fairness of elections and democracy in the United States. Elections are a key component of democracy, and voting is the very essence of what President Abraham Lincoln meant when he said a government 'by the people.' .... If we are attacked repeatedly and do nothing, we will have surrendered unilaterally and put at risk our economy, our national security, our very freedoms." Yet, since that hearing, and the groundswell of information that has been publicly released about the Russian attacks against our election infrastructure, the Science Committee has done nothing to conduct a post-mortem on those attacks and efforts to enhance election security.

The Science Committee can serve a critical role in examining potential cybersecurity enhancements and best practices for our election infrastructure and in exploring the development of tools and technologies that may help to identify foreign attempts to undermine our democratic institutions through the use of covert influence operations in the United States. We believe the Science Committee must fulfill its congressional duties to provide thorough and appropriate oversight of the U.S. election infrastructure in the coming months, and we are calling on you both once again to execute this important duty as leaders of the Science Committee.

A minority staff report released last week by Senator Ben Cardin, Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, highlights the need for our Committee to examine these issues. The report, "*Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security*," focused on Russian influence operations outside of the United States. However, the report did not examine Russia's interference in the 2016 U.S. elections. Senator Cardin noted, "Furthermore, U.S. election infrastructure, electrical grids, and information systems are outside the jurisdiction of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and therefore beyond the scope of the recommendations in this report, but certainly warrant further study."

We believe it is our obligation as Members of the Science Committee to examine concerns regarding the cybersecurity of our election infrastructure as well as efforts to identify foreign covert influence operations against U.S. citizens and our democratic institutions that are likely to reemerge as a major issue in the 2018 and 2020 elections. We hope you will honor our request so that our Committee can fulfill its duty to examine this critical issue in a bipartisan manner.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Science, Space & Technology



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight