

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 20, 2017

The Honorable James B. Comey, Jr.  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Director Comey:

We are writing you in regards to Attorney General Jeff Sessions' representations to the Senate Judiciary Committee, both at his confirmation hearing and subsequent to it.

In a written question after the hearing, Senator Leahy asked him:

Several of the President-Elect's nominees or senior advisers have Russian ties. Have you been in contact with anyone connected to any part of the Russian government about the 2016 election, either before or after election day?

Under oath, Attorney General Sessions responded with an unequivocal "No," and provided no further explanation.

During his confirmation hearing on January 10, 2017, Senator Franken also asked him, "if there is any evidence that anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign communicated with the Russian government in the course of this campaign, what will you do?" Rather than respond to the question asked, he instead testified that "[he has] been called a surrogate a time or two in that campaign and [he] did not have communications with the Russians."

On March 1, 2017, the Washington Post reported that Attorney General Sessions had at least two meetings with the Russian ambassador during the 2016 elections.<sup>1</sup> According to the report, then-Senator Sessions had a private meeting in

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/sessions-spoke-twice-with-russian-ambassador-during-trumps-presidential-campaign-justice-officials-say/2017/03/01/77205eda-feac-11e6-99b4-9e613afeb09f\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/sessions-spoke-twice-with-russian-ambassador-during-trumps-presidential-campaign-justice-officials-say/2017/03/01/77205eda-feac-11e6-99b4-9e613afeb09f_story.html)

his personal office with the Russian ambassador on September 8, 2016, and they also had a conversation following an event at the Republican National Convention in July 2016. Following this revelation, the Attorney General issued a statement that claimed he “never met with any Russian officials to discuss issues of the campaign. I have no idea what this allegation is about. It is false.”

The Attorney General then confirmed he had met with the Russian ambassador on these two occasions during a press conference on March 2, 2017, during which he said the September meeting took place “in campaign season, but [he did not] recall any political conversations.”<sup>2</sup> He also claimed that he “[did not] remember a lot of [the conversation].” The Attorney General later confirmed both meetings in a letter to the Judiciary Committee on March 6, 2017.

Given his own admissions regarding contacts with the Russian ambassador, including at the Republican National Convention, and particularly in light of his description of his lack of recollection of what was said during the conversations, Attorney General Sessions’ written testimony to Senator Leahy appears to be discernably false. His testimony to Senator Franken also appears to be unequivocally false.

We are concerned by Attorney General Sessions’ lack of candor to the Committee and his failure thus far to accept responsibility for testimony that could be construed as perjury. We are also disturbed that the Attorney General has not been forthcoming about his contacts with the Russian ambassador since he was forced to disclose the two meetings following press reports. The press has now reported that there was a third undisclosed instance in which the Attorney General may have had contact with the Russian ambassador during the 2016 elections, which occurred at a small, private campaign event in April 2016 with then-candidate Trump in attendance.<sup>3</sup>

In light of Attorney General Sessions’ failure to provide truthful and complete responses to the Judiciary Committee – in his sworn testimony, in his explanation for his false statements, and in his subsequent March 6 letter purporting to provide “supplemental” testimony – we ask that you investigate all contacts the Russian ambassador, or any other Russian officials, may have had with Attorney General

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/03/02/transcript-of-jeff-sessions-recusal-press-conference-annotated/?utm\\_term=.96a4d24c5af2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/03/02/transcript-of-jeff-sessions-recusal-press-conference-annotated/?utm_term=.96a4d24c5af2)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/jeff-sessions-sergey-kislyak-mayflower\\_us\\_58c05639e4b0d1078ca37225?section=politics](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/jeff-sessions-sergey-kislyak-mayflower_us_58c05639e4b0d1078ca37225?section=politics)

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Sessions or with his staff, and whether any laws were broken in the course of those contacts or in any subsequent discussion of whether they occurred. We also request that you brief us on the results of that investigation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



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PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator



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AL FRANKEN  
United States Senator