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RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 18, 2017

The Honorable Mike Pence, Chair
The Honorable Kris Kobach, Vice-Chair
The Presidential Commission on Election Integrity
c/o Office of the Vice President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Pence and Secretary Kobach:

I write with deep concern regarding recent reports that a staff member of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity ("the Commission") has been charged with possession and distribution of child pornography. These reports raise serious questions about the Commission's vetting process for its staff and its ability to safeguard voter privacy.

In July, twenty-five of my Senate colleagues joined me in addressing a letter to the Commission regarding the unprecedented request to collect highly sensitive voter roll data. Deeply concerned about how the Commission would maintain the security and privacy of such data, we asked for information regarding the protection, collection and use of this voter information. The Commission has yet to provide us with a response to our concerns despite multiple requests.

Recent events have only amplified Americans' worries about voter privacy and security. Reports indicate that Russian hackers targeted voting systems in over twenty-one states.¹ Several social media platforms have come forward to report that foreign operatives illicitly paid for political ads to spread misinformation during the 2016 Presidential elections.² Some even used sophisticated techniques to target voters in swing states.³ Given these rising threats to our democracy's infrastructure, the Commission's proposal to aggregate massive amounts of personally-identifying voter information creates a serious vulnerability. Knowledge that a member of the Commission's staff was arrested for possession and distribution of child pornography only reinforces our concern about who has access to this data and how it is being maintained.

I was further alarmed to learn that members of the Commission report they were not informed about who is working the Commission's support staff, nor what kind of work these staffers were engaged in.⁴

¹ Nicole Perlroth, Michael Wines And Matthew Rosenberg. "Russian Election Hacking Efforts, Wider Than Previously Known, Draw Little Scrutiny." The New York Times, The New York Times, 1 Sept. 2017. www.nytimes.com/2017/09/01/us/politics/russia-election-hacking.html.

² Wakabayashi, Daisuke. "Google Finds Accounts Connected to Russia Bought Election Ads." The New York Times, The New York Times, 9 Oct. 2017. www.nytimes.com/2017/10/09/technology/google-russian-ads.htm

³ Raju, Manu, et al. "Exclusive: Russian-Linked Facebook ads targeted Michigan, Wisconsin." CNN, Cable News Network, 4 Oct. 2017. www.cnn.com/2017/10/03/politics/russian-facebook-ads-michigan-wisconsin/index.html.

⁴ Huseman, Sarah. (@JessicaHuseman). "Spoke to a commissioner. He didnt know about this guy. I didnt either—my requests for a staff list have been ignored." 7:30 a.m. Oct 15. Tweet. See also: Huseman, Sarah. "Have spoken to a second commissioner. No one was told who the commission's staffers were, they say." 10:08 a.m. Oct 15. Tweet. *Ms. Huseman is a writer at ProPublica*

If the Commission's own members do not know who is working under its direction, how can the Commission ensure accountability and transparency?

It is clear that Congress needs more information about exactly who has access to the sensitive data the Commission is collecting. I respectfully request the Commission to provide answers to the following questions by October 25.

1. How do you intend to store and protect the data you receive from state election officials? Who will have access to this data?
2. Did the staffer charged with possession and distribution of child pornography have access to voter data, including data collected for minors who pre-register to vote?
3. What is the hiring process for the Commission, and how does it vet staff?
4. Who are the individuals currently employed by the Commission?
5. The Commission's letter requests election officials to send correspondence and data to ElectionintegrityStaff@ovp.eop.gov. Who has access to this email account and what is being done to ensure it is secure? Please provide the names of all staff members who will have access to the data, including Administration officials and members of the Commission.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator