



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of the Inspector General

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December 13, 2017

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
and Governmental Affairs  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Johnson and Grassley:

Thank you for your letter of December 6, 2017, requesting information regarding the Office of the Inspector General's discovery of certain electronic text messages in connection with its review of the actions of the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in advance of the 2016 presidential election. Our responses to the questions presented in your letter are set forth below.

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

In gathering evidence for the OIG's ongoing 2016 election review, we requested, consistent with standard practice, that the FBI produce text messages from the FBI-issued phones of certain FBI employees involved in the Clinton e-mail investigation based on search terms we provided. After finding a number of politically-oriented text messages between Page and Strzok, the OIG sought from the FBI all text messages between Strzok and Page from their FBI-issued phones through November 30, 2016, which covered the entire period of the Clinton e-mail server investigation. The FBI produced these text messages on July 20, 2017. Following our review of those text messages, the OIG expanded our request to the FBI to include all text messages between Strzok and Page from

November 30, 2016, through the date of the document request, which was July 28, 2017. The OIG received these additional messages on August 10, 2017.

2. When and how did OIG notify the Special Counsel Robert Mueller of the text messages?

On July 27, 2017, upon our identification of many of the political text messages, the Inspector General met with the Deputy Attorney General and the Special Counsel to inform them of the texts that we had discovered, and provided them with a significant number of the texts, so that they could take any management action they deemed appropriate.

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?

The Hatch Act, and its associated regulations, identify authorized and prohibited political activities for most executive department employees, including FBI employees. The Hatch Act permits expressions of personal opinions about candidates and issues. In contrast, political activity, which is defined as “activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group” is prohibited in certain contexts. We are cognizant of these issues and will determine whether there is a basis to refer the allegations, along with relevant evidence we have gathered, regarding Page’s and Strzok’s text messages to the Office of Special Counsel upon completion of our review.

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?

The OIG’s review is ongoing, and we currently are in the process of completing our witness interviews and document review. Thereafter, we intend to issue a public report with our findings on these and the other issues we are reviewing, and we would be pleased to discuss them with you at that time.

Thank you for your continued support for the work of my Office. If you

have any questions, please do not hesitate contact me or Greg Sabina, my Advisor for Legislative Affairs, at (202) 514-3435.

Sincerely,



Michael E. Horowitz  
Inspector General

cc: The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate