

PRESS RELEASES

Warner, Klobuchar Introduce Legislation to Prevent Foreign Interference in American Politics ([/public/index.cfm/pressreleases? ID=4387B70A-6A13-40DC-86B5- 9C9A19935F60](/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=4387B70A-6A13-40DC-86B5-9C9A19935F60))

Jun 25 2019

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ranking Member of the Senate Rules Committee with oversight jurisdiction over federal elections, and Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), Vice Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, introduced legislation today to expand the scope of the prohibition on political activity by foreign nationals. The *Preventing Adversaries Internationally from Disbursing Advertising Dollars (PAID AD) Act* would amend the *Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA)* to prevent foreign nationals from purchasing broadcast, cable, satellite, or digital communications naming a candidate for office at any point in time, and prevents foreign governments and foreign lobbyists from buying issue ads.

“Our intelligence community has been clear—foreign powers continue to interfere in our elections and they’ll keep doing so unless we stop them,” Klobuchar said. **“Strengthening our campaign finance laws to prohibit paid political advertisements by foreign nationals and foreign governments is necessary to ensure American elections are free and fair.”**

“Russia’s massive and unprecedented interference in our last presidential election revealed a number of vulnerabilities in our election system,” Warner said. **“And now that the Kremlin’s playbook is out in the open, we can expect more of the same in 2020, from Russia or elsewhere. We need to get serious**

about protecting our elections from foreign interference. This bill is just one commonsense measure we should adopt to strengthen our democracy against foreign intervention.”

A combination of statutes and Federal Election Commission (FEC) rules define the campaign and electoral activities in which participation by a foreign national is prohibited. Currently, the *Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA)* prohibits a foreign national from contributing directly to campaigns, making independent expenditures, or buying electioneering communications. However, the definition of electioneering communication is narrow and creates a loophole by which foreign nationals may lawfully exert influence in the American electoral system.

The *PAID AD Act* would make it illegal for foreign nationals to directly or indirectly make an expenditure, independent expenditure, or disbursement for an electioneering communication at any time. The legislation would also prevent foreign governments from purchasing issue ads during an election year. Under the proposed legislation, FECA’s specified time horizons for “electioneering communication” are also removed for foreign nationals.

Representatives Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY) introduced bipartisan companion legislation as an amendment to H.R. 1 in the House of Representatives.

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