

For Immediate Release

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PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS FILE AMENDED 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 Campaign for Accountability, filed today an amended complaint with 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.

While public discussion around Russian election interference has largely been framed as a question of national security or counterintelligence, the complaint charges that the Russian government’s activities interfering in the 2016 election also violate the Federal Election Campaign Act, which prohibits “foreign nationals” from spending money to influence federal, state, and local elections. The complaint also argues that the FEC has enough evidence to investigate whether Trump campaign advisors’ communications to and relationship with the Russian government meet the Federal Election Campaign Act’s definition of “coordination.”

The Federal Election Commission (FEC), which was created by Congress in 1975, is an independent commission charged with investigating and enforcing violations of the Federal Election Campaign Act, which regulates campaign fundraising, spending, and reporting. The FEC has broad investigative powers, including the ability to subpoena witnesses and documents and compel testimony. Notably, it is both bipartisan (by law, no more than three of its six members may be from the same political party) and independent (its commissioners do not report to President Trump or Congressional leaders).

“The FEC is the only bipartisan, independent commission that has these questions on its docket,” said Ron Fein, Free Speech For People’s Legal Director and counsel of record on the FEC complaint. “The FEC hasn’t always enforced the law with vigor, but this is an unprecedented crisis of the integrity of our democracy. This could be the FEC’s finest hour.”

Today’s complaint is an update to a preliminary complaint filed on December 19, 2016. Since December, an official intelligence community report from the Director of National Intelligence on behalf of seventeen intelligence agencies, as well as four months’ additional investigative reporting and revelations has uncovered evidence suggesting that Trump campaign advisors and the campaign may have “coordinated” with the Russian government.

“There’s no longer any doubt that the Russian government helped elect Donald Trump President. The U.S. intelligence community and news organizations alike have revealed details of

the extent to which hackers paid by the Russians worked to undermine the Clinton campaign.” Said Daniel Stevens, the Executive Director of Campaign for Accountability. “To maintain the integrity of American elections, the FEC must investigate to determine whether the Russian government or the Trump campaign broke any campaign finance laws.”

The 24-page complaint states: “According to formal findings of 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 amended complaint identifies numerous reports that detail suspicious online activity including a Russian propaganda effort that helped spread a flood of “fake news” designed to support the Trump candidacy. The complaint further details numerous meetings between high-level members of the Trump campaign, including Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Carter Page, who had direct communication with senior Russian officials, as well as unusual activity in Trump’s transition team including apparently secret meetings between General Michael Flynn and Trump’s son-in-law and key campaign official Jared Kushner and the Russian ambassador to the United States in Trump Tower in New York City. This meeting was not disclosed until March 2017.

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.

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

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