



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

January 12, 2017

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER ELLEN L. WEINTRAUB  
ON THE FEC'S FAILURE TO PROTECT THE FEDERAL  
ELECTION FINANCING SYSTEM FROM FOREIGN INFLUENCE**

I am deeply disappointed in my Republican colleagues' refusal to take even the smallest steps at our meeting today to protect U.S. elections from foreign influence.

This is a moment when the American people (and our intelligence services) are appropriately alarmed by foreign intervention in our most recent election. Despite this, the Republican Commissioners have prevented the Federal Election Commission from fulfilling one of its most fundamental duties to the American public: to assure the people that money from foreign nationals and foreign governments is not influencing our elections.

I presented my colleagues with several paths forward today, and I thank Chairman Walther and Commissioner Ravel for their willingness to pursue those paths. But my three Republican colleagues could not even bring themselves to look into whether we should bar unlimited political contributions from corporations owned or controlled entirely by foreign governments. Such contributions are so wildly improper that the consensus to ban them should have been effortless. But, instead, all three Republicans banded together to block the FEC from providing the American people even this most basic protection.

Given the mounting evidence that foreign actors are taking increasingly innovative and aggressive action to influence our elections, we are at substantial risk that foreign nationals and foreign governments will similarly take advantage of loopholes in our campaign-finance laws to intercede invisibly in American elections. No member of the Federal Election Commission should be willing to tolerate this risk.

The Department of Defense physically protects our country from foreign attack. The Department of Homeland Security has moved swiftly to help state and local governments protect our voting systems from foreign cyberattacks. The Federal Election Commission is the agency of the United States Government charged with protecting our federal election financing system from foreign attack. But because of the Republican FEC Commissioners' votes today, the FEC has been obstructed in its ability to do so.