

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2018

General John F. Kelly
White House Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear General Kelly:

We write to you about recent reports of domestic abuse by former White House Staff Secretary Rob Porter. We are deeply concerned that Mr. Porter maintained such an influential position in the Administration and disturbed by reports suggesting that you and other Administration officials knew of his abusive behavior and continued to employ him – all while he was reportedly operating without a permanent security clearance.

During the past week, multiple media outlets have published accounts from the ex-wives of Mr. Porter detailing the physical and verbal abuse they had endured at the hand of their former husband. Mr. Porter's first wife, Colbie Holderness, recounted stories of him choking and punching her in the face. In June 2010, the Arlington General District Court issued a four-day emergency protective order against Mr. Porter for violating a separation agreement with his second wife, Jenny Willoughby, and for refusing to leave their Northern Virginia apartment.

We are especially troubled by reports that after the Federal Bureau of Investigation learned of Mr. Porter's abusive behavior and the protective order last year and reported it to the White House, you and other Administration officials decided to keep him on the White House staff. We are also appalled by your dismissive statement, following the first reports of abuse allegations, that Rob Porter is a "man of true integrity" and that you were "proud to serve alongside him." According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, "More than 10 million Americans are victims of physical violence annually." Furthermore, "20 people are victims of physical violence every minute in the United States and 76 percent of intimate partner physical violence victims are female; 24 percent are male." The alleged behavior exhibited by Mr. Porter has no place in our society. It is a stain on the White House and an insult to all of the women and men who have been victimized by domestic abusers.

Finally, Mr. Porter's behavior – which resulted in his inability to obtain a permanent security clearance – signals a breakdown in operational security as well as moral integrity. Federal law enforcement sources indicate that Mr. Porter was unable to obtain a permanent clearance because of allegations of domestic violence levied against him by his two ex-wives.

As White House Staff Secretary, it was Mr. Porter's job to regularly handle sensitive and classified material to facilitate the flow of information to the President. As one former Obama administration official reported, "I don't know how you would do that job without a security clearance... You see every single piece of paper – whether it's from the NSC [National Security Council] or from specific Cabinet secretaries."

As White House Chief of Staff, you are intimately involved in the hiring and subsequent management of senior level presidential personnel. As such, we respectfully request responses to the following questions:

- When did you learn of the allegations that Mr. Porter had abused one or both of his ex-wives?
- After you learned of these allegations, did you take any steps to remove or suspend Mr. Porter from the White House staff?
- At any point after you learned of these allegations, did you encourage Mr. Porter to remain on staff?
- At any point after you learned of these allegations, did you offer Mr. Porter a promotion or expand his responsibilities?
- Were you aware that Mr. Porter was unable to obtain a permanent security clearance, or was not in possession of a permanent clearance during his time at the White House?
- Why was Mr. Porter allowed to handle and view our nation's most sensitive materials without a permanent security clearance?

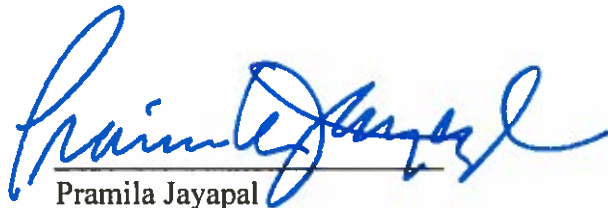
Everything about these troubling reports violates American moral values, ethical principles, and core tenets of national security. It is imperative that Congress and the American people construct a clear timeline of events in order to preserve the integrity of the Office of the President.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress