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October 28, 2016

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable James B. Comey, Jr.
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Director Comey,

On October 23, 2016, the Wall Street Journal reported a set of troubling facts about potential conflicts of interest in the criminal investigation into Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. That news article noted that Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe's political action committee donated \$467,500 to Dr. Jill McCabe's state Senate campaign in 2015.¹ In addition, the Wall Street Journal reported that the Virginia Democrat Party, "over which Mr. McAuliffe exerts considerable control," also donated \$207,788 to her campaign.² Dr. McCabe is married to Andrew McCabe who is currently deputy director of the FBI, and became part of the leadership that oversaw the Clinton email investigation in 2016. Gov. McAuliffe is long-time confidant of Bill and Hillary Clinton and served as President Clinton's chief fundraiser in the 1990s. It is well reported and known that Gov. McAuliffe and the Clintons have been close associates for decades and it begs the question why Mr. McCabe was allowed to be in a position to exert oversight upon the Clinton investigation knowing that his wife was provided over half a million dollars by entities tied so closely to Gov. McAuliffe and the Clintons.

The Wall Street Journal has reported that the FBI did not see Mr. McCabe's position as a conflict of interest concerning the Clinton email investigation because his wife's campaign had ended by the time he stepped into a supervisory position in the investigation, which seems to concede any involvement during her campaign could have been a conflict.³ Notably, even before his supervisory position as deputy director, Mr. McCabe was in charge of the FBI's Washington, D.C. field office which, according to the Wall Street Journal, "provided personnel and resources

¹ Devlin Barret, "Clinton Ally Aided Campaign of FBI Official's Wife," Wall Street Journal (October 23, 2016). Available at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/clinton-ally-aids-campaign-of-fbi-officials-wife-1477266114>

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

to the Clinton email probe.”⁴ In July 2015, around the time the FBI’s Clinton investigation began, Mr. McCabe was promoted to associate deputy director at FBI headquarters – the number three in the chain of command.⁵ The FBI asserts that Mr. McCabe did not have an “oversight role” in the Clinton investigation until he became the number two in command in 2016.⁶ However, the FBI’s statement does not foreclose the possibility that Mr. McCabe had a non-oversight role while associate deputy director. Thus, even during the time period in which his wife’s political campaign received approximately half a million dollars from Gov. McAuliffe’s political action committee, and over \$200,000 from the Virginia Democrat Party, he may have had a role in the investigation and did not recuse himself.

In October 2015, several months after his promotion, Gov. McAuliffe’s political action committee made three donations of more than \$100,000 to his wife’s campaign.⁷ Prior to October, and prior to his promotion, the largest donation was \$7,500.⁸ The Wall Street Journal has reported that 98% of the Gov. McAuliffe related donations to his wife came after the FBI launched the investigation into Secretary Clinton.⁹ Given these facts, the FBI must provide a more detailed explanation as to why it determined that it was appropriate for Mr. McCabe to participate in that investigation in any way.

Also, separate and distinct from the Clinton investigation, it has been reported that the FBI’s Washington field office, the same one which Mr. McCabe led, started an investigation into Gov. McAuliffe for allegedly receiving over \$100,000 in campaign contributions from foreign entities.¹⁰ The FBI has stated that Mr. McCabe was recused from the McAuliffe investigation when his wife chose to run for office.¹¹ It is unclear as to whether Mr. McCabe returned to the investigation when the campaign ended.¹²

As a general matter, all government employees must avoid situations that create even the appearance of impropriety. Specifically, 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, advises that a government employee should seek clearance before participating in any matter that could cause his or her

⁴ Devlin Barret, “Clinton Ally Aided Campaign of FBI Official’s Wife,” Wall Street Journal (October 23, 2016). Available at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/clinton-ally-aids-campaign-of-fbi-officials-wife-1477266114>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.* The FBI released a statement saying, “[m]onths after the completion of her campaign, then-Associate Deputy Director McCabe was promoted to Deputy, where, in that position, he assumed for the first time, an oversight role in the investigation into Secretary Clinton’s emails.” See Devlin Barret, “Clinton Ally Aided Campaign of FBI Official’s Wife,” Wall Street Journal (October 23, 2016). Available at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/clinton-ally-aids-campaign-of-fbi-officials-wife-1477266114>

⁷ October 1, 2015 - \$150,000; October 27, 2015 - \$125,000; October 29, 2015 - \$175,000. See VPAP.org, http://www.vpap.org/donors/248345/recipient/257117/?start_year=2015&end_year=2015&recip_type=all

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Wall Street Journal Editorial, “The FBI’s Clinton Probe Gets Curiouser,” (October 24, 2016). Available at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-fbi-clinton-probe-gets-curiouser-1477352522>

¹⁰ Devlin Barret, “FBI Investigating Donations to Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe,” Wall Street Journal (May 23, 2016). Available at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/fbi-investigating-donations-to-virginia-gov-terry-mcauliffe-1464046899>

¹¹ Gregory S. Schneider, “Why the latest Hillary Clinton conspiracy might not be what it seems,” The Washington Post (October 24, 2016.) Available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/10/24/why-the-latest-clinton-conspiracy-might-not-be-what-it-seems/>

¹² *Id.* The article notes the FBI said, “[w]hen she chose to run . . . McCabe and FBI lawyers implemented a system of recusal from all FBI investigative matters involving Virginia politics, a process followed for the remainder of her campaign.” The implication is that he returned to the investigation when the campaign ended.

impartiality to be questioned. In addition, when impartiality is at issue, the employee should obtain a formal determination from the component superior that participation outweighs the concern that the FBI's integrity would be questioned.¹³ The Wall Street Journal reports that Mr. McCabe did seek ethics advice in March 2015 after he and his wife met with Gov. McAuliffe. However, it is not clear from which officials he sought advice, what guidance he received from the FBI, and whether he sought additional guidance after he was twice promoted to a position that had an apparent increased role in the Clinton investigation.¹⁴ In addition, with respect to the McAuliffe investigation, it is unclear whether he returned to the investigation after recusal and, if so, what ethics guidance he received.

Executive Order 12674, "Principles of Ethical Conduct for Government Officers and Employees," makes clear that "[e]mployees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty," "[e]mployees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual," and "[e]mployees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards promulgated pursuant to this order."¹⁵ Importantly, the FBI Ethics and Integrity Program Guide cites 28 C.F.R. § 45.2 which states that,

no employee shall participate in a criminal investigation if he has a personal or political relationship with [...] [a]ny person or organization substantially involved in the conduct that is the subject of the investigation or prosecution; or [a]ny person or organization which he knows has a specific and substantial interest that would be directly affected by the outcome of the investigation or prosecution.¹⁶

In complying with this rule, the employee must report the matter to his supervisor. If the supervisor determines that a personal or political relationship exists the employee shall be relieved unless the supervisor determines, in writing, the relationship will not "render the employee's service less than fully impartial and professional" and the employee's participation "would not create an appearance of a conflict of interest likely to affect the public perception of the integrity of the investigation or prosecution."¹⁷ As applied to Mr. McCabe's role in the Clinton email investigation and McAuliffe investigation, these rules demand that he and the FBI take steps to ensure that not even the appearance of a loss of impartiality is present. Further, given Mr. McCabe's potential role in both investigations, which has not been fully explained by the FBI, his wife's substantial campaign donations from Gov. McAuliffe's political action

¹³ 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

¹⁴ For example, it is not clear whether or not Mr. McCabe sought guidance from you or the Designated Agency Ethics Official regarding his potential conflict of interest or whether he sought a waiver to continue in his role in the Clinton investigation. The FBI Ethics and Integrity Policy Guide Section 4.6.1.2 notes that an employee who is concerned that circumstances would cause questions as to his impartiality should speak with ethics officials.

¹⁵ FBI Ethics and Integrity Program Policy Guide, p. 29 and 30, citing Executive Order 12674. Emphasis added.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 30. Emphasis added.

¹⁷ *Id.* Emphasis added.

committee and the Democrat party potentially create the appearance of a conflict of interest that has affected the public perception of the integrity of both investigations. This is problematic and the rules are designed to prevent these types of issues from occurring.

The FBI has repeatedly stated that the Clinton investigation was apolitical and you have said that FBI personnel “don’t give a rip about politics.”¹⁸ Further, you have stated, “I want the American people to know we really did this the right way. You can disagree with us, but you cannot fairly say we did it in any kind of political way.”¹⁹ The FBI’s Ethics and Integrity Policy Guide specifically notes that “[w]hether particular circumstances created an appearance that the law or [FBI ethical standards] have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts.”²⁰

Since the Clinton investigation ended, the public’s knowledge of the relevant facts has rightfully increased substantially. The public now knows that the investigation’s scope was arbitrarily limited to classifications issues, with little or no effort to make a case against anyone for intentionally alienating federal records and subverting the Freedom of Information Act process. Moreover, the Justice Department apparently failed to authorize any compulsory process through search warrants or grand jury subpoenas.²¹ This resulted in generous grants of immunity to Secretary Clinton’s associates because of their refusal to cooperate voluntarily except under the terms and limitations most favorable to them—including an inexplicable agreement for the FBI to destroy laptops that contained records subject to congressional subpoenas and preservation letters. On top of these circumstances, now the public learns that the wife of the FBI’s second in command accepted more than half a million dollars from a close associate of Secretary Clinton, with 98% of the donations received after the FBI began its investigation. And, separate from the Clinton investigation, it is not clear whether Mr. McCabe has rejoined the investigation into Mr. McAuliffe after his wife’s campaign received substantial donations. Accordingly, it is reasonable for the public to question the impartiality of the process.

In order to better understand the context of the facts reported in the press about Mr. McCabe, please answer and provide the following:

1. Please describe Mr. McCabe’s role in the Clinton investigation as assistant director in charge of the FBI’s Washington, D.C. field office, associate deputy director, and as deputy director of the FBI.

¹⁸ Evan Perez, “FBI chief on Clinton investigation: My people ‘don’t give a rip about politics,’” CNN (October 1, 2015). Available at <http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/01/politics/james-comey-fbi-hillary-clinton/>

¹⁹ Everett Rosenfeld, “FBI Director Comey says ‘nobody would’ bring a case against Clinton,” CNBC (July 7, 2016). Available at <http://www.cnbc.com/2016/07/07/fbi-director-comey-our-recommendation-was-apolitical.html>

²⁰ FBI Ethics and Integrity Program Policy Guide, p. 35.

²¹ Malia Zimmerman and Adam Housley, “FBI, DOJ roiled by Comey, Lynch decision to let Clinton slide by on emails, says insider,” FoxNews (October 13, 2016). Available at <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/10/13/fbi-doj-roiled-by-comey-lynch-decision-to-let-clinton-slide-by-on-emails-says-insider.html>

2. Please provide all records relating to communications between and among FBI officials relating to the conflict of interest issues pertaining to the candidacy of Mr. McCabe's wife for public office or his involvement in the Clinton email investigation.
3. The Wall Street Journal reported that Mr. McCabe met with Gov. McAuliffe and then sought ethics advice from the FBI. When did he meet with Gov. McAuliffe, where, and under what circumstances? What ethics components did he contact? What was the FBI's advice to Mr. McCabe? Did he follow that advice? Please explain.
4. After Mr. McCabe was promoted twice, did he seek further ethics advice after each promotion? If so, please detail each instance in which he sought advice from the FBI and which FBI component and employees provided the ethics guidance.
5. Were you aware of Mr. McCabe's potential conflicts? If so, when and how did you become aware? If not, why not?
6. Did the FBI perform a conflicts analysis under 28 C.F.R. § 45.2? If so, when and what was the conclusion? If not, why not?
7. Was a waiver analysis under 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d) performed? If so, when? In addition, please provide all records relating to the analysis and issuance of the waiver(s), including copies of the written waivers. If no analysis was performed, why not?
8. Did Mr. McCabe have a political or personal relationship with Gov. McAuliffe or his political action committee as defined in 28 C.F.R. § 45.2? If not, why not?
9. Did Mr. McCabe's involvement in the Clinton investigation as the assistant director in charge of the Washington, D.C. field office, as associate deputy director, and as the deputy director of the FBI create the appearance of a loss of impartiality? Please explain.
10. Did Mr. McCabe's involvement in the Clinton investigation as the assistant director in charge of the Washington, D.C. field office, as associate deputy director, and as the deputy director of the FBI affect the public perception of the investigation? Please explain.
11. What steps are you taking to mitigate the appearance of a conflict of interest in the Clinton email investigation and to reassure Congress and the American people that the investigation was not subject to political bias?
12. It is not clear when the investigation into Gov. McAuliffe's foreign campaign donations started, and which FBI officials have been involved. However, given Mr. McCabe's position at the FBI in the last two years, it is imperative that the FBI inform Congress about his potential role in this investigation. Please answer the following:

- a. Please describe Mr. McCabe's role in the Gov. McAuliffe investigation.
- b. When was Mr. McCabe recused from the McAuliffe investigation? Please provide exact dates and provide all records relating to the recusal.
- c. When Mr. McCabe and his wife met with Mr. McAuliffe in March 2015, did Mr. McCabe have a role in the McAuliffe investigation at that time? If so, what was his role and at what point thereafter did Mr. McCabe recuse himself?
- d. Did Mr. McCabe return to the McAuliffe investigation after his wife's campaign ended? If so, please explain why his participation does not cause the appearance of a loss of impartiality or a conflict of interest. In addition, please note exactly when Mr. McCabe returned to the investigation.
- e. Did Mr. McCabe report any ethical issues to FBI officials relating to the McAuliffe investigation? If so, provide all records relating to his reports and the FBI's final determination, to include all waivers.
- f. Was a waiver analysis under 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d) performed? If so, when? In addition, please provide all records relating to the analysis and issuance of the waiver(s), including copies of the written waivers. If no analysis was performed, why not?
- g. Did the FBI perform a conflicts analysis under 28 C.F.R. § 45.2? If so, when and what was the conclusion? If not, why not?

Please answer the questions according to their corresponding questions. I anticipate that your written reply and any responsive documents will be unclassified. Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committee. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all unclassified information directly to the Committee, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. Although the Committee complies with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information, it is not bound, absent its prior agreement, by any handling restrictions or instructions on unclassified information unilaterally asserted by the Executive Branch.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this request. Please respond no later than November 14, 2016. If you have questions, contact Josh Flynn-Brown of my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary