

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2017

The Honorable Rod J. Rosenstein
Deputy Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein:

We write to request that you take immediate action to ensure a comprehensive and impartial investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election. Because Attorney General Sessions has recused himself from this matter, you are responsible for leading the Department of Justice's (DOJ) response to these unprecedented circumstances. In order to ensure the fullest possible public confidence in the unbiased nature of the conduct of the investigation, the content of its findings, and any necessary actions in response, we urge you to use existing regulatory authority to appoint an independent official, such as a special prosecutor, to head the investigation.

The integrity of American elections must be unquestioned and unimpeachable. Any attempts by a foreign power to interfere with our democratic process – whether to help a particular candidate or otherwise – are attacks not on Democrats or Republicans but on the entire country. It is now well documented that Russia engaged in precisely this type of interference, possibly along with collusion and cover-up efforts by American citizens. The degree to which individuals connected to President Trump's campaign communicated or coordinated with the Russians is the subject of an active FBI investigation, and the possibility of criminal prosecution is very real.

The Attorney General (or his designee) has wide latitude to appoint an attorney from outside the Department of Justice to take charge of any investigation that could pose a conflict of interest or when it would otherwise be in the public interest to do so. See 28 C.F.R. § 600.1. Past Attorneys General have done so in a number of high-profile, highly political cases that had the potential to reveal wrongdoing on the part of an Administration – precisely the kind of matter presented here. For example, Elliot Richardson agreed to appoint a special prosecutor before his confirmation to serve as Attorney General under President Richard Nixon, and then-Deputy Attorney General James Comey designated one to investigate a controversial matter that arose during President George W. Bush's administration.

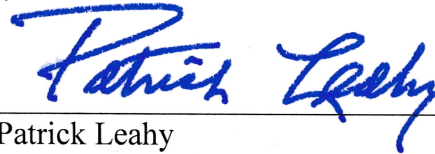
While we have no reason to doubt your integrity or professionalism, the American people cannot have full confidence when a prosecutor investigates his own boss and the President who appointed and can remove him. The regulations providing for the appointment of an independent, impartial head of such investigations were put in place for just this reason. We

therefore urge you to appoint a special prosecutor and take any other steps necessary to ensure that a complete investigation of this matter proceeds without delay.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



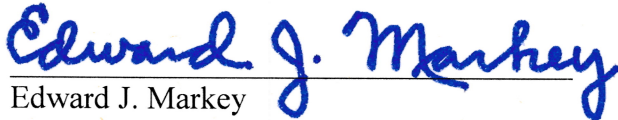
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



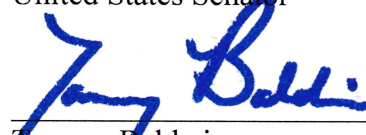
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



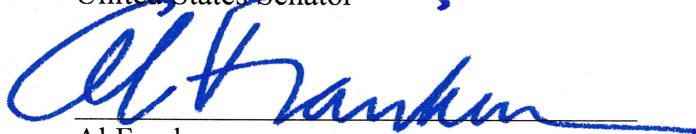
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



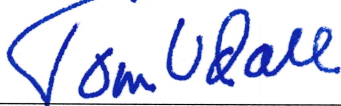
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator




Al Franken
United States Senator



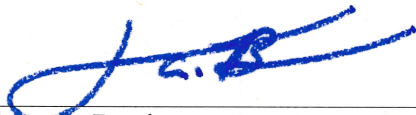
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



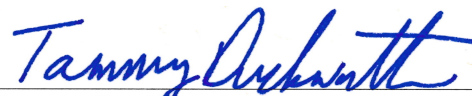
Tom Udall
United States Senator



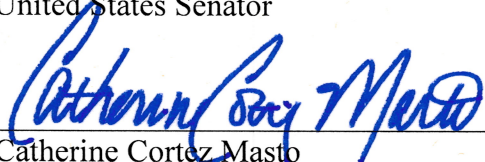
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



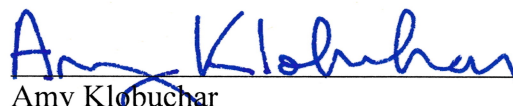
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator