

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 2, 2026

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20528

Nicholas M. Andersen
Acting Director
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security
Agency
1110 N. Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 20598

Dear Secretary Mullin and Acting Director Andersen:

With the midterm elections occurring in two months, we write with grave concern that time is running out for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to act to assist state and local election officials in protecting our elections from cyber and mis- and disinformation threats.

Following the removal of hundreds of CISA personnel and attempts by the Trump Administration to slash the agency's budget, CISA is now only just beginning to take steps to reestablish working relationships with election officials and rehire critical staff ahead of the 2026 midterms. This is particularly disturbing at a time when our nation is at war with the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has reportedly engaged in sophisticated cybersecurity attacks, including on water infrastructure in the United States and nuclear energy facilities in the United Kingdom.¹ Russia, China, and other foreign and non-state actors also have significant cyber and online election interference capabilities, which are likely increasing with advances in artificial intelligence technology.²

While there is a long way to go to repair trust with election officials and find qualified candidates to fill these important roles – work that will not be accomplished before November 3, 2026 – we write to remind you that Congress has directed DHS and CISA to immediately support state and local election officials through the restoration of federal funds to the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC). We urge you to follow that direction immediately and explain the delay as to why federal funds have not yet been provided in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026.

¹ Jenna McLaughlin, *Are hacks of U.S. water facilities a new front in the Iran war?*, NPR (Aug. 12, 2026), <https://www.npr.org/2026/08/12/nx-s1-5927437/cyberattack-water-iran-war>; Ramy Inocencio, *Iran-linked hackers blamed for taking down U.K. power plant for first time, report says*, CBS News (Aug. 24, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-linked-hackers-blamed-attack-uk-power-plant-reports/>.

² Pieter Haeck, *OpenAI, Google join dozens of tech companies to call for urgent action against AI-powered threats*, Politico (Aug. 27, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/08/27/openai-anthropic-google-ai-cyber-letter-01052839>.

Over four months ago, in April, Congress provided clear, bipartisan instructions in the report accompanying FY 2026 DHS Appropriations “to continue Election Security Program activities funded in fiscal year 2024, including Election Security Advisors in each CISA Region and the continuation of the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC).”³ However, under your leadership, CISA has still not provided **any** of the over \$39.6 million in appropriated funds to the EI-ISAC.

Administrations of both parties have recognized that election security is national security and that the federal government has a responsibility to support state and local election offices in their efforts to protect against cyber and mis- and disinformation threats, some of which come from foreign actors. For years, the EI-ISAC provided election security services to local election offices at no cost before the federal government abruptly cut their federal funding in March 2025. While the EI-ISAC has continued providing some services to a limited number of offices through a paid membership model, it now lacks the reach it once had and is unable to share this critical information around cyber threats and security training to under-resourced communities who have not, or cannot, opt in to this new model.

The failure to restore this funding as directed by Congress is a disservice to the thousands of election jurisdictions across this country. As a result, we urgently remind you of your responsibility to ensure that funding is restored to the EI-ISAC immediately and request a response by September 9, 2026 on the status of the disbursement of this funding and the hiring of critical election roles at CISA.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Rules and Administration



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee
on House Administration

³ Joint Explanatory Statement, Pub. Law No. 119-86 (April 30, 2026),
https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/fy26_homeland_jes.pdf. (pg. 75)