

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 16, 2019

Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan:

We write to express concern about how recent transitions in leadership at the Department of Homeland Security may impact efforts to improve election cybersecurity.

Special Counsel Mueller's report found that "the Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in a sweeping and systematic fashion."¹ Recently, FBI Director Wray said that "our adversaries are going to keep adapting, so we are very much viewing 2018 as a kind of dress rehearsal for the big show in 2020."² With the Special Counsel's Report and other assessments from our intelligence agencies, we have a common set of facts about election interference and we must ensure that we are doing everything possible to protect our democracy from future attacks.

Since designating election infrastructure as part of our nation's critical infrastructure, the Department has done important work to improve election security. As we approach the next federal elections, it is vital that this work be scaled to meet the significant threat posed by foreign adversaries. While the Cyber and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) has been instrumental in building our national capacity to defend against and respond to cyber-attacks, more needs to be done and reports indicate that cybersecurity experts and government officials are concerned about the impact that Secretary Nielsen's departure will have on cybersecurity initiatives, including those aimed at protecting the 2020 elections.³ As you continue in the role of Acting Secretary, we strongly urge you to prioritize election security and to ensure that the Department's resources are allocated to reflect the increasing demands associated with election security.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, we look forward to working with you to secure our election systems.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator

¹ Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III. Report on the Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election, Volume I, pg. 1, March 2019.

² Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Christopher Wray. Council on Foreign Relations "A Conversation with Christopher Wray." April 26, 2019

³ Marks, Joseph. "The Cybersecurity 202: Nielsen's Departure Will Hurt DHS Cybersecurity Mission, Experts Say." The Washington Post. April 16, 2019.

"The Network: The Washington Post's Regular Survey of Cybersecurity Experts." The Washington Post. May 21, 2019.