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One Hundred Eighteenth
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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January 4, 2024

Mr. Gary Thompson
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Mr. J.C. Boggs
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Ms. Karyn Greenfield
Member
D.C. Board of Elections
1015 Half Street, S.E.
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Dear Board Members:

As Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on House Administration, which has broad oversight of our nation's federal elections,¹ I write today to express my deep concerns over the breach of the D.C. Board of Elections ("Board") voter database on October 5, 2023, which included the exfiltration of a copy of the voter registration roll and the subsequent sale by malicious actors of sensitive voter identification information.²

This breach is especially troubling because it appears that the Board did not realize its full extent until two weeks later. For Americans to have confidence in our elections, they must have reason to believe that voter databases and voter information are safe, secure, and not susceptible to malicious access or manipulation.

Unfortunately, this hack raises the possibility that malicious actors could replace voters' information replaced with false information, including improper removal of voters from the rolls, improper additions of ineligible individuals or false names to the rolls, or improper or false markings about a voter's ballot return status, which might allow bad actors to prevent certain voters from casting ballots, allow other voters to cast multiple ballots, or permit ineligible people or false names to cast ballots.

Finally, even if none of these worst-case scenarios is realized, this data breach and other recent breaches in Washington might very well create a bad perception among voters that elections in the District of Columbia are not be secure, reducing both voters' confidence in the election system and their likelihood of participation.

The Committee has continued its strong focus on cybersecurity this Congress, including oversight of a recent cyber attack on another D.C. government-affiliated entity earlier this year that resulted in the theft of the sensitive personal identification information of Members of Congress, staff, and family members.³ In April, the Committee held a joint hearing with the Committee on Oversight and Accountability with respect to this breach of D.C.

¹ Clause 1(k)(12) of Rule X of the United States House of Representatives,
<https://rules.house.gov/sites/republicans.rules118.house.gov/files/documents/Rules%20and%20Resources/118-House-Rules-Clerk.pdf>.

² Sergiu Gatlan, *D.C. Board of Elections: Hackers may have breached entire voter roll*, Bleeping Computer (Oct. 23, 2023),
<https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/dc-board-of-elections-hackers-may-have-breached-entire-voter-roll/>.

³ Alexander Culafi, *DC Health Link Confirms Breach, but Questions Remain* | TechTarget, TECHTARGET (Mar. 13, 2023),
<https://www.techtarget.com/searchsecurity/news/365532552/DC-Health-Link-confirms-breach-but-questions-remain>.

Health Exchange systems.⁴ As such, this breach of the Board's records makes this leak at least the second time this year⁵ that D.C. government systems were breached by malicious actors.⁶ This is unacceptable.

In response to these facts, please answer the following questions:

1. What steps has the Board taken to investigate the cause of the breach?
2. Did the Board conduct a review of its information technology infrastructure when it learned about the D.C. Health Exchange breach?
 - a. If not, why not?
3. How and when did the Board notify voters affected by the breach?
4. What steps is the Board and/or the D.C. Attorney General taking to investigate whether this information was purchased on the dark web?
5. Has the Board conducted a review of its information technology infrastructure following this breach?
6. What new policies, procedures, and technological improvements will be implemented to ensure this does not happen again?
7. What is the Board's strategy to ensure voters' confidence in elections held within the District of Columbia does not suffer?
8. Has the Board confirmed that there were no changes made to voter information in its voter database?
 - a. If not, what steps does the Board plan to take to look into this matter?
9. Given that this hack occurred on October 5, 2023, and DataNet Systems identified individuals affected on November 20, 2023,⁷ why did the Board and DataNet Systems wait until December 22, 2023 to notify affected voters and the public?⁸

⁴ Data Breach at the D.C. Health Exchange: Joint Hearing before the Committee on House Administration and Committee on Oversight and Accountability, 118th Cong. (2023), <https://cha.house.gov/hearings?ID=84FB80EB-91D9-4B18-A92E-C17AE584B058>.

⁵ Within the jurisdiction of the Committee on House Administration. See *supra*, note 1.

⁶ C Mandler, *Following a "Significant" Breach, DC Health Link User Data Is Being Sold on the Dark Web*, CBS News (Mar. 08, 2023), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/data-breach-washington-dc-health-link-user-data-sold-dark-web-congress/>.

⁷ Press Release, DataNet Systems, Information about a data security incident (December 22, 2023), <https://www.dnscorp.com/data-breach>.

⁸ Press Release, District of Columbia Board of Elections, DCBOE Shares Update on Email Outreach to Voters about October 2023 Data Breach (December 27, 2023), https://dcboe.org/getmedia/1ccfcef2-398a-4363-b4d0-9d324ea7c934/DCBOE-Data-Breach-Email-Update_122723_FINAL.

Mr. Thompson, Mr. Boggs, and Ms. Greenfield
January 4, 2023
Page 3 of 3

Please direct all correspondence and any questions you may have by January 18, 2024, to Caleb Hays, General Counsel and Deputy Staff Director, at Caleb.Hays@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Bryan Steil
Chairman
Committee on House Administration



Laurel M. Lee
Chair, Subcommittee on Elections
Committee on House Administration

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Accountability
The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member, House Committee on Oversight and Accountability
The Honorable Mark Green, M.D., Chairman, House Committee on Homeland Security
The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security

BGS/ad