



After Facebook Revelations, FEC Must Act Now on Pending Complaint for Russian Election Interference and Trump Campaign Coordination

Statement of Ron Fein, Legal Director, Free Speech For People

On December 16, 2016, Free Speech For People and Campaign for Accountability filed a [complaint](#) with the Federal Election Commission against the Russian government and the Trump campaign, for violations of the federal campaign finance law prohibiting foreign nationals from spending money in U.S. elections, including through paid social media. We filed amendments to that complaint in [May 2017](#) and [June 2017](#) to include new allegations, including that Russian operatives had purchased targeted political advertisements on Facebook.

The newly reported revelations—identifying the specific entity that bought the ads, and the amount paid—help add detail to the illegal conduct already alleged in our FEC complaint. Under the [Federal Election Campaign Act](#), it is illegal for a foreign national to spend money to influence U.S. elections. As our complaint explained, the Russian purchase of Facebook political advertisements violates this provision. Furthermore, as our complaint alleged, the Trump campaign is implicated if the Russian communications met the definition of “[coordinated communications](#)” or were otherwise “[coordinated](#)” with the Trump campaign.

Our complaint has now been before the FEC for ten months. The FEC has more than enough information to find reason to believe that a respondent has violated the Federal Election Campaign Act, and to proceed to the next step in the investigatory process. The questions raised by our complaint go to the core of the integrity of the 2016 presidential election, and the FEC must move forward now with a full investigation.

The complaint filed by Free Speech For People and Campaign for Accountability has been designated by the FEC as Matter Under Review #7207.