

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927

Minority (202) 225-3641

February 2, 2017

The Honorable Donald McGahn
Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. McGahn:

Numerous reports last week raise questions regarding the Administration's use of private Republican National Committee email servers, and the Administration's cybersecurity practices generally. These reports, if true, raise possible cybersecurity and transparency concerns related to the email use of the President and senior Administration officials.

The New York Times reports that the President himself uses a private, consumer grade Android smartphone, despite security officials issuing him a locked-down device when he took office.¹ And CNN reports that the hacker "WauchulaGhost" found that the Twitter accounts for the President, First Lady, and Vice President all use easily guessed email addresses and do not use basic security features such as two-factor authentication.²

A recent Newsweek account stated, "[s]enior Trump administration staffers, including Kellyanne Conway, Jared Kushner, Sean Spicer and Steve Bannon, had until Wednesday active accounts on a Republican National Committee email system."³

The same Newsweek account also raised transparency concerns associated with use of such accounts, stating "the system (rnchq.org) is the same one the George W. Bush administration was accused of using to evade transparency rules."⁴

¹ *That Old Phone Trump Uses for Twitter Could Be an Opening to Security Threats*, New York Times (Jan. 25, 2017).

² *Hacker to Trump: Fix Your Security Settings on Twitter*, CNN (Jan. 24, 2017).

³ *Trump White House Senior Staff Have Private RNC Email Accounts*, Newsweek (Jan. 25, 2017).

⁴ *Id.*

To provide assurances that the Administration is properly handling communications that include sensitive material and has hardened the defenses of key communications, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Have cybersecurity experts assessed the security of the Administration's communications platforms, including Twitter accounts? If so, what were the findings of this assessment? If not, why has such an assessment not been undertaken?
2. Has the White House Counsel assessed the legality of the data retention practices and private email use of Administration officials? If so, what were the findings of this assessment? If not, why has such an assessment not been undertaken?
3. Has the Administration assessed whether any classified or otherwise sensitive information is stored on insecure devices or on private email accounts? If so, what were the findings of this assessment? If not, why has such an assessment not been undertaken?

I request that you provide answers to these inquiries by February 14, 2017. If you have any questions about this request, please have your staff contact the Committee at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce