



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

November 16, 2017

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER ELLEN L. WEINTRAUB
ON THE FEC'S UNANIMOUS BIPARTISAN DECISION TO
ADDRESS INTERNET POLITICAL ADVERTISING DISCLAIMERS**

Today, the Federal Election Commission unanimously voted, on a bipartisan basis, to advance a rulemaking that seeks to strengthen the disclaimer rules for political advertisements that run on the internet. The FEC's ability to shatter its usual gridlock and move forward shows the gravity of our current situation.

America is enmeshed in the most serious campaign-finance crisis in our history. Watergate, which largely involved misdeeds by domestic actors, pales by comparison. What we are seeing now is a direct, substantial, and continuing attack on our democracy by a hostile foreign adversary. That adversary is spending money to influence our elections, and it is squarely within the jurisdiction of the Federal Election Commission to respond.

It should not have taken this grave a crisis for Washington to act. I have been warning for years that our campaign-finance system is vulnerable to foreign interference. But though my Republican FEC colleagues are late to act on this, today they have acted, and they should be applauded for doing so.

Sustained public pressure has brought everyone to the table. Great credit must go to the thousands upon thousands of American citizens who took the time to speak up in defense of their democracy and comment on this proposed rulemaking. And to the groups that so ably organized the voices of the people. And to those on Capitol Hill who spoke eloquently and firmly of the need for this agency to act.

The Department of Defense is the agency of the United States Government charged with physically protecting our country from foreign attack. The Federal Election Commission is the agency of the United States Government charged with protecting our federal election financing system from foreign attack.

Today, the FEC has taken an important first step to protect America's elections. This is not nearly the end of the fight to protect our democracy from foreign interference. It's not everything we could or should be doing. But it should serve as a signal to everyone in government whose job it is to protect our democracy that failure to act is no longer an option.