

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 9, 2018

The Honorable John F. Kelly  
Chief of Staff  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Donald F. McGahn II  
White House Counsel  
Office of the White House Counsel  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

General Kelly and Mr. McGahn,

Based on recent news reports, Rob Porter has officially left his position as White House Staff Secretary following public disclosure of allegations he physically and verbally abused his two former wives and the existence of a temporary protective order.<sup>1</sup> Following the publication of a news story on February 5 about the allegations, General Kelly issued a statement on February 6 describing Mr. Porter as “a man of true integrity and honor and I can’t say enough good things about him. He is a friend, a confidante, and a trusted professional. I am proud to serve alongside him.”<sup>2</sup> White House spokesperson Sarah Sanders said that you and President Trump had “full confidence” in Mr. Porter following the allegations.<sup>3</sup> After publication of a photograph on February 7 depicting Porter’s first wife with a black eye, however, General Kelly professed to be “shocked by the new allegations.”<sup>4</sup>

We understand there are also serious questions regarding when the White House first learned of these allegations and Mr. Porter’s security clearance status and access to classified

---

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Restuccia and Eliana Johnson, *In New Statement, Kelly Says He Was ‘Shocked’ by Porter allegations and Condemns Abuse*, POLITICO, February 7, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/07/john-kelly-porter-allegations-abuse-398168>

<sup>2</sup> Sebastian Murdock, *John Kelly Calls Aide Facing Abuse Allegations a ‘Man of True Integrity,’* Huffington Post, February 7, 2018, [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/john-kelly-rob-porter-abuse-allegations\\_us\\_5a7b691ae4b0c6726e0edd46](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/john-kelly-rob-porter-abuse-allegations_us_5a7b691ae4b0c6726e0edd46)

<sup>3</sup> *White House Senior Aide to Resign Following Abuse Charges*, Reuters, February 7, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-porter/white-house-senior-aide-to-resign-following-abuse-charges-idUSKBN1FR2WZ>

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Restuccia and Eliana Johnson, *In New Statement, Kelly Says He Was ‘Shocked’ by Porter allegations and Condemns Abuse*, POLITICO, February 7, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/07/john-kelly-porter-allegations-abuse-398168>

information. It has been reported that Mr. McGahn knew a year ago that Mr. Porter's ex-wives were prepared to make these accusations about him, yet allowed Mr. Porter to serve without investigating them.<sup>5</sup> In addition, press reports suggest that there are "multiple" White House employees in addition to Porter who may not be receiving permanent security clearances and that the White House may have been aware of this.<sup>6</sup> Like all Americans, we find these allegations deeply troubling.

We recognize that you and the President have tremendous discretion in deciding whom to hire to work in the White House. However, we are troubled by published accounts suggesting that you decided to hire Mr. Porter despite the fact he could not get a security clearance and that you were aware of the specific domestic violence allegations made against him. As Senators, including members of the Senate Homeland Security & Government Affairs Committee, the Intelligence Committee, the Armed Services Committee, and the Judiciary Committee, we would like answers to the following questions:

- When were you, Reince Preibus, and other officials first made aware of any aspect of the allegations of domestic abuse and the temporary protective order against Mr. Porter?
- Did Mr. Porter disclose these domestic abuse allegations or the temporary protective order taken against him as part of his application for a security clearance (SF-86, Questionnaire for National Security Position) or an application for employment in the White House?
- As part of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) background investigation that accompanies an application for a security clearance, when did the FBI make you, Reince Preibus, and other officials aware of these domestic abuse allegations and the temporary protective order?
- Was Mr. Porter denied a security clearance?
- Did Mr. Porter ever receive classified material while holding an interim security clearance?
- How many individuals in the White House are working with interim security clearances? Please identify these individuals, how long they have been permitted to work at the White House under this interim status, and how long you plan to allow them to continue doing so.

---

<sup>5</sup> Josh Dawsey and Beth Reinhard, *Top White House Officials Knew of Abuse Allegations Against Top Aide for Months*, THE WASHINGTON POST, February 8, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/top-white-house-officials-knew-of-abuse-allegations-against-top-aide-for-months/2018/02/08/2faddcf2-0ce9-11e8-95a5-c396801049ef\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.2c458efa8a55](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/top-white-house-officials-knew-of-abuse-allegations-against-top-aide-for-months/2018/02/08/2faddcf2-0ce9-11e8-95a5-c396801049ef_story.html?utm_term=.2c458efa8a55)

<sup>6</sup> Eliana Johnson, *Kelly Knew Before Abuse Reports that Porter would be Denied Security Clearance*, POLITICO, February 8, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/08/john-kelly-rob-porter-security-clearance-400987> (White House chief of staff John Kelly "was told several weeks ago that the FBI would deny full security clearances to multiple White House aides who had been working in the West Wing on interim security clearances.")



- Other than Porter, who are the “multiple aides” that have been told they aren’t getting a security clearance?<sup>7</sup> For each identified employee, are they in roles that deal with classified information, and if so, why are they still in the White House?

We would like answers to these questions by March 1, 2018.

Sincerely,



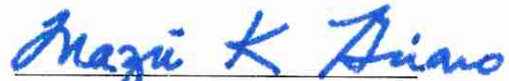
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



KAMALA D. HARRIS  
United States Senate



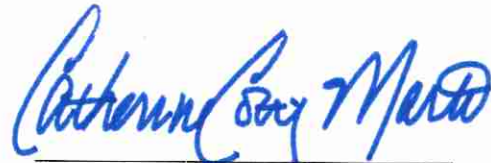
TAMMY DUCKWORTH  
United States Senate



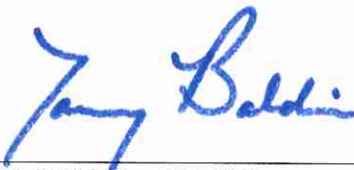
MAZIE K. HIRONO  
United States Senate



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND  
United States Senate



CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO  
United States Senate



TAMMY BALDWIN  
United States Senate



RON WYDEN  
United States Senate

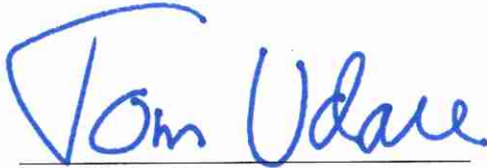
<sup>7</sup> Eliana Johnson, *Kelly Knew Before Abuse Reports that Porter would be Denied Security Clearance*, POLITICO, February 8, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/08/john-kelly-rob-porter-security-clearance-400987> (White House chief of staff John Kelly “was told several weeks ago that the FBI would deny full security clearances to multiple White House aides who had been working in the West Wing on interim security clearances.”)



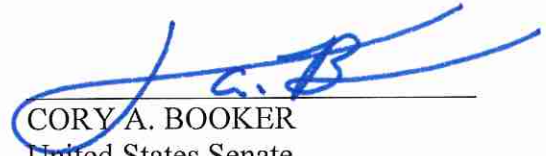
BERNARD SANDERS  
United States Senate



ELIZABETH WARREN  
United States Senate



TOM UDALL  
United States Senate



CORY A. BOOKER  
United States Senate