

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 1, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

I write to express my deep concern that under your leadership House Republicans have not taken credible action to fully address Russia's interference in our democracy and prevent cyber-attacks from Russia in the future. Instead, it appears that many House Republicans have decided to sow conspiracy theories and attack the integrity and credibility of federal law enforcement as a means to protect President Trump and undermine the work of Special Counsel Mueller.

In particular, Devin Nunes, Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI), has now drafted and seeks to release a conspiracy-themed memo that selectively cherry-picks classified information intended to discredit the past work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and ultimately Special Counsel Mueller. Even more extraordinary is that the actions of Chairman Nunes and his supporters are being actively parroted by Russian-linked cyber actors on social media with the intent to discredit U.S. democratic institutions.

Our nation's most senior law enforcement officials have made clear their grave concerns regarding the release of the memo. In a statement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation raised the memo's "material omissions of fact that fundamentally impact the memo's accuracy." The Justice Department has also wrote directly to Chairman Nunes that "it would be extraordinarily reckless for the Committee to disclose such information publicly" and advised Chairman Nunes of "the risk of harm to national security and ongoing investigations that could come from public release." Chairman Nunes has also refused to answer if he or his staff coordinated with White House staff during the preparation of the memo.

Quite simply, under your leadership, dangerous partisanship among many House Republicans seems to have taken precedent over the oath we all take to protect our nation. Given these concerns, your inaction and Chairman Nunes' actions raise critical questions that need to be answered, including:

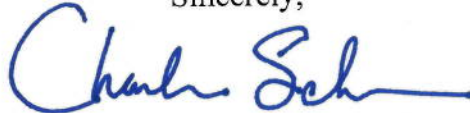
1. What is your response to the grave concerns the FBI and the DOJ expressed in objecting to the release of classified information in the memo?

2. Were you or any members of the House Republican leadership involved in the planning or drafting of the memo? Did any of you consult Chairman Nunes or his staff?
3. Are you aware of any coordination with the White House and Chairman Nunes or his staff regarding the planning or drafting of the memo?
4. Have you or any members of your staff been in contact with the White House regarding this memo?
5. Has Chairman Nunes actually reviewed any of the underlying classified documents that supposedly informed the memo? Have you or your staff reviewed any of the underlying classified documents that supposedly informed the memo? Are you aware of information in the underlying intelligence documents that would call into questions the conclusions of the memo?
6. What assurances do you have that the release of classified information in the memo will protect sources and methods and not harm our national security?
7. Why have House Republicans prevented the concurrent release of a memo drafted by Ranking Member Adam Schiff that sets out the relevant facts and exposes the misleading character of the Chairman Nunes' memo so that the public is not left with an erroneous impression of the dedicated professionals at the FBI and DOJ?
8. As part of its investigation, was the House Ethics Committee ever able to make a determination of whether Chairman Nunes publically disclosed classified information?
9. Did you review the House Ethics Committee's findings or approve Chairman Nunes' continued participation in the Russian investigation? It was previously announced Chairman Nunes was recused from the investigation - was he? What were the bounds of the recusal?
10. Were you aware the draft sent to the White House was different than that voted on by the Committee? Is this consistent with House rules? Are you aware of any instance where a Chairman has unilaterally and substantively changed a document (whether bill, amendment, report, rule, or motion) without notifying the committee? Or without voting on an amended document?
11. What does it say that Chairman Nunes' actions are being actively supported and amplified by ongoing Russian-linked cyber actors on social media with the intent to discredit U.S. democratic institutions?

12. Chairman Nunes is a member of the so-called Gang of 8. Do you believe his actions are consistent with being a member of this small group trusted with our nation's most sensitive defense and intelligence secrets?

The American people have a right to know the answers to these questions. I urge to answer the preceding questions; withdraw support for the release of the HPSCI's memo; remove Chairman Nunes from the HPSCI; and insist on supporting swift passage of legislation protecting Special Counsel Mueller's investigation from political interference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Charles E. Schumer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" and last name "Schumer" clearly legible.

Charles E. Schumer