

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 6, 2017

The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Inspector General Horowitz:

We understand that the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General (DOJ OIG) continues its review of the actions of DOJ and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in advance of the 2016 presidential election.<sup>1</sup> As part of this review, your office discovered that a senior FBI agent allegedly exchanged electronic text messages “that expressed anti-Trump political views” with an FBI colleague.<sup>2</sup> We write to seek more information about the OIG’s discovery of these electronic text messages and the actions you took in response.

According to reports, FBI employees Peter Strzok and Lisa Page were involved in the exchange of text messages that exhibited political bias.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Strzok was involved in the FBI’s investigation into former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s handling of classified information through her use of a private email server. Mr. Strzok personally participated in the FBI’s interviews of Secretary Clinton, Huma Abedin, Cheryl Mills, Heather Samuelson, and Jake Sullivan.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Strzok most recently worked for Special Counsel Robert Mueller.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Mueller’s office announced that it removed Mr. Strzok from the investigation after learning of the allegations.<sup>6</sup>

To understand OIG’s discovery of these text exchanges, we respectfully request the following information:

1. When and how did OIG become aware of the text messages between Peter Strzok and Lisa Page?

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Justice Office of Inspector General released the following statement in response to inquiries today, (2017), <https://oig.justice.gov/press/2017/2017-12-02.pdf> (last visited Dec 5, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Michael S. Schmidt, Matt Apuzzo and Adam Goldman, *Mueller Removed Top Agent in Russia Inquiry Over Possible Anti-Trump Texts*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 2, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/02/us/politics/mueller-removed-top-fbi-agent-over-possible-anti-trump-texts.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Karoun Demirjian and Devlin Barret, *Top FBI official assigned to Mueller’s Russia probe said to have been removed after sending anti-Trump texts*, WASH. POST, Dec. 2, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/two-senior-fbi-officials-on-clinton-trump-probes-exchanged-politically-charged-texts-disparaging-trump/2017/12/02/9846421c-d707-11e7-a986-d0a9770d9a3e\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.93899dad030d](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/two-senior-fbi-officials-on-clinton-trump-probes-exchanged-politically-charged-texts-disparaging-trump/2017/12/02/9846421c-d707-11e7-a986-d0a9770d9a3e_story.html?utm_term=.93899dad030d)

<sup>4</sup> Fed. Bureau of Investigation, 302s of Clinton Investigation (2015-16) (on file with Comm.).

<sup>5</sup> Michael S. Schmidt, Matt Apuzzo and Adam Goldman, *Mueller Removed Top Agent in Russia Inquiry Over Possible Anti-Trump Texts*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 2, 2017 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/02/us/politics/mueller-removed-top-fbi-agent-over-possible-anti-trump-texts.html>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

2. When and how did OIG notify the Special Counsel Robert Mueller of the text messages?
3. Did OIG refer these allegations to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel to pursue a potential Hatch Act inquiry? If not, why not?
4. In connection with the OIG's review of the actions of DOJ and the FBI in advance of the 2016 presidential election, has the OIG received any similar allegations involving other government officials?

Please respond as soon as possible but no later than 5:00 p.m. on December, 13, 2017, so that the Committees may begin to receive responsive information.

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized by Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate to investigate "the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of all agencies and departments of the Government."<sup>7</sup> Additionally, S. Res. 62 (115th Congress) authorizes the Committee to examine "the efficiency and economy of all branches and functions of Government with particular references to the operations and management of Federal regulatory policies and programs."<sup>8</sup>

If you have any questions about this request, please ask your staff to contact Brian Downey of Chairman Johnson's staff at (202) 224-4751 or Josh Flynn-Brown of Chairman Grassley's staff at (202) 224-5225. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs



Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary

cc: The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary

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<sup>7</sup> S. Rule XXV(k); *see also* S. Res. 445, 108th Cong. (2004).

<sup>8</sup> S. Res. 62 § 12, 115th Cong. (2017).