

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 1, 2020

U.S. Election Assistance Commission
Chair Benjamin W. Hovland
Vice-Chair Donald L. Palmer
Commissioner Christy McCormick
Commissioner Thomas Hicks
1335 East West Highway, Suite 4300
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Commissioners:

With 33 days left before Election Day for the 2020 general election, we write to request an update on your efforts to support states in administering successful elections during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and to ask how Congress can best support these efforts. As the only federal agency with the sole mission of improving the administration of elections, you have a critical role to play in helping states administer safe, secure, and successful elections. Your mission is especially important this year as states change how elections are administered in light of the pandemic and continued threats from foreign adversaries.

While some states struggled to administer safe elections at the beginning of the pandemic, we also saw many successful elections in which both Democratic and Republican voters cast mail-in ballots at unprecedented levels. Some states even broke voter turnout records for their primaries. We also saw state governments and election officials work on a bipartisan basis to implement election changes and expand mail-in voting.

Congress provided states \$400 million in the CARES Act in emergency election funding. We appreciate your work to expediently distribute these grants to states and provide guidance on spending. While this funding was an important step in the right direction to support state election Administration, many election officials report that they require more funding for the general election.

At the same time, the Intelligence Community has confirmed that foreign adversaries, particularly Russia, are actively working to interfere in and undermine the 2020 elections, as they did in the 2016 and 2018 elections. They have warned of influence campaigns spreading disinformation about voting by mail and that Russia may seek to “compromise our election infrastructure for a range of possible purposes, such as interfering with the voting process, stealing sensitive data, or calling into question the validity of the election results.”¹ As a result,

¹ *Statement by NCSC Director William Evanina: Election Threat Update for the American Public*, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Press Release (August 7, 2020)

many states have worked to improve their cybersecurity. Experts and election officials have also emphasized the importance of securing election night reporting systems and improving how states report results on election night.

Election officials are on the front lines of the democratic process and many have worked around the clock to ensure that Americans can safely and securely cast their ballots. In order to ensure the federal government is assisting states to the fullest extent possible, we request that you provide answers to the following questions by October 12:

- In the final weeks before the election, how are you planning to assist states to help ensure successful elections?
- If Congress immediately provided additional emergency election funding under the Help America Vote Act to help states administer elections, and provided flexibility for the funding, would it help for the 2020 general election and future elections?
- How have you helped states to recruit election workers this year, and have recruitment efforts resulted in a sufficient number of workers to process ballots and staff polling locations?
- What steps have you taken to help states manage voter expectations about the timeline for reporting election results and combat any potential disinformation about election results?

Thank you for your ongoing work to support state and local election officials in administering safe and secure elections. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure all Americans can safely vote.

Sincerely,



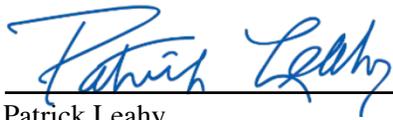
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

<https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/item/2139-statement-by-ncsc-director-william-evanina-election-threat-update-for-the-american-public>

Russia Likely to Continue Seeking to Undermine Faith in US Electoral Prospects, Department of Homeland Security, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Intelligence Bulletin (September 3, 2020) https://www.scribd.com/document/474711820/DHS-Russia-Intel-Sept-3-2020-Voting-w-Redactions#from_embed



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator