

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 29, 2019

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Barr,

Following press reports that Connecticut U.S. Attorney John Durham's inquiry into possible wrongdoing involving counterintelligence and law enforcement organizations and practices related to the 2016 presidential campaign has been upgraded to a criminal investigation, we write to reiterate our support for a thorough, fair, and transparent examination of that investigation. Regardless of whether or not Mr. Durham decides to file indictments, in order to restore public confidence in the Department of Justice (DOJ), the FBI, and the Intelligence Community (IC), the findings of his investigation must be made public to the fullest extent possible.

There have been far too many incidents of suspected malfeasance under the Obama administration that have not been fully explained to the American public. Under the previous administration, the public witnessed an array of scandals that lowered their confidence in federal agencies and government officials. These included the ATF's gun-running Fast and Furious operation, the IRS's targeting of conservative nonprofit groups, and Hillary Clinton's use of a private e-mail server during her time as Secretary of State and the resulting mishandling of highly classified information. Lack of transparency, public awareness, and accountability of government officials encourages additional malfeasance and severely erodes the public trust.

Our committees' oversight efforts related to the FBI's handling of the Clinton e-mail scandal and government agency actions related to the FBI's investigation into the now-debunked Russia collusion theory have only resulted in more questions. Most troubling, evidence that we have uncovered, along with public news reports, suggest that government officials in both investigations were politically biased and that bias may have affected their decision-making. No one, not even our federal law enforcement organizations, are above the law, or immune from mistakes. If the American people are going to trust their government, then their government must be honest with them.

At a time when our nation faces significant challenges, our body politic stands deeply divided. It will remain divided and incapable of seriously addressing those challenges as long as the American public are kept in the dark about suspected actors within the bureaucracy having used their powers of office to affect the outcome of a presidential election and/or sabotage a duly elected president.

The Honorable William P. Barr
October 29, 2019
Page 2

If wrongdoing occurred within government agencies that targeted a presidential candidate and campaign, or subsequent to the election sought to undermine a duly elected president resulting in the appointment of a special counsel, the public has a right to know as much of the detail of what transpired as possible. If no, or minimal, wrongdoing occurred, the public needs to know that as well.

In conclusion, for the benefit of the American public, we urge you to ensure that appropriate standards of transparency are applied to Mr. Durham's findings so that as much information as possible pertaining to his investigation is made available for public review.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on Finance

cc: The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz
Inspector General