

RICK SCOTT Governor **KEN DETZNER**Secretary of State

August 9, 2018

The Honorable Richard Burr Chairman, U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence 211 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

As Florida's Chief Elections Officer, the safety and security of Florida's elections and the protection of voter information is my top priority. Florida has achieved free and fair elections in 2012, 2014 and 2016. These elections in Florida were not hacked because the Florida Department of State (DOS) and locally-elected Supervisors of Elections have systems in place that are constantly analyzing and flagging potential suspicious activity. State and local election officials have taken significant steps and invested millions of dollars to ensure the security and integrity of Florida's elections. This includes updated monitoring systems, millions in grants to locally-elected Supervisors of Elections and the hiring of additional cyber security experts.

Any information of infiltration that we receive, we take very seriously and it is imperative since Floridians are already casting vote-by-mail ballots for the Primary Election which is on August 28, and we have a General Election on November 6, that we are made fully aware of any system infiltration so it can be swiftly addressed.

I am very concerned by comments made yesterday by Senator Bill Nelson saying that the "Russians are in Florida's elections records" and that they have "already penetrated certain counties in the state and they now have free rein to move about" without any evidence or details to support such a claim. I am also concerned that when questioned by members of the media on the validity of this claim, Senator Nelson refused to elaborate other than claim that the information was "classified".

Let me be clear, this is a very serious charge made in a public setting without any evidence, details or any prior communication to state or local election officials in Florida. With Florida's Primary Election only three weeks away and the General Election soon to follow, it is imperative that the voting public maintains confidence in our elections system, and comments such as these only serve to erode public trust in our elections at a critical time.

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Immediately upon hearing Senator Nelson's comments, DOS contacted the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to request an immediate briefing on any information that pertained to Senator Nelson's comments. DOS was advised by all partners that they have no information that corroborates Senator Nelson's statement. Additionally, DOS has no evidence to support these claims.

DOS staff have the appropriate security clearance from the federal government to receive briefings on classified and confidential information. Our federal partners have been very forthcoming in sharing information with DOS on potential threats so that state and local election officials can take the necessary precautions to protect our elections. I urge the Committee and any federal agency with information to continue to share relevant, classified information about current and potential threats with DOS. DOS values the strong partnerships with DHS and all federal, state and locally-elected Supervisors of Elections as it is one of our best weapons against cyber threats.

Additionally, if you, Senator Nelson or any federal agency, government official or elected official has information that verifies that "the Russians are in Florida's elections records", I urge immediate transparency and cooperation in sharing that information so that we can take action to protect our elections.

Time is of the essence. We have an election ongoing and people are voting right now. Floridians must be confident their vote matters. Thank you for your prompt attention. Given the confusion this has caused, I respectfully request a response by the start of early voting in Florida, which begins Monday, August 13.

Sincerely,

Ken Detzner

Florida Secretary of State

CC: The Honorable Kristjen M. Nielsen, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Christopher Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Richard Swearingen, Commissioner, Florida Department of Law Enforcement The Honorable Paul Lux, President, Florida State Association of Supervisor of

Elections

Ben Spear, Director, EI-ISAC