

U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Johnson demands text messages demonstrating alleged bias of FBI employees

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, sent a letter to the Department of Justice Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein Wednesday after allegations surfaced of potential political bias among FBI employees involved in the investigation into former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the ongoing special counsel probe of potential Russian interference in the 2016 election. Chairman Johnson is seeking information about when and how Deputy AG Rosenstein became aware of the text messages between FBI agent Peter Strzok and FBI attorney Lisa Page and is requesting the DOJ to produce the communications between Mr. Strzok and Ms. Page to the committee.

Additionally, Sens. Johnson and Grassley [sent a letter](#) Wednesday to Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz regarding Mr. Strzok and Ms. Page. The Justice Department Inspector General is currently conducting a review of the actions of DOJ and the FBI in advance of the 2016 election.

The letter can be found [here](#) and below:

December 6, 2017

The Honorable Rod J. Rosenstein
Acting Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Acting Attorney General Rosenstein:

I understand the Department of Justice (DOJ) is reviewing thousands of electronic text messages sent and received by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) employees Peter Strzok and Lisa Page for production to Congress. These text messages exchanged between Strzok and Page reportedly “expressed anti-Trump political views.” I write to seek more information about your awareness of these text messages and what actions, if any, you took in response.

Strzok reportedly “helped lead” the FBI’s investigation into former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s handling of classified information through her use of a private email server. During the FBI’s investigation of Secretary Clinton, Strzok participated in interviews of Clinton, Huma Abedin, Cheryl Mills, Heather Samuelson, and Jake Sullivan. In addition, Strzok reportedly edited then-FBI Director James Comey’s statement about Secretary Clinton, changing the description of her actions from “grossly negligent” to “extremely careless.”

After you tapped Robert Mueller as special counsel to examine potential Russian interference in the 2016 election, Strzok reportedly began “play[ing] a major role” in the investigation. Mueller removed Strzok from the investigation after becoming aware of the text message allegations.

To understand your awareness of these text messages and the Department’s actions in response, I respectfully request the following information:

1. When and how did you become aware of the text messages allegedly exchanged between FBI employees Peter Strzok and Lisa Page?
2. When and how did the Special Counsel Robert Mueller notify you of the allegations and the decision to remove Peter Strzok?
3. Did you or the Special Counsel Robert Mueller refer these allegations to the U.S.

Office of Special Counsel to pursue a potential Hatch Act inquiry? If not, why not?

4. Is the Department aware of any similar text messages sent or received by Peter Strzok during any other investigation?

5. Is the Department aware of any similar allegations involving other government officials?

6. Please produce all documents and communications sent or received by Peter Strzok and Lisa Page referring or relating to candidates for the 2016 presidential election or indicative of political bias.

Please respond as soon as possible but no later than 5:00 p.m. on December, 13, 2017, so that the Committees may begin to receive responsive information.

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized by Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate to investigate “the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of all agencies and departments of the Government.” Additionally, S. Res. 62 (115th Congress) authorizes the Committee to examine “the efficiency and economy of all branches and functions of Government with particular references to the operations and management of Federal regulatory policies and programs.”

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Brian Downey of the Committee staff at (202) 224-4751. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ron Johnson
Chairman