



UNITED STATES SENATE

November 19, 2024

To Director Clapper, Director Hayden, Secretary Panetta, and others:

On October 14, 2020, the *New York Post* published a report detailing the contents of a laptop that belonged to President Joe Biden's son, Hunter Biden.¹ The Post report detailed that the laptop included e-mails showing how Hunter Biden used the position and influence of his father, now-President Joe Biden, for personal gain with the apparent awareness of President Biden.² This news raised doubts about then-candidate Joe Biden's prior denials that he was involved with Hunter Biden's business dealings in Ukraine.³

Five days later, on October 19, 2020, you, the "51 former intelligence officials," signed on to a public statement that detailed that the Hunter Biden laptop story had "all the classic earmarks of a Russian information operation," in an attempt to discredit the *New York Post's* reporting.⁴ You deduced this using your "experience" and the notion that you know "Russian behavior intimately." Your stance on the legitimacy of the laptop caused a considerable impact less than a month out from the 2020 Presidential Election. Your letter was relied upon by X, formally known as Twitter, as a pretext to censor the story⁵ and was referenced by Vice President Joe Biden during the second presidential debate held on October 22, 2020 in an effort to dismiss the story.⁶

At the time, it was reported that John Paul Mac Isaac, a computer repair shop owner in Wilmington, Delaware, received a damaged laptop from Hunter Biden in April 2019 and was asked to recover the data located on the hard drive.⁷ Due to the nature of the material on the laptop, Mr. Isaac contacted the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) and met with F.B.I. agents in late 2019.⁸ F.B.I. agents returned two weeks after their conversation with Mr. Isaac with a grand jury subpoena allowing them to seize the laptop and the accompanying external hard drive.⁹ No official statement of an open investigation into the laptop was ever made to the public by the F.B.I. prior to the 2020 Presidential Election.

¹ Morris, Emma Jo and Fonrouge, Gabrielle, *Smoking-gun email reveals how Hunter Biden introduced Ukrainian businessman to VP dad*, NEW YORK POST, October 14, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/10/14/email-reveals-how-hunter-biden-introduced-ukrainian-biz-man-to-dad/>.

² *Id.*

³ Givas, Nick, *Joe Biden again denies speaking to son about Ukraine business dealings*, FOX NEWS, October 10, 2019, <https://www.foxnews.com/media/joe-biden-ukraine-hunter-denial>.

⁴ *Public Statement on the Hunter Biden Emails*, October 19, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000175-4393-d7aa-af77-579f9b330000>.

⁵ Thiessen, Marc, *The suppression of Hunter Biden's laptop is a huge scandal*, THE WASHINGTON POST, December 9, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/12/09/hunter-biden-laptop-suppression-twitter-fbi-social-media/>.

⁶ *October 22, 2020 Debate Transcript*, COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES, <https://www.debates.org/voter-education/debate-transcripts/october-22-2020-debate-transcript/>.

⁷ Goldman, Adam, *What We Know and Don't About Hunter Biden and a Laptop*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, September 13, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/22/us/politics/hunter-biden-laptop.html>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

More than four years later, we know that both the laptop and the information it contained belonged to Hunter Biden. In fact, in June 2024, the Department of Justice Special Counsel David Weiss relied upon the laptop as evidence as part of a criminal case against Hunter Biden.¹⁰ Federal prosecutors introduced the laptop into evidence with testimony from an F.B.I. agent involved in authenticating and investigating the laptop.¹¹

In your letter, you claimed that the laptop story was “Russia trying to influence how Americans vote.” I ask you to respond publicly to one simple question: if you knew then what you know now about the laptop, would you still have signed the October 19, 2020 letter?

Sincerely,



Lindsey O. Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary

¹⁰ Bruggeman, Lucien, “Prosecutors introduce infamous laptop as evidence”, ABC NEWS, June 4, 2024, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/live-updates/hunter-biden-gun-trial/prosecutors-introduce-infamous-laptop-as-evidence-110826798?id=110723981>.

¹¹ *Id.*