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Engel Announces Sanctions Legislation to Punish Interference in U.S. Elections (/press-releases?ID=E28CF6F5-0BFC-41DC-B726-CA501F59E494)

June 28, 2019

WASHINGTON—Representative Eliot L. Engel this week delivered the following remarks at a press conference announcing the reintroduction of the SECURE Our Democracy Act (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3501?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22H.R.+3501%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=1>), legislation designed to punish any foreign actors who interfered in the 2016 election and anyone who would do so in future elections:

“Today I’m glad to announce that along with my friend Gerry Connolly of Virginia and several dozen other members, I’ve introduced a bill that tackles a different part of election security. Our legislation makes clear that there should be stiff consequences for any foreign actor who meddles in an American election.

“The SECURE Our Democracy Act is simple, it’s straightforward, and it’s potent. Starting in 2015, if we find that a foreign person or entity has interfered in our democracy, we’re going to slap tough sanctions on them. Here’s the bill. It’s right here in the bill.

“They won’t be allowed in this country. If they’re already here they’ll be kicked out. Any assets they have parked in the United States will be frozen. And this is what we do to human-rights abusers. It’s what we do to people doing business with America’s adversaries. And it’s what should happen to anyone who sticks his nose in our elections.

“You hear that Vladimir Putin?

“We’re introducing this bill now because in a few hours, the G20 is going to get underway in Japan. President Trump is expected to meet once again with Vladimir Putin. And the president refused to say clearly whether he plans to raise election interference.

“Now think about that for a minute. Everyone knows the Russians interfered in our election in 2016. Everyone knows the Russians are going to do it again and again and again. And yet the president of the United States refuses to say whether he plans to raise election interference—which, to me, means no. It’s absolutely a disgrace.

"Now, we still don't know what Trump and Putin discussed in earlier meetings. We're quickly approaching the one-year anniversary since the Helsinki Summit. You remember that one? It's almost a year. We still don't know what Putin and Trump spoke about. We still don't know if the translators had little notes. We still don't know if the President has little notes or destroyed little notes. We don't know anything when it comes to that. This is part for the course.

"But, we do know, thanks to information that former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson shared with the Foreign Affairs Committee last month, that the President was outmatched in his meetings with Putin, that's what he said—and you'll all have access to the transcript of that interview very very soon.

"So we do know that the President said he would be open to once again accepting the assistance of foreign governments in the next election, imagine that... that he wouldn't report that sort of interference to the FBI. It makes you really scratch your head.

"I think that's a recipe for disaster. And I'm worried what's going to unfold when this meeting in Japan gets underway. So even though the President won't do what's needed to shore up our election systems and push back on foreign interference, this legislation makes it clear to the American people that we will do what it takes to protect our democracy—and it makes it clear to anyone who would try to interfere: there will be serious consequences."

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WATCH: Democrats introduce legislation to prevent election interference



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