Rep. Tulsi Gabbard Introduces Securing America's Elections Act to Ensure Integrity of 2018 Elections. FINALLY- A RUSSIA-PROOF ELECTION PLAN
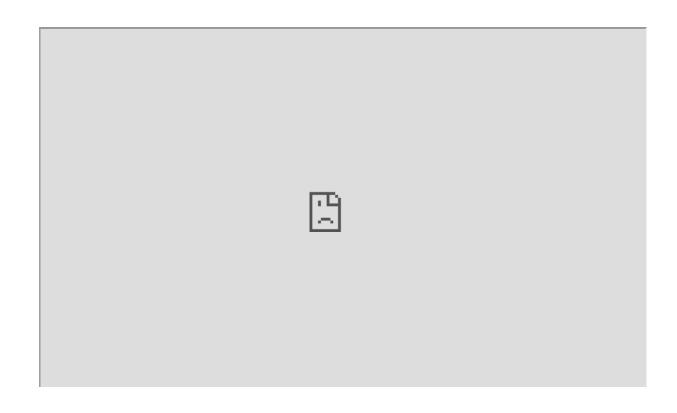
Washington, DC—Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (HI-02) today introduced legislation to protect the country's election infrastructure from cyber-hackers by requiring the use of voter-verified paper ballots or a paper ballot backup in federal elections. It authorizes emergency funding to empower every state to use voter-verified paper ballots that produce an auditable paper trail, beginning with the 2018 elections. It also addresses the need to ensure safe and secure software is utilized in voting machines on Election Day.

The Securing America's Elections Act expands on progress made in Hawaiʻi and 14 other states that currently produce voter-verified paper ballots to provide the American people with a secure, reliable, and independent record of their votes.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, 21 U.S. states' electoral systems faced attempted hacking in the 2016 election. Shortly after, at the world's longest-running and largest hacking conference,

DEFCON revealed startling cyber vulnerabilities in US election infrastructure: hackers easily breached every piece of election equipment, some in mere minutes. Participants with limited prior hacking knowledge and few tools and resources were able to undermine and manipulate the privacy, integrity, and accessibility of election equipment – most of which is still widely used in state and local elections today. Following these revelations from DEFCON, states like Virginia took action and switched to a voter-verified paper ballot system in their 2017 election to ensure voter integrity and confidence in their elections infrastructure. They produced the highest voter turnout in two decades. However, serious vulnerabilities remain in most states.

Video of Rep. Tulsi Gabbard's Speech on the House Floor is Available Here

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard questioned top homeland security, cybersecurity, and Virginia elections officers on the integrity of the nation's voting machines.

Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard said:

"The Department of Homeland Security reported that 21 state electoral systems were targeted in the 2016 election, revealing serious vulnerabilities and threatening the integrity of our elections. Soon after, at DEFCON, the world's largest hacking conference, hackers breached every piece of election equipment, some within mere minutes. We cannot ignore these vulnerabilities that erode voter confidence and expose our election's infrastructure to manipulation by adversaries. With 2018 elections quickly approaching, Congress must act now and work with states to safeguard our electoral infrastructure and ensure that each and every American vote is counted faithfully and accurately.

"The Securing America's Elections Act will ensure our elections are hack-proof by providing the American people with an auditable, reliable, paper record of their votes in time for the 2018 elections. It will also begin to address the effectiveness and security of our voting machine software. This is critical to renew our citizens' faith in the electoral process."

Brian Fox, Board Member, National Association of Voting Officials, said, "We are pleased to see Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard leading

the country toward safe and secure election systems. The open source software language in her legislation, in addition to the necessary paper ballot component, will give appropriate security direction to the nation's election officials. Congresswoman Gabbard is appreciated as a pioneer advocating the science of protecting our democracy."

Background:

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard's Securing America's Elections Act would ensure an auditable and secure record of every American's vote by:

- Requiring the use of voter-verified paper ballots or a paper ballot backup in federal elections that if needed, can be audited and counted by hand, optical scanner, or similar device.

- Allowing voters to verify their ballot and correct any errors before their permanent paper ballot is preserved for official records.

- Establishing voter-verified paper ballots as the correct record of the total votes cast, in the event of any inconsistencies or irregularities between electronic and paper vote tallies.

- Authorizing emergency funding for states to meet the costs of ensuring paper ballots/paper ballot backups by the 2018 federal elections.

- Studying the effectiveness and security of using open-source electronic voting software, which could potentially provide additional

security and lower costs of upgrading our nation's election infrastructure.

In an Oversight and Government Reform Hearing, Edgardo Cortés, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Elections, confirmed the lack of public confidence and vulnerabilities of existing voting systems in the state of Virginia and across the country. Following these revelations of vulnerable election equipment at DEFCON, Virginia switched to a voter-verified paper ballot system before the 2017 election. The Virginia Department of Elections didn't receive a single complaint questioning the integrity of the 2017 election and produced the highest voter turnout in two decades.

Asked by Rep. Tulsi Gabbard about the decision to transition to a voter-verified paper ballot election system, Edgardo Cortés, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Elections said, "When it came down to the final decision about what to do with the equipment, our biggest consideration was if there was some issue reported on Election Day, would we have the confidence to go out and tell our voters that the results from the machines were accurate and that we could confirm that. I think that ultimately, we determined, in consultation with our wonderful staff at the state IT agency and their assessment, that we wouldn't be in a position to do that with the equipment that we were using. Without that independent verification, that paper ballot, there would be no way to do that. I think that ultimately was the moment that

decertification moved forward, and we decided to have paper ballots state-wide for this past November."

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