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February 21, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Office of the Executive Secretary
Mail Stop 0525
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem,

As leaders of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), we would like to congratulate you on your new role as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The membership of NASS includes nearly 40 of the nation's Chief Election Officials responsible for overseeing the administration and security of elections—the foundation of our democracy.

We understand you are currently conducting an extensive review of DHS's departments, engagements, and work overall. Related to this evaluation, we are writing to share our perspective for your consideration, as well as to request official, ongoing, timely communications.

In January 2017, our work was amplified by DHS when elections were designated as national "critical infrastructure." While elections firmly remain a state and local responsibility, this designation has allowed states to voluntarily coordinate with DHS, and particularly with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), if they wish to utilize cybersecurity and physical security services prioritized for state and local election offices. Information technology systems related to election administration have long been targeted by sophisticated cyber threat actors including nation-state and cybercriminal groups. CISA's prioritized services help election entities defend against these national security threats.

Below are some examples of valuable CISA services and information-sharing mechanisms many state and local election officials regularly utilize:

- Cybersecurity services assisting election offices.
- Physical security assessments to aid in safeguarding voting locations and election offices.



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- Support for the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC), which increases the situational awareness of election offices by notifying officials of cyber threats experienced in other states or jurisdictions.
- Incident response planning resources and tabletop exercises to further build resilience against cyber, physical, and other threats.
- On-the-ground incident response support when state and local election offices face an active threat such as cyber criminals attempting to conduct a ransomware attack.
- Classified and unclassified intelligence briefings to help state and local election officials better understand foreign threats to our election systems.
- The Election Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (EIS-GCC) and its regular meetings. The unique structure of the EIS-GCC allows state and local election officials to provide meaningful input to ensure services are implemented effectively and address concerns about any potential federal overreach.

We understand your review of CISA will take place over the next several weeks and respect your authority to reassess existing priorities, structures, staffing, and missions. We favor continuity of the core resources above and welcome the opportunity as Chief Election Officials to discuss any potential changes or impacts to election security-related services before making a final decision.

We would be happy to meet with you to answer any questions you may have and to also stay informed about what state and local election officials should expect. To facilitate any meetings, NASS's Executive Director Leslie Reynolds can be reached at 202-624-3526 or via email at reynolds@nass.org.

Sincerely,

Hon. Steve Simon
NASS President and Minnesota Secretary of State

Hon. Michael Watson
NASS President-elect and Mississippi Secretary of State

On behalf of the NASS Executive Board



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CC:

Bridget Bean, Executive Director, CISA

Mona Harrington, Assistant Director for the National Risk Management
Center, CISA

Sara Perkins, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs,
DHS

LETTER SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL