

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2017

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We respectfully write to request that Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes be recused from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and potential Russian ties to the Trump campaign. Chairman Nunes' recusal is critical in order to preserve the integrity and independence of the U.S. House of Representatives.

On January 6, 2017, the U.S. Intelligence Community (USIC) released an unclassified report detailing an unprecedented, deliberate, and multi-faceted campaign by Russia to interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The USIC assessed that Putin directed this interference not only to "undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process," but also "to help President-elect Trump's election chances when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to him."

Following these revelations, Chairman Nunes and Ranking Member Adam Schiff announced that HPSCI was undertaking a bipartisan inquiry into the USIC's activities and the underlying intelligence used to draft the assessment. Chairman Nunes and Ranking Member Schiff stated, "This issue is not about party, but about country. The Committee will continue to follow the facts wherever they may lead."

On March 21, 2017, Chairman Nunes visited the White House to view classified intelligence documents. The next day, without consulting Ranking Member Schiff or any other members of the Committee, Chairman Nunes communicated to President Trump and announced to the press that the USIC had incidentally collected information about members of the Trump transition team during legal surveillance of foreign operatives. Chairman Nunes then cancelled several upcoming HPSCI meetings, including a closed-door meeting with Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey and National Security Agency Director Michael Rogers, and an already scheduled public hearing with former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, and former Central Intelligence Agency Director John Brennan.

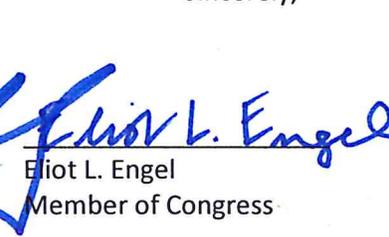
Due to these actions and his role on the Trump transition team, Chairman Nunes has lost the faith of the public to carry out this investigation in an honest, transparent, and bipartisan fashion. Republican Senator John McCain said, "If we're really going to get to the bottom of these things, it's got to be done in a bipartisan fashion. And as far as I could tell, Congressman

Nunes killed that.” His colleague Senator Lindsey Graham said, “If he’s not willing to tell the Democrats and the Republicans on the committee who he met with and what he was told, he has lost his ability to lead,” and added that “the House is off track and probably can’t get back on track.” This inquiry will not be credible if Chairman Nunes remains at the helm.

Mr. Speaker, one of our most cherished institutions, free and fair democratic elections, was attacked. Congress must come together in a bipartisan fashion to understand the nature of this attack and the scope of Russian ties to the Trump campaign, transition team, and presidential administration. Chairman Nunes has demonstrated his bias, and the public will no longer accept the results of this probe as legitimate under his leadership. This is about country, not party. It is also a test about the ability of the House, as an institution, to conduct an investigation of the Executive Branch while being independent of that branch. Chairman Nunes’ recent actions make clear he has failed that test. Only his recusal will allow the House to pass that test. That is why we urge you to require the recusal of Chairman Nunes from this investigation.

Sincerely,


Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress


Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress


David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

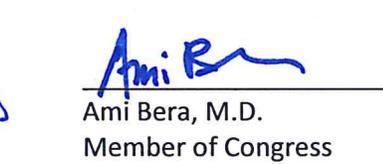

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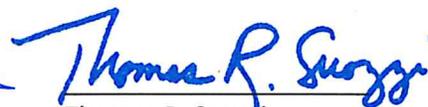

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