

CONGRESSIONAL INTEGRITY PROJECT

April 4, 2024

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Comer:

In light of your stated interest in rooting out corruption and influence peddling, we want to draw your attention to a new troubling report about Trump Media & Technology Group receiving funding from a Russian-backed trust¹ as well as the news Wednesday that two investors in Trump Media pleaded guilty to securities fraud.²

We are calling on you to investigate possible influence peddling and corruption involving a former president and current presidential candidate.

Donald Trump's company, Trump Media & Technology Group, went public last week. He personally stands to make billions from this initial public offering. This IPO would not be possible without \$8 million in emergency loans from ES Family Trust, which is operated by a Russian-American businessman, Anton Postolnikov. According to news reports, Postolnikov has been the subject of a FBI and DHS criminal investigation into the Trump media merger and money laundering.³ Postolnikov is also the nephew of an ally of Russian dictator Vladimir Putin.

Donald Trump has repeatedly praised Russian dictator Vladimir Putin publicly, in and out of office. U.S. intelligence officials are concerned about their relationship should Donald Trump return to the White House.⁴ The American people deserve to know the circumstances around ES

¹ Hugo Lowell, *Exclusive: Trump Media saved in 2022 by Russian-American under criminal investigation*, The Guardian (Apr. 3, 2024),

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/03/trump-media-es-family-trust-2022-loans>.

² Matt Egan, *Two investors in Trump Media insider trading case plead guilty*, CNN, (Apr. 3, 2024),

<https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/03/business/trump-truth-social-insider-trading/index.html>.

³ Hugo Lowell, *Exclusive: Trump Media saved in 2022 by Russian-American under criminal investigation*, The Guardian (Apr. 3, 2024),

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/03/trump-media-es-family-trust-2022-loans>.

⁴ Peter Stone, *Putin bromance has US intelligence officials fearing second Trump term*, The Guardian (Mar. 18, 2024), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/mar/18/us-intelligence-trump-putin-threat>.

Family Trust's loan to Trump and whether Putin and his allies had a role in securing it in order to help Donald Trump get re-elected. It is also imperative to determine whether there was any quid pro quo discussed.

An investor in Trump Media, Michael Shvartsman, just pleaded guilty to securities fraud as part of an investigation into insider trading involving Trump Media along with his brother. Shvartsman was reportedly involved in the ES Family Trust, and documents revealed he was to be named trustee if the original trustee stepped down.⁵ The full extent of his involvement in the trust is unclear, and getting to the bottom of that fits within your mandate as Chairman of the House Oversight Committee.

Throughout your evidence-free impeachment investigation into President Biden and his family, you have repeatedly expressed concern about influence peddling, particularly in regards to our adversaries like Russia and China. Last May, you stated plainly "the American people need to know" if our nation's leaders "sold out the United States of America" for profit.⁶ In media appearances, you shared your deeply held concerns about political leaders allegedly using their public office to "engage in influence peddling with our adversaries"⁷ You further stated that government officials seeking to curry favor from foreign governments for personal gain would be especially problematic because it presents a clear "national security risk" to the United States.⁸

While you have demonstrated that you are willing to do anything to protect Donald Trump and his fact-based, undeniable Russian connections while at the same time accepting the demonstrably false claims against Joe Biden made by Russian agents, this is an opportunity to put country over fealty to Trump. Should you desire more examples of the damning evidence implicating President Trump and his family in influence peddling with foreign adversaries, we stand ready to assist you and we are looking forward to the first Congressional hearing on the matter.

Sincerely,

⁵ Hugo Lowell, *Exclusive: Trump Media saved in 2022 by Russian-American under criminal investigation*, The Guardian (Apr. 3, 2024),

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/03/trump-media-es-family-trust-2022-loans>.

⁶ House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Press Release (May 3, 2023), Grassley, Comer Demand FBI Record Alleging Criminal Scheme Involving Then-VP Biden,

<https://oversight.house.gov/release/grassley-comer-demand-fbi-record-alleging-criminal-scheme-involving-then-vp-biden/>.

⁷ 'Sunday Morning Futures with Maria Bartiromo', *Biden family was influence peddling with US adversaries: Rep. James Comer*, Fox News (Dec. 4, 2022), <https://www.foxnews.com/video/6316573410112>.

⁸ Ibid.

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