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A BIPARTISAN PATH FORWARD

Secure U.S. Elections | Hold Russia Accountable | Deter Other Adversaries

Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election

Volume I of II

Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller, III

Submitted Pursuant to 28 C.F.R. § 600.8(c)



BLUE DOG COALITION

bold leadership. commonsense solutions.

JUNE 21, 2019

BLUE DOGS CALL FOR A COMPREHENSIVE BIPARTISAN EFFORT TO SECURE U.S. ELECTIONS, HOLD RUSSIA ACCOUNTABLE, AND DETER ADVERSARIES

“And I will close by reiterating the central allegation of our indictments, that there were multiple, systematic efforts to interfere in our election. And that allegation deserves the attention of every American.”

—Robert S. Mueller III, Special Counsel, May 29, 2019

Volume I of the Mueller report makes it clear that Russia, a foreign adversary, launched an attack on our nation’s political system and made a concerted effort to interfere in the 2016 U.S. election, particularly through social media and disinformation tactics. Additionally, the report revealed that Russian military intelligence officers gained access to the computer networks of what we now know to be at least two counties in the state of Florida leading up to the 2016 election. In December, then-Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis confirmed that Russia attempted to interfere in the 2018 U.S. midterm election. Meanwhile, intelligence agencies have issued multiple stark warnings that Russia and other adversaries, including Iran and China, are looking ahead to the 2020 U.S. election as another opportunity to advance their interests.

As we quickly approach another election year, it is important that all Americans rise above politics and unite against this threat to our national security. We cannot allow partisan politics to cloud this clear threat to the foundation of our democracy: free and fair elections.

Republicans and Democrats agree that a foreign adversary should never be able to sow discord in our political system and interfere in our electoral process. Both parties also agree that the United States should impose the strongest possible sanctions against Russia for its efforts to meddle in the 2016 and 2018 elections, and additionally coordinate measures to deter future efforts by Russia and other adversaries. The United States must send a clear signal to the world that any attempt to undermine American democracy will be met with swift and severe consequences.

Protecting our elections from foreign influence will require a comprehensive approach from federal, state, and local governments, as well as the international community. Additionally, it will require significant action by the private sector, particularly social media companies and other online platforms.

In Congress, it will be crucial to identify bipartisan policies that can pass a Democratic-led House and a Republican-led Senate, because that is the only way we will be able to address this pressing matter prior to the 2020 election. Both parties in both chambers of Congress have put forward viable policy solutions, some of which the House of Representatives has already passed and await action in the Senate. And although we have seen a strong effort in the Senate to bring forward bipartisan legislation, such as Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) and Sen. Amy Klobuchar’s (D-MN) *Secure Elections Act*, most of those efforts continue to be blocked by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

A lack of action by Congress to secure our elections would embolden our adversaries and pose a danger to the national security of the United States. Americans must have confidence that their country’s electoral process is secure in order to ensure full faith in every election’s result, no matter the outcome. It is incumbent on both the House and the Senate to act *now* on these and other bipartisan solutions to secure our elections.

OUR PROPOSALS FOR A BIPARTISAN PATH FORWARD

EQUIP AND INFORM STATES AND LOCALITIES:

- ✓ Require all states to use paper ballots or machines that produce a voter-verifiable paper audit trail.
- ✓ Require risk-limiting audits after every federal election.
- ✓ Direct the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to provide grants in support of training programs on election administration and cybersecurity for election officials and employees.
- ✓ Establish regular funding streams to states in support of strengthening the cybersecurity posture of election infrastructure.
- ✓ Authorize the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to establish a recurring “Hack the Election” competition, commonly known as a bug bounty program, where independent cyber experts can assist participating state and local election officials by uncovering both new and existing threats to their election systems.¹

INCREASE TRANSPARENCY ON POLITICAL ADS SOLD ONLINE AND REFORM THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (FEC):

- ✓ Require political ads sold online to have the same transparency and disclosure requirements as ads sold on TV, radio, and satellite.
- ✓ Require online platforms to make all reasonable efforts to ensure that foreign individuals and entities are not purchasing political advertisements to influence the American electorate.
- ✓ Reform the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) and enable it to more effectively carry out its mission to oversee and enforce campaign finance laws, including transparency rules and the prohibition on foreign national activity in connection with U.S. elections.

ASSESS THE THREAT, ENHANCE COORDINATION, AND ALERT FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL OFFICIALS:

- ✓ Require election system vendors and officials to report suspected security breaches to law enforcement.²
- ✓ Provide security clearances to appropriate state election officials so they can access and act quickly on classified cybersecurity information.³
- ✓ Require a federal assessment of the scope of potential threats to the security of the U.S. election system, including cyber, terror, and state actor threats. The assessment would occur 180 days prior to the general election to allow states the time to respond and strengthen the security of their systems.

¹ [H.R.6188 \(115th Congress\), Prevent Election Hacking Act of 2018](#)—Reps. Mike Quigley (IL-05) and John Katko (NY-24)

² [S.2593 \(115th Congress\), Secure Elections Act](#)—Sens. James Lankford (R-OK), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Richard Burr (R-NC), and Mark Warner (D-VA)

³ [S.2593 \(115th Congress\), Secure Elections Act](#)—Sens. James Lankford (R-OK), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Richard Burr (R-NC), and Mark Warner (D-VA)

- Direct the U.S. Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to update federal and state officials on possible vulnerabilities revealed in the assessment and to provide recommendations on how best to stop these threats.
- ✓ Require federal officials to promptly alert appropriate state and local officials and Members of Congress if they have credible evidence of an unauthorized intrusion into an election system and a reasonable basis to believe that such intrusion could have resulted in voter information being altered or otherwise affected. Require state and local officials to alert potentially affected voters of such an intrusion.
 - This would not apply in cases where federal officials determine that a public notification would compromise intelligence sources or methods, or cause harm to an ongoing investigation.
- ✓ Require the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to give Congress a determination on whether any foreign government has interfered in an election within 60 days after every federal election.
- ✓ Create a National Fusion Center to Respond to Hybrid Threats to better prepare and respond to foreign-sourced disinformation and other emerging threats emanating from the Russian Federation and other adversaries, including Iran, China, and North Korea.

PROHIBIT FOREIGN ENTITIES FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND UPDATE CRIMINAL AND IMMIGRATION LAWS REGARDING ELECTION INTERFERENCE:

- ✓ Ban foreign governments from buying a campaign ad that discusses a national legislative issue of public importance during an election year to influence an election.
- ✓ Prohibit foreign governments, foreign nationals, and foreign corporations from buying a campaign ad on television, radio, or the internet that promotes, supports, attacks, or opposes a candidate.
- ✓ Bar foreign adversaries from owning and controlling the companies that support American elections.
- ✓ Give prosecutors the ability to shut down botnets and other digital infrastructure that can be used for a wide range of illegal activity.
- ✓ Allow the Department of Justice to pursue federal charges for the hacking of any voting system that is used in a federal election, with an exception for certain forms of ethical hacking that are used to detect vulnerabilities.
- ✓ Create a new criminal violation for individuals who have knowingly targeted critical infrastructure, including election infrastructure, with an exception for certain forms of ethical hacking that are used to detect vulnerabilities; and prohibit cybercriminals from selling access to botnets to carry out cyber-attacks.
- ✓ Designate “improper interference in U.S. elections” as a violation of U.S. immigration law, and bar violators from obtaining a visa to enter the United States.

HOLD RUSSIA ACCOUNTABLE NOW AND DETER FUTURE ELECTION INTERFERENCE:

- ✓ Increase sanctions pressure on Moscow for its interference in the U.S. election and other democratic processes abroad. Including the following:
 - Sanctions on Russian banks that support Russian efforts to undermine democratic institutions in other countries;
 - Sanctions on investment in Russian LNG projects outside of Russia;
 - Sanctions on Russia's cyber sector;
 - Sanctions on Russian sovereign debt;
 - And sanctions on political figures, oligarchs, and family members and other persons that facilitate illicit and corrupt activities, directly or indirectly, on behalf of Vladimir Putin.
- ✓ In future instances of election interference by Russia, swiftly impose sanctions on Russian banking, energy, and defense industries. Additionally, black list every senior Russian political figure or oligarch who knowingly contributes to U.S. election interference from entering the United States and block their assets.
- ✓ Define actions of foreign governments or agents acting on behalf of a foreign government that would illicit retaliation from the United States. Actions of a foreign government that require retaliation by the United States should include:
 - The purchase of advertisements to influence an election;
 - Use of social and traditional media to spread information to Americans under a false identity;
 - Hacking and releasing or modifying election and campaign infrastructure, including voter registration databases and campaign e-mails;
 - And blocking or otherwise hindering access to election infrastructure, such as websites providing information on polling locations.
- ✓ Require the Trump administration to present Congress with a comprehensive strategy to prevent U.S. election interference by China, Iran, North Korea, or any other foreign state of significant concern.
- ✓ Reaffirm U.S. support for NATO and impose a requirement for two-thirds of the United States Senate to vote to leave NATO.
- ✓ Reauthorize the Countering Russia Influence Fund, which would provide assistance to European countries vulnerable to Kremlin interference.
- ✓ Establish an Office of Cyberspace and the Digital Economy within the Department of State. This office would lead diplomatic efforts relating to international cybersecurity, Internet access, Internet freedom, the digital economy, cybercrime, deterrence and responses to cyber threats.

###

ENDORSED LEGISLATION

Most of our proposals are included in a set of House and Senate legislation that were introduced during the 116th Congress and have been endorsed by the Blue Dog Coalition. The endorsed legislation is listed below:

[H.R. 2592, Honest Ads Act](#)—Reps. Derek Kilmer (WA-06) and Elise Stefanik (NY-21)

[H.R. 2135, Preventing Adversaries Internationally from Disbursing Advertising Dollars \(PAID AD\) Act](#)—Reps. Elissa Slotkin (MI-08) and Elise Stefanik (NY-21)

[S. 1692, Invest in Our Democracy Act of 2019](#)—Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Susan Collins (R-ME)

[S.482, Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression \(DASKA\) Act of 2019](#)—Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Ben Cardin (D-MD), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)

[S. 1060, Defending Elections from Threats by Establishing Redlines \(DETER\) Act of 2019](#)—Sens. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Marco Rubio (R-FL)

[S. 1328, Defending Elections against Trolls from Enemy Regimes \(DETER\) Act](#)—Sens. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC)

[S.825, Protect our Elections Act](#)—Sens. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Susan Collins (R-ME), and Ben Cardin (D-MD)

[H.R.2754, Protecting American Votes and Elections \(PAVE\) Act of 2019](#)—Reps. Earl Blumenauer (OR-03), Jim Cooper (TN-05), Yvette Clarke (NY-09), Kathleen Rice (NY-04), Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01), Jamie Raskin (MD-08), Alcee Hastings (FL-20), John Lewis (GA-05), Peter DeFazio (OR-04), and Denny Heck (WA-10)

[H.R. 1474, Strengthening Elections Through Intelligence Act](#)—Rep. Abigail Spanberger (VA-07)

[H.R.1272, Restoring Integrity to America's Elections Act](#)—Reps. Derek Kilmer (WA-06), Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-01), Scott Peters (CA-52), John Sarbanes (MD-03), Kathleen Rice (NY-04), Stephanie Murphy (FL-07), and Julia Brownley (CA-26)

[**Achieving Lasting Electoral Reforms on Transparency and Security \(ALERTS\) Act](#)—Reps. Stephanie Murphy (FL-07) and Michael Waltz (FL-06)

** =To be introduced

ABOUT THE BLUE DOG COALITION

The Blue Dog Coalition is an official caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives comprised of 27 fiscally-responsible Democrats, who are leading the way to find commonsense solutions. They are pragmatic Democrats, appealing to the mainstream values of the American public. The Blue Dogs are dedicated to pursuing fiscally-responsible policies, ensuring a strong national security for our country, and transcending party lines to get things done for the American people.

BLUE DOG COALITION LEADERSHIP

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Rep. Lou Correa (CA-46), Co-Chair for Communications
Rep. Anthony Brindisi (NY-22), Co-Chair for Whip
Rep. Kurt Schrader (OR-05), Co-Chair

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Rep. Kendra Horn (OK-05), Co-Chair
Rep. Jeff Van Drew (NJ-02), Co-Chair

Task Force on Fiscal Responsibility and Government Reform

Rep. Ed Case (HI-01), Co-Chair
Rep. Ben McAdams (UT-04), Co-Chair

Task Force on Infrastructure and Job Creation

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