February 16, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Secretary Nielsen:

I write today to voice serious concerns following the Department’s confirmation that Russia successfully penetrated the voting systems of several states during the 2016 election. This raises further national security and election integrity concerns following earlier statements from Department officials confirming that the Russian government targeted certain internet-connected election networks of at least 21 states, including Wisconsin. With the nation’s top intelligence chiefs unanimously agreeing that Russia will likely continue its efforts to interfere with U.S. elections in a recent Senate Intelligence Hearing, the U.S. must stand strong to respond to the threat.

Any attempt to interfere with U.S. elections is an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of our democratic institutions. A strong and enduring partnership between federal agencies like the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) within DHS and the states and localities in charge of overseeing elections is essential to preventing interference from foreign adversarial powers. Additionally, state and local officials must be fully informed about any prior interference attempts on their systems in order to sufficiently prepare for future elections.

I request that the Department respond to the following questions. Firstly, which states were penetrated by Russian interference in the 2016 election and to what degree was Russia successful in penetrating any voting systems in Wisconsin? Secondly, what collaborations are currently ongoing between state and local officials and the Department to defend critical election systems from future interference?

I welcome the opportunity to work with the Department to continue efforts to strengthen the security of U.S. voting infrastructure. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my requests.

Sincerely,

Ron Kind
Member of Congress