

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 18, 2017

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
301 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen,

We write to express concern about the security of U.S. election systems and to urge you to prioritize election cybersecurity as you begin your tenure as Secretary.

Election security is national security, and our election systems have become a target for foreign adversaries. Intelligence reports make it clear that Russia hacked presidential campaign accounts from both parties, launched cyberattacks against at least 21 state election systems, attacked a U.S. voting systems software company, and illegally obtained emails from more than 100 local election officials. National security officials continue to sound the alarm that our voting systems will remain a target in future elections.

In response to these attacks on our election system, in January 2017 the Department of Homeland Security determined that election infrastructure should be designated as a subsector of the existing Government Facilities critical infrastructure sector. This was an important step towards ensuring that election systems, including voting machines, voter registration databases, and other systems used to administer elections and store election data are prioritized and protected. However, more must be done to fully protect our systems.

For example, we must improve information sharing between the federal government and states regarding threats and ensure that security clearances for appropriate state election officials are expedited so that they can receive relevant information. We must also provide states with resources, best practices, and manpower to help combat attacks and update voting technology. State and local election officials are on the front lines of our democratic process, it is wrong to leave them defenseless against sophisticated cyber hackers backed by the Kremlin and other adversaries.

We have worked across the aisle with colleagues from both the Senate and the House to develop legislation that would help protect our election systems. Our Senate legislation requires DHS cooperation and leadership on establishing information sharing processes and improving election cybersecurity. Given your significant experience across administrations, within the Department, and on issues of cybersecurity, we are hopeful that under your leadership DHS will make securing our election infrastructure a top priority.

We must do everything in our power to protect our democracy from future attacks. Time is of the essence, the next federal election is less than a year away.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



James Lankford  
United States Senator