



**One Hundred Fourteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515**

October 20, 2016

The Honorable Jeh C. Johnson
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

Throughout this election season, thousands of Department of Homeland Security (“Department”) employees have worked tirelessly to fulfill the agency’s mission. From providing candidate protection to securing the party conventions to furnishing cybersecurity support, the efforts of the men and women of the Department has not gone unnoticed and are greatly appreciated. Furthermore, I would like to thank you for making yourself available to Members of Congress as well as Federal, State, and local officials during this uniquely challenging campaign season.

As you know, antigovernment militia groups grew by one-third in 2015.¹ This election season is occurring in the midst of a period of heightened activity for these extremist groups and those that espouse separatist and nationalist ideologies.² These sentiments have become more mainstream and have been amplified throughout this election season and have fueled incidents of violence.⁴ Members of militia groups and “sovereign citizens” report feeling a sense of legitimization from political rhetoric of Republican Presidential nominee Donald J. Trump’s campaign.⁵ Further, the rhetoric from the Republican Presidential nominee, including statements made as recently as last night that the election is “rigged” and that he will not say whether he will accept the results of the election in the event he loses, further risks fueling these extremist groups.⁶ Militia groups are already mobilizing to recruit new members based on the possibility of a Trump loss⁷ and some

¹ <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2016/01/04/antigovernment-militia-groups-grew-more-one-third-last-year>. Southern Poverty Law Center.

² Extremist militias recruiting in fear of Clinton winning election, activists say. Jason Wilson. The Guardian. 18 October 2016.

⁴ Extremist militias recruiting in fear of Clinton winning election, activists say. Jason Wilson. The Guardian. 18 October 2016.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Trump refuses to say whether he will accept results of Nov. 8 election. Heidi M Przybyla. USA TODAY. 20 October 2016.

⁷ Extremist militias recruiting in fear of Clinton winning election, activists say. Jason Wilson. The Guardian. 18 October 2016.

Trump supporters have begun raising the possibility of a civil war or race war in the event Trump is defeated.⁸ The prospect of violence is not so far fetched as just last week, three members of a Kansas militia group called the Crusaders were charged with plotting a bombing attack,⁹ reportedly planned for the day after election day, in an attempt to “wake people up” and encourage other militia groups across the country to commit similar violent acts of terror.¹⁰ Notably, at least one of the alleged attackers is reported to be a strong Trump supporter and was organizing a “security detail” to protect Trump, who he sees as his hero.¹¹

Mr. Trump’s widely-reported statements on the campaign trail could be taken by some as a call to arms.¹² For instance, Mr. Trump has stated that his opponent, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, should be refused candidate protection by the United States Secret Service so that we can “see what happens to her”.¹³ Mr. Trump has also stated that “Second Amendment” people could possibly “do something” if Secretary Clinton is elected.¹⁴

The rhetoric and propaganda spewed throughout this election season have the ability to empower and embolden individuals to commit acts of terror. Since the Department is responsible for monitoring, reporting, and responding to all threats and hazards impacting the Nation, I urge you to redouble your efforts to engage with Federal, State, and local authorities throughout the remainder of the season and after the election. We must ensure that information is being collected, shared with State and local authorities, and between DHS Components. Situational awareness of these events during the upcoming weeks may prove significant in preventing violence. There is no place for interference with the electoral process and the will of the American people should be respected.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Ranking Member

⁸ Trump supporters are talking about civil war. Could a loss provide the spark? Dana Milbank. Washington Post. 18 October 2016.

⁹ Kansas town rallies around Somalis after threat. John Bacon. USA TODAY. 17 October 2016.

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ Id.

¹² Donald Trump Suggests ‘Second Amendment People’ Could Act Against Hillary Clinton. Nick Corasaniti & Maggie Haberman. New York Times. 9 August 2016.

¹³ Trump: Clinton’s Secret Service should disarm, ‘see what happens to her’ William Cummings. USA TODAY. 18 September 2016.

¹⁴ “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” (The Constitution of the United States, Amendment 2).