

# **Pelosi, Schumer, Schiff, Warner Write Letter to ODNI Director Coats, DAG Rosenstein and FBI Director Wray on President Trump's Decision to Release Highly Classified Information Related to Special Counsel's Investigation**

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Sep 19 2018

Washington, D.C. – Today, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), U.S. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), House Intelligence Committee Ranking Member Adam Schiff (D-CA), and Senate Intelligence Committee Vice Chairman Mark Warner (D-VA) sent a letter to Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and FBI Director Christopher Wray expressing serious concerns about the implications of President Trump's decision to declassify and disclose highly classified information related to the Special Counsel's investigation and the involvement of the White House Counsel in the process. The Members also requested an immediate "Gang of Eight" briefing from the agency heads prior to any disclosure.

In the letter, the Members write: "The action [President Trump] has taken, to direct your agencies to selectively disclose classified information that he believes he can manipulate publicly to undermine the legitimacy and credibility of the Special Counsel's investigation, is a brazen abuse of power. Any decision by your offices to share this material with the President or his lawyers will violate longstanding Department of Justice policies, as well as assurances you have provided to us."

Pelosi, Schumer, Schiff and Warner previously wrote to Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein and Director Wray on [June 5](#) and [June 27](#), and to Director Coats on [July 12](#). The full [letter](#) is below:

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September 18, 2018

The Honorable Daniel Coats  
Director  
Office of the Director of National Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20511

The Honorable Rod J. Rosenstein  
Deputy Attorney General of the United States  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Christopher Wray  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Director Coats, Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein, and Director Wray:

We write to express profound alarm at President Donald Trump's decision on September 17, 2018 to intervene in an ongoing law enforcement investigation that may implicate the President himself or those around him. The action he has taken, to direct your agencies to selectively disclose classified information that he believes he can manipulate publicly to undermine the legitimacy and credibility of the Special Counsel's investigation, is a brazen abuse of power. Any decision by your offices to share this material with the President or his lawyers will violate longstanding Department of Justice policies, as well as assurances you have provided to us.

On June 5, 2018, we first wrote to Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein and Director Wray to express deep concern that the President and his legal team sought to abuse the President's power to interfere with the Special Counsel's ongoing investigation and undermine the Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation's lawful and appropriate activities. We underscored that providing the White House and the President's lawyers access to classified information and investigatory material of the utmost sensitivity – including information related to the Special Counsel's investigation that implicates the President's own campaign and associates – would grossly violate our system of checks and balances, fundamental norms, and long-standing, well-founded, and established procedure. Absent an indictment, moreover, the subjects of federal

investigation should not be able to access law enforcement or related national security information for any reason.

On June 27, 2018, we wrote again to memorialize the verbal assurance you provided us that DOJ and FBI would not provide the White House or any of the President's attorneys with access to sensitive information briefed to a small group of designated Members.

On July 12, 2018, we also wrote to Director Coats to express alarm that this information was being made more broadly available within the Congress, in direct contravention of your assurances. In this letter, we noted that during our meetings with all of you on these sensitive matters we discussed at great length the importance of protecting sources and methods and ongoing investigations. As you recall, all of the meetings' attendees agreed that the information discussed was among the most sensitive type of information and should be protected accordingly. Director Coats' July 13, 2018 written response to our letter, moreover, underscored his agreement that protecting sources and methods must be a top concern.

Pursuant to the President's order, announced yesterday evening in a White House press statement, DOJ stated publicly that a declassification review process has been triggered, that DOJ and FBI are "already working with the Director of National Intelligence," and that this review would be "conducted by various agencies within the intelligence community, in conjunction with the White House Counsel [...]." The involvement of the White House Counsel, or any component of the White House, is highly improper and profoundly troubling. President Trump and the White House should not be given access to any sensitive law enforcement or national security information related to an ongoing federal investigation examining conduct by the President, his campaign, or his associates.

In light of the assurances you provided, we request an immediate briefing to the Gang of Eight from you prior to any disclosure of the affected material by your agencies to anyone at the White House. Among other issues of concern, we will need you to clarify in person:

- the exact review process that will be undertaken, including the White House's role in and visibility into this process and the specific White House officials expected to be involved;
- your agencies' proposed redactions and plans to protect investigative equities and sources and methods, including efforts to mitigate harm that may result from these disclosures; and
- how you intend to comply with statutes binding on the President and executive branch officers and employees, including the Privacy Act.

Your agencies' review, and any communication with the White House on the substance of the material, should not proceed further until you have briefed the Gang of Eight in person.

Thank you for your immediate attention and we appreciate meeting as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

NANCY PELOSI  
House Democratic Leader

CHUCK SCHUMER  
Senate Democratic Leader

ADAM SCHIFF  
Ranking Member, House Intelligence  
Committee

MARK WARNER  
Vice Chairman, Senate Intelligence Committee

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