

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 23, 2020

Mr. Christopher Wray  
Director  
**Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Director Wray,

We write to request an immediate investigation into the origins of disinformation campaigns and deceptive claims targeting Latino voters in South Florida.

As we rapidly approach election day, Latino circles in South Florida have witnessed a surge in posts containing false or misleading information on social media.<sup>1</sup> These posts are often politically charged and contain far-right conspiracy theories relating to “QAnon” or other fringe ideologies designed to manipulate Latino voters.<sup>2</sup> Constituents in South Florida frequently comment that these misleading posts are especially prominent on Facebook and its owned entities, including WhatsApp and Instagram, as well as other outlets, like Twitter.

While disinformation on social media is, itself, problematic, even more concerning is the fact that disinformation originating on social media is now shaping and pervading more traditional media outlets in South Florida.<sup>3</sup> On August 22, 2020, for example, South Florida station Radio Caracol played 16 minutes of programming containing an anti-Black and anti-Semitic rant that claimed a victory by candidate Joe Biden would mean that the U.S. would fall into a dictatorship led by “Jews and Blacks.”<sup>4</sup> The program further claimed that candidate Biden is leading a political revolution “directed by racial minorities, atheists and anti-Christians” and supports killing newborn babies.<sup>5</sup> In another instance, El Nuevo Herald, the Spanish-language sister publication of the Miami Herald, included an insert on September 11 that claimed American Jews support “thieves and arsonists” and equated Black Lives Matter protesters with Nazis.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Sabrina Rodriguez and Marc Caputo, ‘*This is f---ing crazy*’: Florida Latinos swamped by wild conspiracy theories, POLITICO (Sept. 14, 2020), <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/09/14/florida-latinos-disinformation-413923>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*; see also Jaelyn Peiser, *Miami Herald editor blames ‘internal failures’ after publishing an anti-Semitic, racist insert*, WASH. POST (Sept. 18, 2020), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/09/16/miami-herald-libre-racist-anti-semitic/>.

<sup>4</sup> Rodriguez, *supra*.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Peiser, *supra*.

It is common knowledge that the Russian government interfered in our 2016 elections through hacking and social media influence campaigns.<sup>7</sup> Florida, in particular, was a target of Russian interference in 2016 where the election systems of two state counties were breached.<sup>8</sup> On Facebook and other social media sites, Russian actors organized pro-Trump rallies in South Florida in an attempt to build support for then-candidate Trump and influence voters against candidate Clinton.<sup>9</sup> But these attacks are not relegated to 2016 – the FBI has recognized, as has the intelligence community at-large, that malign Russian actors are working to interfere with our 2020 elections, along with other hostile foreign nations.<sup>10</sup>

The Latino voting population continues to grow and currently represents approximately 10% of the eligible vote nationally, and nearly 20% of the eligible voters in Florida.<sup>11</sup> As the FBI works to secure our elections, we urge you to keep the Latino community in mind and consider efforts of foreign actors to spread disinformation and sow doubt in our election systems among Latinos, especially in South Florida. Moreover, we request an immediate investigation into the origin of the surge of disinformation on social media among Latino communities and their ties to coordinated efforts from foreign actors. Finally, we request a briefing regarding these troubling patterns, the FBI’s response to preventing further disinformation prior to election, and their connection to any foreign interference campaign.

Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, please provide your responses to this letter and availability to conduct a briefing by **October 7, 2020**. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



---

**Debbie Mucarsel-Powell**  
Member of Congress



---

**Joaquin Castro**  
Member of Congress

---

<sup>7</sup> Report On Russian Active Measures, Campaigns, And Interference In The 2016 U.S. Election, Vol. 5: Counterintelligence Threats and Vulnerabilities, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, p. v; Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election, Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III (Mar. 2019), Vol. I, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at Vol. I, p. 51; see also Kevin Conlon, et al., *Florida governor says two counties in the state were hacked in 2016*, CNN (May 14, 2019), <https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/14/politics/florida-two-counties-hacked/index.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference, Vol. I, p. 31, 34-35.

<sup>10</sup> *Worldwide Threats the Homeland, Hearing Before the H. Comm. On Homeland Security*, 116th Cong. (Sept. 17, 2020) (testimony of Christopher Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation) (“We certainly have seen very active – very active – efforts by the Russians to influence our election in 2020, through what I would call more the malign influence side of things – social media, use of proxies, state media, online journals, etc. – in an effort to both sow divisiveness and discord, and, I think the intelligence community has assessed this publicly, to primarily to denigrate Vice President Biden in what the Russians see as a kind of an anti-Russian establishment.”).

<sup>11</sup> *NALEO Educational Fund Projects At Least 14.6 Million Latinos Will Cast Ballots This November*, NALEO Educational Fund (Aug. 5, 2020), [https://naleo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/8\\_5\\_2020\\_-\\_NEF\\_Release\\_-\\_National\\_and\\_State\\_Projections\\_and\\_Latino\\_Voters\\_at\\_Risk\\_-\\_Final.pdf](https://naleo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/8_5_2020_-_NEF_Release_-_National_and_State_Projections_and_Latino_Voters_at_Risk_-_Final.pdf).