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**Congress of the United States**  
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**Washington, DC 20515-4209**

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COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND  
COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
(U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION)

January 31, 2017

Dana J. Boente  
Acting Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Acting Attorney General Boente:

Enclosed is a letter I sent yesterday to then-Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates. In light of her departure, I wanted to provide you with a copy and respectfully request a response from you in your new capacity.

Thank you for your assistance.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Encl.

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January 30, 2017

Sally Yates  
Deputy Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Deputy Attorney General Yates:

I write to seek information from the Department of Justice about the effects of voter suppression on minority voters nationwide in 2016. The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. Yet, as you know, our nation has a long and ugly history of efforts to discourage and deny the fair exercise of this right, especially when attempted to be exercised by African Americans.

Sadly, since the Supreme Court overturned a key portion of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, there has been a resurgence of efforts to establish new barriers to voting that could once again disproportionately impact minority communities.

For example, while invalidating a new provision of a voter ID law in North Carolina the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit concluded that the North Carolina legislature, “target[ed] African Americans with almost surgical precision[.]”<sup>1</sup> According to the court, the law imposed cures for problems that did not exist, and, “Thus the asserted justifications cannot and do not conceal the State’s true motivation,” which was discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

Given the persistent threat to voting rights, I would like to know how many complaints the Department of Justice has received alleging, in whole or in part, that individuals were inappropriately denied the ability to vote in 2016. This includes, but is not limited to, allegations involving:

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<sup>1</sup> 7/29/16 NY Times at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/30/us/federal-appeals-court-strikes-down-north-carolina-voter-id-provision.html>

<sup>2</sup> 7/29/16 Mother Jones at: <http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2016/07/horrible-north-carolina-voting-law-struck-down>

- 1) U.S. citizens who are 18 years of age or older who attempted to vote but were unable to do so; and
- 2) U.S. citizens who are 18 years of age or older who attempted to register to vote but were unable to do so.

Thank you for your assistance.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress