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Public Interest Groups Launch Grassroots Campaign Calling on FEC to Investigate Russian Interference in 2016 Election

Groups' Campaign Will Engage Their 2.5 Million Members at fecmustinvestigate.org

Effort Follows Formal Legal Complaint Urging FEC to Investigate Possible Violations of Federal Campaign Finance Law by Russian Government, Trump Campaign

Washington, DC – Today, a pair of leading public interest organizations publicly launched a website and campaign calling on the Federal Election Commission to immediately investigate whether Russian agents and the Trump campaign violated federal campaign finance laws during the 2016 campaign.

The groups, **Rootstrikers** and **Free Speech For People**, will engage their more than 2.5 million collective members in coming days, encouraging them to visit fecmustinvestigate.org, a petition site where they can urge FEC commissioners to launch and prioritize this investigation.

With Monday's [new revelations](#) about Russian cyberattacks on U.S. voting systems days before the November election and the upcoming testimony of fired FBI Director James Comey, the groups are calling on the FEC to urgently carry out its duty to investigate.

The petition to FEC commissioners housed at fecmustinvestigate.org reads in part:

"It is the responsibility of the FEC to ensure the integrity of our elections. ... Please conduct a thorough investigation into whether or not foreign actors sought to influence the 2016 election through the purchase of Facebook ads, other paid social media, or targeted hacking, and whether any of this activity was coordinated with the Trump campaign."

The campaign follows on a formal legal complaint filed with the FEC by Free Speech For People and Campaign for Accountability charging that Russian agents and the Trump campaign may have violated federal campaign finance laws.

"The FEC hasn't been vigilant about foreign political influence over the past few years, but now we need it to step up," **said Ron Fein, Legal Director for Free Speech For People.** "The prospect that a foreign government appears to have conducted an illegal influence operation in a U.S. election, with possible coordination from the Trump campaign, demands urgent investigation."

"Americans always deserve to see accountability for anyone who violates the laws protecting our sacred electoral process, but never more so than today," **said Kurt Walters, campaign director at Demand Progress's Rootstrikers project.** "The FEC has the authority to investigate whether Russian agents or the Trump campaign violated campaign finance laws, and people across our country rightly expect FEC commissioners to live up to their responsibility and launch an immediate investigation. We will engage our millions of members to ensure their voices are heard."

In December, Free Speech For People and Campaign for Accountability filed a [complaint](#) with the FEC charging that the Russian government's activities interfering in the 2016 election violated 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 report was later amended in [May](#) and then again in [June](#) as additional information came out.

In recent weeks, one FEC commissioner has [publicly called](#) for the agency to investigate whether Russian agents purchased Facebook ads to spread misinformation, in violation of federal campaign finance laws.

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.

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.

Rootstrikers is the money in politics reform and anti-plutocracy wing of Demand Progress, a grassroots activist organization of more than 2 million members.

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