



The Office of Secretary of State

Brian P. Kemp
SECRETARY OF STATE

December 8, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Secretary Johnson,

On November 15, 2016, an IP address associated with the Department of Homeland Security made an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate the Georgia Secretary of State's firewall. I am writing you to ask whether DHS was aware of this attempt and, if so, why DHS was attempting to breach our firewall.

The private-sector security provider that monitors the agency's firewall detected a large unblocked scan event on November 15 at 8:43 AM. The event was an IP address (216.81.81.80) attempting to scan certain aspects of the Georgia Secretary of State's infrastructure. The attempt to breach our system was unsuccessful.

At no time has my office agreed to or permitted DHS to conduct penetration testing or security scans of our network. Moreover, your Department has not contacted my office since this unsuccessful incident to alert us of any security event that would require testing or scanning of our network. This is especially odd and concerning since I serve on the Election Cyber Security Working Group that your office created.

As you may know, the Georgia Secretary of State's office maintains the statewide voter registration database containing the personal information of over 6.5 million Georgians. In addition, we hold the information for over 800,000 corporate entities and over 500,000 licensed or registered professionals.

As Georgia's Secretary of State, I take cyber security very seriously. That is why I have contracted with a global leader in monitored security services to provide immediate responses to these types of threats. This firm analyzes more than 180 billion events a day globally across a 5,000+ customer base which includes many Fortune 500 companies. Clearly, this type of resource and service is necessary to protect Georgians' data against the type of event that occurred on November 15.

Georgia was one of the only few states that did not seek DHS assistance with cyber hygiene scans or penetration testing before this year's election. We declined this assistance due to having already implemented the security measures suggested by DHS. Under 18 U.S.C. § 1030, attempting to gain access or exceeding authorized access to protected computer systems is illegal. Given all these facts, a number of very important questions have been raised that deserve your attention:

1. Did your Department in fact conduct this unauthorized scan?
2. If so, who on your staff authorized this scan?
3. Did your Department conduct this type of scan against any other states' systems without authorization?
4. If so, which states were scanned by DHS without authorization?

I am very concerned by these facts provided by our security services provider, as they raise very serious questions. I would appreciate your prompt and thorough response.

Sincerely,



Brian P. Kemp

CC:

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
United States Senate

The Honorable Rob Woodall
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable David Perdue
United States Senate

The Honorable Austin Scott
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Buddy Carter
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Doug Collins
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Jody Hice
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Lynn Westmoreland
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Barry Loudermilk
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Hank Johnson
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Rick Allen
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable John Lewis
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable David Scott
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Tom Price
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Tom Graves
United States House of Representative