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PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS FILE FEC COMPLAINT AGAINST RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT AND TRUMP CAMPAIGN

COMPLAINT SEEKS “IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION” OF POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS OF FEDERAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW

WASHINGTON, DC – Two leading public interest organizations, Free Speech For People and the Campaign for Accountability, filed today a complaint before the Federal Election Commission demanding “an immediate investigation” into whether the Russian Government illegally spent money to influence the 2016 presidential election, in possible coordination with the Trump campaign.

The 17-page complaint states: “According to the United States government, the Russian government deliberately attempted to influence the 2016 presidential election in order to assist the candidacy of Donald J. Trump. [The Federal Election Campaign Act] prohibits foreign nationals from spending money to influence federal elections.”

The complaint continues: “Furthermore, according to published reports, there is sufficient basis for the FEC to initiate an investigation as to whether this activity by the Russian government met the legal definition of having “coordinated” with the Trump campaign, whether at the request of the candidate or his committee, or through shared former employees, contractors, or business associates.”

The complaint identifies numerous reports that computer hackers paid by the Russian government engaged in cyberattacks on the Democratic National Committee to gain access to DNC emails, including those of Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta, and then released those email messages to help Trump win the election. The complaint further identifies reports that a Russian propaganda effort helped spread a flood of “fake news” designed to support the Trump candidacy. And, the complaint cites indications of potential coordination with the Trump campaign, including Trump’s statement on June 27, 2016, publicly calling upon the Russian government to hack into Hillary Clinton’s emails.

“Up until now, the recent revelations of potential interference by the Russian government in the 2016 presidential election have invoked serious national security concerns,” said Ron Fein, Free Speech For People’s Legal Director and counsel of record on the FEC complaint. “But, of equal importance is the question of whether any laws of the United States may have been violated and, if so, who committed those violations. The Federal Election Commission must investigate whether

the Russian government, in possible coordination with the Trump campaign, violated federal campaign finance law designed to protect our democracy against corruption and foreign influence.”

“The Federal Election Commission is charged with protecting the impartiality of America's elections,” said Anne Weismann, the Executive Director of the Campaign for Accountability. “The agency must immediately open an investigation into whether the Russian government illegally aided Donald Trump's campaign for the Presidency. It is hard to imagine a more clear-cut case of a foreign national attempting to influence an American election: the CIA and the FBI have both concluded that hackers paid by the Russian government aided President-elect Trump's campaign.”

Free Speech For People is a national non-partisan organization that works to restore republican democracy to the people, including through legal advocacy concerning the law of campaign finance.

The Campaign for Accountability is a national non-partisan project which uses research, litigation, and communications to expose misconduct and malfeasance in public life.

The FEC complaint filed today can be accessed [here](#).