

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301

(202) 225-6371
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September 19, 2016

Mr. Kenneth F. Eichner
Principal
The Eichner Law Firm
3773 Cherry Creek Drive North
West Towers, Suite 900
Denver, Colorado 80209

Dear Mr. Eichner,

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology is examining former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's use of a private email account and server during her time at the State Department. The Committee initially requested transcribed interviews with seven Platte River Networks employees on July 12, 2016, in addition to requesting documents.¹ To date, Committee staff has attempted to reach you to schedule the interviews for those employees through email on four separate occasions and by phone on at least three additional occasions.² In an effort to accommodate Platte River Networks employees' schedules, as well as your own, Committee staff prioritized interviews of Bill Thorton and Paul Combetta.³ Despite Committee staff's attempts to streamline the scheduling of requested interviews, they remain unscheduled. Today, additional information has come to light elevating the Committee's need to speak with the employees.

Yesterday, new information emerged regarding the role of a key Platte River Networks employee in managing Secretary Clinton's private email server. On September 19, 2016, reports surfaced appearing to indicate that a reddit.com user, identified by a username belonging to Paul Combetta, the Platte River Networks employee responsible for applying the program BleachBit

¹ See Letter from Hon. Lamar Smith, Chairman, H. Comm. on Science, Space, & Tech. & Hon. Ron Johnson, Chairman, S. Comm. on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs, to Treve Suazo, CEO, Platte River Networks (Jul. 12, 2016).

² See, e.g., E-mail from H. Comm. on Science, Space, & Tech. Staff, to Kenneth F. Eichner, The Eichner Law Firm (Sept. 2, 2016, 12:59 p.m.); E-mail from H. Comm. on Science, Space, & Tech. Staff, to Kenneth F. Eichner, The Eichner Law Firm (Sept. 6, 2016, 4:59 p.m.); E-mail from H. Comm. on Science, Space, & Tech. Staff, to Kenneth F. Eichner, The Eichner Law Firm (Sept. 9, 2016, 12:36 p.m.); E-mail from H. Comm. on Science, Space, & Tech. Staff, to Kenneth F. Eichner, The Eichner Law Firm (Sept. 19, 2016, 9:32 a.m.); see also Phone Calls from H. Comm. on Science, Space, & Tech. Staff, to Kenneth F. Eichner (Aug. 2016 & Sept. 2016).

³ See E-mail from H. Comm. on Science, Space, & Tech. Staff, to Kenneth F. Eichner, The Eichner Law Firm (Sept. 6, 2016, 4:59 p.m.).

to emails stored on Secretary Clinton's private server,⁴ sought help from reddit.com users on how to strip the email address from archived emails he claimed to maintain at the time.⁵ Combetta described the email address as belonging to a "VERY VIP" individual.⁶ Specifically, he stated:

Hello all- I may be facing a very interesting situation where I need to strip out a VIP's (VERY VIP) email address from a bunch of archived email that I have both in a live Exchange mailbox, as well as a PST file. Basically, they don't want the VIP's email address exposed to anyone, and want to be able to either strip out or replace the email address in the to/from fields in all of the emails we want to send out.

I am not sure if something like this is possible with PowerShell, or exporting all of the emails to MSG and doing find/replaces with a batch processing program of some sort.

Does anyone have experience with something like this, and/or suggestions on how this might be accomplished?⁷

If true, these details raise new questions as to whether Platte River Networks purposefully defied legal document retention requirements. Further, it is unclear if the Federal Bureau of Investigation was aware of these facts at the time of their investigation. By speaking with Platte River Networks employees, including Paul Combetta, the Committee will be able to provide clarity to these outstanding questions directly related to its investigation.

Additionally, I am concerned that Mr. Combetta may have made an attempt to delete relevant posts, including the post mentioned above, from his reddit.com username just hours after reports initially surfaced on September 19, 2016, about his request for assistance on deleting email addresses from archived emails. This raises significant concerns that materials directly related to the Committee's investigation and responsive to its outstanding requests are being actively destroyed in an attempt to conceal relevant information from coming to light. These posts are being destroyed despite a lawfully issued congressional subpoena served on your client, Platte River Networks, requiring responsive information be preserved.⁸

⁴ Adam Goldman & Michael S. Schmidt, *Justice Dept. Granted Immunity to Specialist Who Deleted Hillary Clinton's Emails*, NY TIMES, Sept. 8, 2016, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/09/us/politics/hillary-clinton-emails-investigation.html> (last visited Sept. 19, 2016).

⁵ Reddit.com, Question by Stonetear, "Remove or replace to/from address on archived emails?" (Jul. 24, 2014), available at https://web.archive.org/web/20160919041600/https://www.reddit.com/r/exchangeserver/comments/2bmm4l/remove_or_replace_tofrom_address_on_archived/ (last visited Sept. 19, 2016).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.* (emphasis added).

⁸ H. Comm. on Science, Space, & Technology Subpoena to Platte River Networks, Sept. 16, 2016 (relevant portion in the Instructions on page 2).

Mr. Kenneth F. Eichner
September 19, 2016
Page 3

The information sought by the Committee is crucial in furthering its understanding of Secretary Clinton's private server and informing policy changes to prevent similar email arrangements in the future. Given these concerns, the Committee requests that you provide dates for the prioritized interview requests, as well as dates for the remaining Platte River Networks employees, by noon on Friday, September 23, 2016. If you fail to provide dates certain for each of the requested transcribed interviews, the Committee will consider issuing subpoenas for depositions.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Committee staff at 202-225-6371. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Lamar Smith
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ranking Minority Member