



STATE OF MINNESOTA

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

102 STATE CAPITOL
ST. PAUL, MN 55155
TELEPHONE: (651) 296-6196

KEITH ELLISON
ATTORNEY GENERAL

June 18, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Committee on Rules and
Administration
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Rules and
Administration
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

The undersigned Attorneys General write to express our significant concern regarding the persistent threats to our election systems and to urge Congress to take action to protect the integrity of our election infrastructure.

Intelligence officials and the Department of Justice continue to warn that our election systems have been a target for foreign adversaries and that those same adversaries are currently working to undermine the upcoming elections. The Special Counsel's Report concludes that Russia interfered in our elections in a "sweeping and systematic fashion." New reports confirm that Russia successfully breached election systems in Florida and the Department of Homeland Security is reviewing computers used in North Carolina after the state experienced irregularities on Election Day. In addition, documents leaked by the National Security Agency show that hackers working for Russian military intelligence installed malware on a voting systems software company used in eight states, including North Carolina.¹ Russia's military intelligence service also broadly performed reconnaissance on state and local election boards, researched—and in some cases targeted—the election infrastructure of all 50 states, successfully invaded state election websites to steal sensitive information from tens of thousands of American voters, and hacked into a company that supplies voting software to states across the U.S.²

In the wake of these attacks on our democracy, the Congress and Federal Government have taken some important steps to address the threats facing our democracy. The Department of Homeland

¹ Satija, Neena. "Federal Investigators to Examine Equipment from 2016 N.C. Election amid Renewed Fears of Russian Hacking." The Washington Post. June 05, 2019.

Parks, Miles. "Florida Governor Says Russian Hackers Breached 2 Counties In 2016." NPR. May 14, 2019.

² Gallagher, Sean. "DHS, FBI Say Election Systems in All 50 States Were Targeted in 2016." Ars Technica. April 10, 2019.

Garcia, Monique. "Illinois Elections Board 'very Likely' Named in Mueller Indictment of Russian Hackers, Officials Say." Chicagotribune.com. May 15, 2019.

Security is working with states to improve election security, and in the 2018 Omnibus, Congress provided \$380 million in grant funding to help states secure their election systems. The Election Assistance Commission, the federal agency charged with disseminating and auditing the election security grants, projects that states will spend approximately \$324 million, or 85 percent of the grant funds, prior to the 2020 elections. This funding was an important first step in helping to secure our election infrastructure, however more must be done. Our state and local election officials are on the front-lines of the fight to protect our election infrastructure, but they lack the resources necessary to combat a sophisticated foreign adversary like Russia. Therefore, we respectfully request that you provide additional assistance to states seeking to modernize their elections systems and take the following actions to protect our elections from future attacks:

- Provide additional election security grants to states and localities. Today, more than at any other time in our nation's history, election officials face unique challenges that require access to federal financial support. Additional funding for voting infrastructure will not only allow states to upgrade election equipment and voter registration systems and databases, it will allow them to further fortify their election systems from future cyberattacks. Sustained federal funding is necessary to pay for continued training, equipment replacements, software upgrades and implementation of security controls. This funding is vital if we are to adequately equip our states with the resources we need to safeguard our democracy.
- Support the establishment of cybersecurity and audit standards for election systems. It is critical that the federal government work with elections officials and technical experts to establish guidelines and best practices for election security. We believe that the U.S. Election Assistance Commission should update its standards for voting machines and take a stronger regulatory role in testing voting equipment before it is sold to states. The federal government should also keep state elections officials closely informed about suspected breaches, alerts, and related intelligence. There should be clear channels of communication so that local and state officials can share information with federal authorities.
- Pass election-security legislation. Last year, a group of state attorneys general voiced support for the *Secure Elections Act*, bipartisan legislation that would improve information sharing and strengthen election security. We reiterate our support for action on election security reform. The National Association of Secretaries of State and our state elections officials can be a valuable resource as Congress considers specific proposals.

The nature of the threat against our election systems requires the federal government to provide increased assistance to the states. Securing our election systems is a matter of national security and we hope that you will take immediate action to protect our election infrastructure and restore Americans' trust in our election systems.



KEITH ELLISON
Attorney General of Minnesota



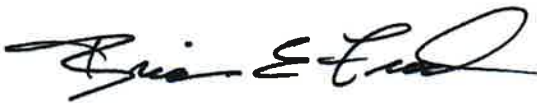
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KWAME RAOUL
Attorney General of Illinois



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Attorney General of New York State



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Attorney General of North Carolina



ELLEN ROSENBLUM
Attorney General of Oregon



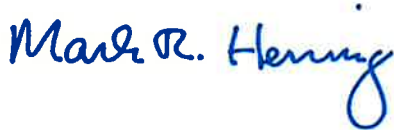
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Attorney General of the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



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Attorney General of Rhode Island



T.J. DONOVAN
Attorney General of Vermont



MARK R. HERRING
Attorney General of Virginia



BOB FERGUSON
Attorney General of Washington State