



August 12, 2020

Senator James Lankford, Chairman  
Senator Christopher Coons, Vice Chairman  
Senate Select Committee on Ethics  
220 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lankford and Vice Chairman Coons:

On August 10, 2020, Democracy 21 sent a letter calling on the Senate Ethics Committee to conduct an immediate investigation into whether Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) and Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA), and the respective committees they chair, are being used by Russian agents to spread disinformation about Vice President Biden to damage the presidential campaign of Vice President Biden and help re-elect President Trump.

We stated in the letter that the Ethics Committee has an obligation to determine as soon as possible -- and certainly before the November 3 election -- if this abuse is occurring.

We further stated:

If Senators Johnson and Grassley are failing to safeguard the committee investigative process, and if Russian agents are therefore to be successful in manipulating a Senate committee to disseminate disinformation to affect U.S. elections, there would be incalculable damage done to the Senate as an institution and more broadly to American democracy.

In support of our request for this investigation, we are enclosing a report published on August 11, 2020 on the website *Just Security* by Ryan Goodman and Asha Rangappa, entitled "How Sen. Ron Johnson's Investigation Became an Enabler of Russian Disinformation: Part I." The report provides detailed background information that supports Democracy 21's request for an Ethics Committee investigation of this matter.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Fred Wertheimer*

Fred Wertheimer  
President

Copy to:  
Members of the Senate Ethics Committee