

Earlier this year, we had a hearing to examine the global narcotics epidemic—and it is a global one—and discuss our country's counternarcotics strategy. At this first hearing, we were lucky to have the Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, as a witness. He spoke in depth about the scope of this problem and how the State Department is working with our friends and allies abroad to curb the supply of these illicit drugs. We learned a lot from Secretary Pompeo and our other expert witnesses about the complexity of this problem and a need for a whole-of-government approach. It was a strong way to kick off our agenda.

I am looking forward to our second hearing tomorrow, which I will talk about briefly, where we will have experts testifying on the public health effects of the most commonly used illicit drug—marijuana.

A 2018 report found that an estimated 43.5 million Americans used marijuana in the last year. That is the highest percentage since 2002. While marijuana is still a prohibited drug under Federal law, we know that more than half of the States have legalized it in some form, making the rise in usage not all that surprising.

Now, there is no shortage of people who claim that marijuana has endless health benefits and can help patients struggling with everything from epilepsy to anxiety to cancer treatments. This reminds me of some of the advertising we saw from the tobacco industry years ago where they actually claimed public health benefits from smoking tobacco, which we know, as a matter of fact, were false and that tobacco contains nicotine, an addictive drug, and is implicated with cancers of different kinds.

We are hearing a lot of the same happy talk with regard to marijuana and none of the facts that we need to understand about the public health impact of marijuana use. We have heard from folks here in Congress, as well as a number of our Democratic colleagues who are running for President, about their desire to legalize marijuana at the Federal level. But for the number of voices in support of legalization, there are even more unanswered questions about both the short-term and long-term public health effects.

Between 1995 and 2014, THC concentration—that is the active ingredient in marijuana—has increased threefold, making today's version of the drug far stronger and more addictive than ever before. It is true that for some people marijuana can indeed be addictive.

There has been an effort throughout the medical and scientific communities to learn more about the public health effects of marijuana use, but the results of these studies haven't provided any definitive evidence. I must say that among all the discussion at the State and Federal level about marijuana use and its benefits and its hazards, Congress really hasn't had an op-

portunity to soberly and deliberately consider this question, which, hopefully, we will be enlightened about tomorrow, about what the public health benefits are of this trend in our country.

A few years ago, the National Academy of Sciences convened an expert committee to review the health effects of cannabis and cannabis-derived products. The committee members were experts in the fields of marijuana and addiction, as well as pediatric and adolescent health, neurodevelopment, public health, and a range of other areas. Their findings were released in January of 2017, and while I will not read you the entire 468-page document, I will tell you that it raised more questions than it provided answers.

For many of the claimed medicinal uses of marijuana, the committee found that there was insufficient evidence to conclude its effectiveness, which is a pretty basic question. The benefits aren't the only thing clouded in mystery—so are the risks. There is simply a lack of scientific evidence to determine the link between marijuana and various health risks. That is something, I would think, Congress and the American people would want to know before we proceed further down this path.

This is especially concerning when it comes to marijuana's youngest users and the impact, for example, on the adolescent brain as it develops. We don't know enough about how this could impair cognitive function or capacity or increase the risk of mental illness or perhaps serve as a gateway for other drugs that are even more damaging to the health of a young person.

With increasing use and a growing number of States giving the green light for marijuana use, we need better answers. At our hearing tomorrow, I am eager to dive into this subject and learn more from our witnesses to help us fill the knowledge gaps that exist when it comes to this subject.

We are honored to have Surgeon General Jerome Adams among our distinguished witnesses. Surgeon General Adams has raised concerns in the past about the increasing use of recreational marijuana among adolescents and its impact on the development of cognitive functions in a growing and developing brain.

We will also hear from Nora Volkow, who is the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Our second panel includes experts in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, pathology, and epidemiology. So we will get a holistic look at the potential health implications. There is simply too much we don't know about the risks and the claimed benefits of marijuana use, and I am looking forward to hearing from our witnesses tomorrow to get a better sense of the facts as Congress contemplates future legislation.

I appreciate the bipartisan commitment of my colleagues on the com-

mittee, particularly the cochair of the Caucus on International Narcotics Control, Senator FEINSTEIN, so that we can get to the bottom of the risks and benefits associated with marijuana use, and I believe tomorrow it will get us moving in the right direction.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ELECTION SECURITY

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to urge the Senate to take action on election security legislation immediately.

It has been 1,005 days since Russia attacked our elections in 2016, and we have yet to pass any kind of comprehensive election security reform. The next major elections are just 378 days away, so the clock is ticking. We must take action now to secure our elections from foreign threats.

Let's review what happened.

In 2016, Russia invaded our democracy. They didn't use bombs, jets, or tanks. Instead, they spent years planning a cyber mission to undermine the foundation of our democratic system. This mission has been called "sweeping" and "systematic" by many, including Special Counsel Mueller. Our military and intelligence officials from both Democratic and Republican administrations, as well as Special Counsel Mueller, made clear and confirmed over and over again that Russia launched sophisticated and targeted cyber attacks that were authorized by President Putin. This includes former Director Coats, President Trump's former intelligence head; Director Wray, the head of the FBI; and the head of Homeland Security. One by one, officials in the Trump administration have confirmed that this happened.

What exactly did Russia do? They conducted research and reconnaissance against election networks in every single State. We used to think it was just 21 States, but this year, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security under the Trump administration issued a report that confirmed that all 50 States were targeted.

Russia was successful in hacking into databases in Illinois. The Chicago board of elections reported that names, addresses, birth dates, and other sensitive information on thousands of registered voters were exposed. Russia launched cyber attacks against U.S. companies that made the software we use to vote, and they tried to hack into the email of local officials who have elections in their purview.

Investigations are ongoing, but we know Russia hacked into election systems in the Presiding Officer's home

State of Florida. Senator RUBIO has publicly confirmed that Russian hackers not only accessed voting systems in Florida but were in a position to change voter rolls.

These are just the attacks on our election infrastructure.

So we should look at it this way: No. 1, they tried to get into the infrastructure. No. 2, we know they spread propaganda about things. One of the main ways they did that was through social media. This month, the Senate Intelligence Committee released a bipartisan report detailing Russia's widespread social media campaign to spread disinformation and divide our country. Remember, you have hacking into things at the local level and at the State levels, and then you have this disinformation campaign. These are two things with the same intent—to interfere in our democracy.

Think about what I just described. A foreign country attacked our democracy in multiple ways. Our military leaders and law enforcement officials all say that Russia hasn't paid a sufficient price for the attack, so they are now "emboldened," in the words of former Director Dan Coats—a former Republican Senator—in continuing efforts to undermine our political system.

Congress hasn't passed a law—aside from providing election equipment funding with no strings attached—to address the problem. This isn't just wrong; this is legislative malpractice. We have a common set of facts about what happened. Now we need common-sense solutions to make sure it doesn't happen again.

This week, a number of us are coming to the floor to urge the Republican leader to bring election security legislation to a vote. That must happen, but much more must happen as well.

Today, I am going to focus on the need to improve transparency and accountability for online platforms like Facebook and Twitter, but before I turn to that, I would like to take a moment to describe why it is imperative that we update our election infrastructure.

Right now, the majority of States rely on electronic voting systems that are at least 10 years old. In 2020, voters in eight States will cast their ballots on machines with no paper trail, so there will be no reliable record to go back and audit the election results. So if something goes wrong, if they hack in, there will be no paper ballots to back up what actually happened. Problems for that State or that county? Yes. Well, how about problems for our national Presidential election?

By the way, am I telling any secrets? No. Russia knows exactly which States and counties don't have backup paper ballots.

Sixteen States have no statewide audit requirement to confirm the results of the election. These statistics are alarming because experts agree that paper ballots and audits are the

baseline of what we need to secure our election system.

FBI Director Wray recently testified in the Senate. I asked him whether he thinks having things like paper ballots makes sense in the event that Russia—or any other foreign country, for that matter—decides to go at us again. He said, yes, that would be a good thing. Maybe we should think of listening to the head of the FBI and figure out what we can do to make this better. Even the President has expressed his support for paper ballots. But I think we need more than words; I think we need action. We need this body to say to those States: It is time to get your act together now and get those backup paper ballots.

I have introduced multiple pieces of legislation—some of them bipartisan—that would secure our election by requiring paper ballots, mandating post-election audits, and modernizing our election infrastructure. One of those bills, the Secure Election Act, is co-sponsored by my colleague Senator LANKFORD and also by the head of the Intelligence Committee, Senator BURR, and Senator WARNER, the ranking member, as well as Senator GRAHAM, the chair of the Judiciary Committee, and Senator HARRIS is also a cosponsor. In spite of all of these leaders being on this bill, it was blocked last year by Senator MCCONNELL, who made calls, along with the White House general counsel, to Republican Senators asking them not to support the bill. This is wrong.

I am glad that my colleagues Senators WYDEN and DURBIN will be coming to the floor this week urging the Senate to take up the bills, such as the bills I introduced, the SAFE Act and the Election Security Act, that would modernize our election infrastructure.

Remember, Russia didn't just try to hack into our elections system; they also launched an extended and sophisticated information war designed to divide our country and destroy America's confidence in our political system. Russia also knew that our social media platforms would be easily exploited for that purpose.

I am going to ask unanimous consent to pass this bill, which is a bipartisan bill that I lead along with Senator GRAHAM, the Republican chair of the Judiciary Committee, and that is also cosponsored by Senator WARNER, the ranking leader on the Intelligence Committee.

Why are we doing this bill about the social media platforms? Well, the place where Russia was most successful in undermining our democracy was right there in front of you on your Facebook page. We know that some of the brightest minds in our country built remarkable platforms where people can share information, like Twitter, Google, and Facebook. Unfortunately, these platforms failed to build adequate protections against the bad guys, kind of like building a bank but not putting any locks on the doors, and our democracy is worse because of it.

Our social media platforms are not well regulated. In fact, they are hardly regulated at all and are ripe for exploitation. Countries like Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China are taking advantage of that as we speak.

The Senate Intelligence Committee, led by Chairman BURR and Vice Chairman WARNER, recently released its second report on Russian interference in the 2016 election. This wasn't a partisan report. No one could call it that at all.

The first report details attacks and threats to election infrastructure. This second report details the sophisticated disinformation campaign Russia used to pit Americans against each other, and the committee found that Russia's targeting of the 2016 U.S. Presidential election was "part of a broader, sophisticated, and ongoing information warfare campaign designed to sow discord in American politics and society." The report notes that Russia conducted "a vastly more complex and strategic assault on the United States than was initially understood."

What did they do? They hired trolls. They hired buildings full of people to go online and pretend to be Americans and then submit things and buy things and buy ads that ended up on your Facebook pages and your Twitter feed. Russia specifically focused on hot-button issues and used falsified stories and memes to foster distrust of our democratic institutions. So maybe they would target a conservative person and put up a bunch of things that would make that person mad, but they were fake or maybe they would target a liberal person, and they would put up a bunch of ads about rallies and about things like that which were actually fake.

They targeted African-Americans more than any other group through individual posts, location targeting, Facebook pages, Instagram accounts, and Twitter. Their internet research agency focused on stoking divisions around race.

One of my best examples is an ad that they bought in rubles. Facebook let them buy it in rubles. It was an ad that we didn't even see until months after the election. It had an innocent woman's face on it. I know because she called our office later when it came out in Judiciary. She was just a woman. They found her face—an African-American woman—and put it on the ad. The ad reads: Why wait in line on election day? You can text your vote for Hillary Clinton. They gave the text number. That is a lie. It is more than a lie. It is a crime. They are trying to suppress people's votes and make them not go vote, and instead, text to a fake number. That is a crime. People have gone to jail for simply jamming the lines on election day. That is what this is. It is a high-tech version of a crime. No one was prosecuted because we didn't even know the ad existed that was targeting African-American Facebook pages in

swing States until way after the election. They could do the same thing on the conservative side of the aisle.

That is why I am simply asking for some solution, because one time it is going to be one side, and the next time it will be the other. Why would the people in this Chamber let this go on? Why would we do that? We have sworn and taken an oath—an obligation—to stand up for our country. That is what this is about.

It continues. Intelligence officials are once again sounding the alarm that adversaries are using social media to undermine the upcoming elections. Just yesterday, Facebook announced that it removed a network of Russian-backed accounts posing as locals weighing in on political issues in swing States. It never ends. Russia has a playbook, and they are using it to attack us. We have to stop them. How do we do that? Well, I have a very good solution. It is not the only solution. There are a lot of other bills we can do too.

But this is called the Honest Ads Act, which I am leading with Senator GRAHAM. I want to thank Senator WARNER for all the work he did on this bill as well. The goal is simple: Bring our laws into the 21st century to ensure that voters know who is paying to influence our political system. Right now, the political ads that are sold on TV, radio, and newspapers are disclosed so that the public knows what they are. They are actually kept in an archive so campaigns and reporters can go over and see what they are. They can actually figure out what this ad is and why somebody was putting this ad against me. I believe in the competitiveness of our election system, and if you disclose things, then, you are going to get more information about what is wrong with those things.

The ads also have to say who paid for them. That is why you see those little disclaimers at the bottom or you see elected officials or their challengers saying who paid for this ad: My name is this; I paid for this ad. That is what that is.

Guess what. If those things go on radio, TV, or newspaper, you have to follow all those rules. If they end up on Facebook or Twitter or another large social media platform, there are no rules in play. Sure, a few of those companies right now are voluntarily disclosing it, but there are no actual rules in place about how it should be done.

When I asked them why they wouldn't favor the bill, some of them have since changed their minds and do favor it, but when I asked at the beginning, they said they couldn't figure out what an issue of Federal legislative importance is. That is what the standard is. It is about candidate ads and the issue ads that you see on TV that bug you all the time. When asked about ads and why they couldn't do it, they said they couldn't figure out what that was. I said: Really? My radio station in Deep River Falls, MN, can figure it out.

These are some of the biggest companies in the world. Please tell me you don't have the expertise to figure that out.

That is why it is important that we pass this bill. It is about issue ads, and it is also about candidate ads. All it does is this. As we look at where the money is going to go in advertising, in the last 2016 Presidential election, \$1.4 billion was spent online on these kinds of ads. It is supposed to go to \$3 billion or \$4 billion in 2020, and there are no rules of the road. It is not only unfair, but it is criminal if this continues.

It is so easy to do. This is something we could fix right away. This is why John McCain led this bill with me. When we introduced it, he said:

I have long fought to increase transparency and end the corrupting influence of special interests in political campaigns, and I am confident the Honest Ads Act will modernize existing law to safeguard the integrity of our election system.

This Congress, as I mentioned, Senator GRAHAM took his place. It is time to get this done. There are many other bills that I will come back and discuss in the next few weeks that would help on foreign influence in our elections, but, today, I want to focus on this one because election security is national security, and it is well past time that we take action. The American people should expect nothing less from us. We should be able to get this done.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1356

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be discharged from further consideration of S. 1356 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senate majority whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, there are Members who object to this. They can't be here to object on their own behalf. I object on their behalf.

I say to the Senator from Minnesota that, like her, I also want to do everything we can to ensure that our elections are fair and transparent in this country. I think there are a number of solutions, as she pointed out, that are out there. I think there is a lot of good work that is being done and can be done, hopefully, on a bipartisan basis.

As a former chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, I have worked with the Senator from Minnesota on a number of issues where we have been able to fashion solutions that are bipartisan in nature. I suspect work on this will continue.

As I mentioned, we have a couple of Members on our side who do have objections to the bill in its current form or the process of trying to do it this way. I do think there is a way in which we can come together and work toward solutions that will help do what I think

all of us have as an objective, and that is to keep our election process in this country fair and transparent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I appreciate the words from my colleague from South Dakota. I point out that the act is a bipartisan bill, with the other cosponsor being the Republican chair of the Judiciary Committee, and I think we should be focused on election security instead of protecting these social media companies. I think we should be protecting the American people.

We need to be a united front. I appreciate his words, and I look forward to working with him to get this bill to the floor.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ELECTION SECURITY ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Mueller report made crystal clear that the Russian Government interfered in the Presidential election of the United States of America in the year 2016. They called it a “sweeping and systematic fashion” of interference.

I know this better than some because, in my home State of Illinois, the Russian intelligence service literally hacked into our State Board of Elections' voter file and gained access to a database containing information on millions of voters in my State. Then the Russians extracted the data on thousands of those voters. They also targeted other State election authorities, county governments, and election technology vendors.

Federal law enforcement and intelligence officers have repeatedly warned us that these interference efforts will continue into the election of 2020. In fact, former KGB Agent Vladimir Putin recently mocked us and openly joked that Russia would definitely interfere again in the U.S. elections. Congress cannot sit back and ignore this threat. We must take action to help State and local election officials prepare for the 2020 elections and those beyond.

I am pleased that the leader, MITCH McCONNELL, of Kentucky, finally relented on his opposition to any further funding to assist State and local election officials with election security efforts. Yet the \$250 million included in the fiscal year 2020 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill is clearly inadequate. We need to boldly invest in our election security. It is literally the cornerstone of our democracy, and we need to provide sustained funding to State and local election officials so they may respond