

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on the Judiciary**  
Washington, DC 20515-6216  
One Hundred Fifteenth Congress

July 20, 2017

Chairman Bob Goodlatte  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Goodlatte:

This letter represents the fourth time that we have written to you to ask that the House Committee on the Judiciary hold hearings on matters that now extend well beyond any investigation into Russian influence. To date, you have not responded to any of these requests. More importantly, the Committee has not yet held a single hearing about the damage being done to the Department of Justice by the Trump Administration.

**We write again to request that you schedule hearings with the senior leadership of the Department of Justice, including Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, and acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe, without delay.**

President Trump's contempt for the leadership of the Department of Justice is now clear. In an interview with the *New York Times*, President Trump complained that "Sessions should have never recused himself, and if he was going to recuse himself . . . I would have picked somebody else."<sup>1</sup> The Attorney General's recusal from the Russia investigation is, of course, required by federal law.<sup>2</sup> In the same interview, President Trump attacked the credibility of Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein,<sup>3</sup> acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe,<sup>4</sup> and Special Counsel Robert Mueller.<sup>5</sup> He then warned the Special Counsel not to examine the finances of his family business.<sup>6</sup> None of these attacks on the Department or the Special Counsel's investigation are warranted. Any one of them would merit a response by our Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Baker et al., *Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions*, N.Y. TIMES, July 19, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> See 50 C.F.R. § 45.2.

<sup>3</sup> *Excerpts From The Times's Interview With Trump*, N.Y. Times, July 19, 2017. "Rosenstein, who is from Baltimore. There are very few Republicans in Baltimore, if any." *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> "We have a director of the F.B.I., acting, who received \$700,000, whose wife received \$700,000 from, essentially, Hillary Clinton." *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> "The next day, he is appointed special counsel. I said, what the hell is this all about? Talk about conflicts!" *Id.*

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

Other matters require our attention as well. On July 11, 2017, after repeatedly denying his participation in any such meetings, Donald Trump, Jr. released emails showing that he, Paul Manafort, and Jared Kushner met with a “Russian government attorney who is flying over from Moscow” in an attempt to obtain information “that would incriminate Hillary.”<sup>7</sup> By itself, this revelation—and its relation to both federal election laws and the question of obstruction of justice—would warrant a hearing in our Committee.

But it also appears that Natalia Veselnitskaya, the “Russian government attorney” named in Mr. Trump’s emails, was directly involved in a massive federal money-laundering case that was abruptly settled by the Department of Justice—for pennies on the dollar, with no admission of wrongdoing, and just two days before trial was set to begin—on May 12, 2017.<sup>8</sup> Ms. Veselnitskaya told one Russian news outlet that the penalty was so light that it seemed “almost an apology from the government.”<sup>9</sup> It is possible that the connection is merely a coincidence—that the Southern District of New York settled this case without pressure from Main Justice, and that the President’s closest advisors merely took an unrelated meeting hoping to obtain assistance from the Russian government. In any event, Attorney General Sessions has an obligation to answer the Committee’s questions about this troubling fact pattern.

Similarly, the Attorney General should provide the Committee with an explanation for his—at best—incomplete application for a security clearance. On July 13, 2017, by order of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the Department of Justice released a single, redacted page of the Attorney General’s SF-86 security clearance application.<sup>10</sup> On the form, Attorney General Sessions indicated that he had not had *any* contact with a foreign government official in the past seven years. The Department indicated that the FBI had searched its files and found *no* reference to any meeting between then-Senator Sessions and any Russian official.<sup>11</sup>

Through this omission, and by neglecting to even mention his meetings with Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak to federal investigators, the Attorney General joins a growing list of

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<sup>7</sup> Jo Becker, Adam Goldman, and Matt Apuzzo, *Russian Dirt on Clinton? ‘I Love It,’ Donald Trump Jr. Said*, N.Y. TIMES, July 11, 2017. See also Andrew Higgins and Andrew E. Kramer, *Soviet Veteran Who Met with Trump Jr. Is a Master of the Dark Arts*, N.Y. TIMES, July 15, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Natasha Bertrand, “*The offer was too good to refuse*”: *A major Russian money-laundering case was unexpectedly settled in New York*, BUS. INSIDER, May 23, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Oleg Fochkin, *We have made a difficult, but absolutely the right decision*, IZVESTIA, May 14, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen Nakashima, *Justice Department releases portion of Sessions security clearance form claiming no contacts with foreign officials*, WASH. POST, July 13, 2017.

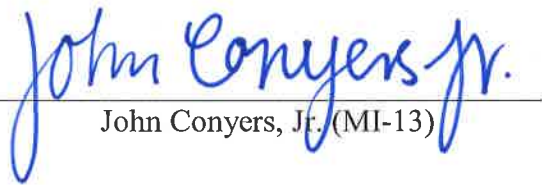
<sup>11</sup> *Id.* See also, Press Release, *DOJ Releases Redacted Page of Sessions’s SF-86 to American Oversight*, American Oversight, July 13, 2017.

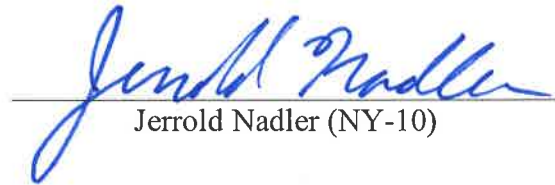
senior Trump advisors—among them, former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort, and Jared Kushner—who failed to fully disclose their contacts with a foreign government when required to do so by law. Our Committee has jurisdiction over statutes like the Foreign Agents Registration Act. We have the competence to investigate whether or not these officials intentionally misled the FBI and the public. We have an obligation to seek answers from the Attorney General now that he is implicated in this matter.

We believe that our failing to act now will allow others to inflict lasting damage to the Department of Justice. It will also inflict lasting damage to our Committee—which has, in years past and under the leadership of Chairmen of both parties, rarely shied away from providing meaningful oversight of the Department and its component agencies.

Accordingly, we once again call for hearings with the leadership of the Department of Justice as soon as practicable.

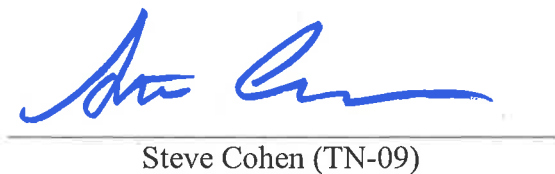
Sincerely,

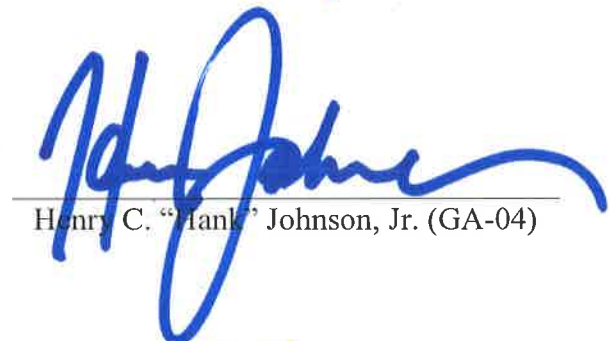
  
John Conyers, Jr. (MI-13)

  
Jerrold Nadler (NY-10)

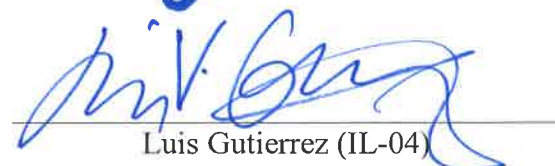
  
Zoe Lofgren (CA-19)

  
Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)

  
Steve Cohen (TN-09)

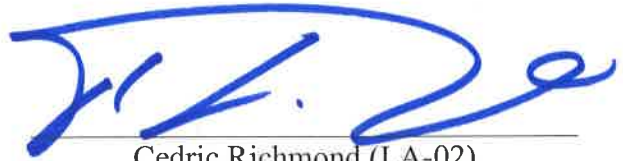
  
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr. (GA-04)

  
Ted Deutch (FL-22)

  
Luis Gutierrez (IL-04)



Karen Bass (CA-37)



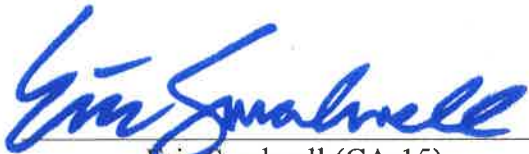
Cedric Richmond (LA-02)



Hakeem Jeffries (NY-08)



David N. Cicilline (RI-01)



Eric Swalwell (CA-15)



Ted Lieu (CA-33)



Jamie Raskin (MD-08)



Pramila Jayapal (WA-07)



Bradley Schneider (IL-10)

cc: Chairman Bob Goodlatte, House Committee on the Judiciary