



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State

August 16, 2018

Senator Bill Nelson
716 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Nelson,

The Florida Department of State (DOS) and all locally-elected Supervisors of Elections have been laser-focused on the safety and security of Florida's elections and the protection of voter information since before 2016. We take the threat of potential interference in our elections extremely seriously, which is why we have invested millions of dollars and established strong federal, state and local partnerships to protect our elections. Our efforts and dedication resulted in a fair, accurate and secure election in 2016 with zero successful hacking attempts.

Your recent comments that "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 to support such a claim is deeply troubling. DOS attempted to verify your statements with the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), and all of Florida's 67 county Supervisors of Elections and no one had any information to validate or corroborate your statement and no actionable intelligence to share with us.

Since making this unsubstantiated claim, you have not provided any evidence or details and when pressed for answers by members of the media you stated that you are "trying to make sure Florida officials are aware of the ongoing Russian threat so they take the steps necessary to safeguard our elections" and that "It would be foolish to think that the Russians would not continue to do this as they did in Florida in 2016." These ambiguous comments do not address your statement that "Russians are in Florida's elections records" and they do nothing to clear up the confusion and concern this has caused among Florida voters. Furthermore, it is inaccurate to imply that Russians penetrated

Florida's elections systems in 2016. As DHS has clearly maintained, Florida was unsuccessfully targeted in 2016 and our systems were not breached in any way.

We are aware of the threat and the need to stay vigilant, but if you have specific information on a confirmed intrusion of any of Florida's voting systems or databases at the state or county level, we urgently need you to disclose that information to us so we can take action.

When pressed for answers, you have previously stated that the information was "classified." DOS staff and some Supervisors of Elections have the appropriate security clearance from the federal government to receive briefings on classified and confidential information, but no information has been shared with us to corroborate your statement.

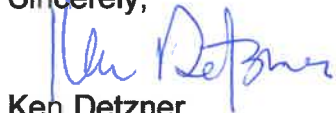
With voters already casting ballots for the Primary Election and the General Election soon to follow, time is of the essence. Today, we respectfully request a response from you clarifying your comments no later than Friday, August 17, before the start of the mandatory early voting period for all counties on August 18. If this means sharing classified information with DOS, we request you do that through the appropriate channels no later than Friday.

Given the magnitude of your comments you have a responsibility to share any classified information you have with us, and we have a responsibility to the public to fully look into any allegations of hacking.

Our number one priority is having a secure election and maintaining public confidence in our elections system. We trust that you share our commitment and would therefore never withhold information that is critical to the protection of our democracy from any potential threats.

We look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Ken Detzner
Florida Secretary of State



Paul Lux
President, Florida State Association of
Supervisors of Elections