

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 12, 2017

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

Dear Inspector General Horowitz:

President Trump's abrupt firing of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director James Comey, the man charged with investigating the Trump campaign's alleged collusion with Russian agents to disrupt the 2016 presidential election, raises concerns of possible political interference by the sitting President into our nation's most sensitive criminal investigation. That Mr. Comey's termination occurred just days after he reportedly requested more resources from the Department of Justice to further pursue that investigation is particularly troubling.¹

Further, the justification for Mr. Comey's termination—that Mr. Comey had violated Department of Justice protocol in a way that was unfair to former Secretary Clinton—directly contradicts countless prior public proclamations made by Attorney General Jeff Sessions (“He had an absolute duty, in my opinion, eleven days or not, to come forward with the new information.”²) and the President (“It took a lot of guts...I tell you what, what he did, he brought back his reputation.”³).

Notably, in his decision to fire Mr. Comey, the President claims to have relied on a recommendation from Attorney General Sessions.⁴ Mr. Sessions is himself recused from the Russia investigation, in part because he provided false testimony in his Senate confirmation hearing regarding his own communications with Russian officials while serving as an advisor to the Trump campaign. Mr. Sessions's participation in this matter appears wholly inappropriate and raises further concerns of possible political interference.

¹ *Day Before Firing, Comey Asked for More Resources for Russia Inquiry*, New York Times (May 10, 2017) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/10/us/politics/comey-russia-investigation-fbi.html>).

² *Comey's removal sparks fears about future of Russia probe*, Washington Post (May 9, 2017) (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/comeys-removal-sparks-fears-about-future-of-russia-probe/2017/05/09/013d9ade-3507-11e7-b412-62beef8121f7_story.html).

³ *Here's a Timeline of Trump's Statements on Comey*, NBC News (May 10, 2017) (<http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/here-s-timeline-trump-s-statements-comey-n757416>).

⁴ *Letter from President Trump Terminating Mr. Comey* (May 9, 2017) (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/05/09/us/politics/document-White-House-Fires-James-Comey.html>).

Contrary to the rationale for Mr. Comey's termination provided by the Administration, according to the *Washington Post*, which reported on the private accounts of more than 30 officials in the administration and Congress, "Trump was angry that Comey would not support his baseless claim that President Barack Obama had his campaign offices wiretapped. Trump was frustrated when Comey revealed in Senate testimony the breadth of the counterintelligence investigation into Russia's effort to sway the 2016 U.S. presidential election. And he fumed that Comey was giving too much attention to the Russia probe and not enough to investigating leaks to journalists."⁵

The Attorney General's recommendation and the President's decision to remove Mr. Comey in the midst of the FBI's most sensitive criminal investigation threatens the integrity of the Department of Justice and poses grave injury to the rule of law. Yesterday, the President told NBC News that he asked Mr. Comey if he was under investigation while he was actively considering whether or not to retain Mr. Comey as FBI director, a question that in itself undermines the FBI's independence.⁶

The Office of the Inspector General is uniquely situated to defend the Department of Justice and the American people from this threat. For that reason, we request that you open an inquiry into whether there was political interference with the FBI's investigation into the Trump campaign's alleged collusion with Russian agents to disrupt the 2016 presidential election.

We ask that this inquiry include but not be limited to:

1. The provision of resources for the investigation, including efforts by the President and Attorney General to allocate resources based on unsubstantiated claims of wiretapping;
2. The intent and impact of Mr. Comey's termination, including any inconsistencies with the publicly offered rationale;
3. The role of the Attorney General in that termination contrary to his recusal;
4. The timing of the termination, occurring, as it did, just days after Mr. Comey was reported to have requested additional resources for his investigation; and
5. Whether any actions of the Department of Justice and the White House in this matter fell outside regular protocol or constituted political interference in an

⁵ *Inside Trump's anger and impatience – and his sudden decision to fire Comey*, Washington Post (May 10, 2017) (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-trumps-anger-and-impatience-prompted-him-to-fire-the-fbi-director/2017/05/10/d9642334-359c-11e7-b373-418f6849a004_story.html).

⁶ *Trump Interview With Lester Holt: President Asked Comey If He Was Under Investigation*, NBC News (May 11, 2017) (<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/trump-reveals-he-asked-comey-whether-he-was-under-investigation-n757821>).

ongoing investigation, including whether or not Mr. Comey informed the President “on three separate occasions” that he was not under investigation.⁷

We thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



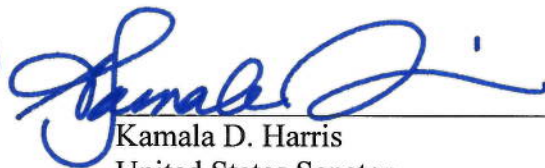
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

⁷ Letter from President Trump Terminating Mr. Comey (May 9, 2017)
(<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/05/09/us/politics/document-White-House-Fires-James-Comey.html>).