

## Press Release of Intelligence Committee



## Statement from Senators Burr, Warner Following Senate Intel Social Media Hearing

Wednesday, August 01, 2018

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr (R-NC) and Vice Chairman Mark Warner (D-VA) convened an open [hearing](#) on foreign influence operations and their use of social media platforms, featuring the testimony of third-party social media experts.

“Today, we learned that foreign campaigns to sow discord and disinformation through social media began well before the 2016 U.S. elections and continue to this day,” said **Senator Burr** following the hearing. “The Kremlin began testing this capability in Russia years before using it against the United States and our allies. Their aim is to use American freedoms, values and rights against our society and to undermine faith in our democratic process. Their mistake is believing our rights are a weakness, when in fact they are our strength. The task before us is preserving those rights, including the right to free speech, while defending them against a hostile foreign power. The Senate Intelligence Committee is uniquely positioned to foster this critical conversation between the intelligence community, Congress and technology leaders, and we will continue pursuing this question over the coming months.”

“Russian information warfare in the 2016 election has helped to reveal the dark underbelly of social media,” said **Senator Warner**. “The same tools that so successfully spread disinformation in 2016 can be used to negatively affect our lives in countless ways. This Committee’s investigation and actions to date have helped pressure the social media companies to admit the problem and begin to take steps to address the threat on their platforms; however, as we heard today, they still have a lot of work to do. I hope the leadership from Google, Facebook, and Twitter will take this seriously and come prepared with ideas for how they will better protect our democratic processes moving forward.”

Today’s expert panel was comprised of Dr. Todd Helmus, Senior Behavioral Scientist at RAND Corporation, Renee DiResta, Director of Research at New Knowledge, Dr. John Kelly, Founder and CEO of Graphika, Laura Rosenberger, Director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy at The German Marshall Fund of the United States and Philip Howard, Director of the Oxford Internet Institute.

You can watch the hearing [here](#).

You can view the exhibits shared by the Committee during the hearing [here](#).

