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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

KOLAN DAVIS, STAFF DIRECTOR AND CHIEF COUNSEL
JOSHUA SHEINKMAN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

May 3, 2019

Pete Brownell
President and CEO
Brownells, Inc.
200 South Front Street
Montezuma, IA 50171

Dear Mr. Brownell:

On December 13, 2018, I requested that you make yourself available to be interviewed by my staff in conjunction with my investigation into Russian engagement with the National Rifle Association and political activities. You failed to respond to my request. To your credit, you voluntarily provided over 800 pages of documents. In order to resolve this matter, I, as Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, respectfully request that you provide answers and related documents to the attached questions no later than May 17, 2019.

I also request that you complete and notarize the attachment attesting to the accuracy and authenticity of your response. Federal law (18 USC 1001) generally makes it a crime to knowingly and willfully provide false information or to conceal a material fact in any matter within the jurisdiction of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of the Government of the United States.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee

Attachment

December 2015 Moscow Trip:

- 1) On February 14, 2019, your spokesman claimed to the media you had your “company’s compliance team review the itinerary with the State Department ahead of time and carefully followed their guidance before, during and after the trip.” In one email exchange with Paul Erickson, who was indicted in February for wire fraud and money laundering, he appears to have suggested that you tell the State Department you would “absent yourself” from meeting then-Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who was sanctioned at the time of your trip, and that doing so would “get bonus points.” In that same email Erickson implies that a planned meeting with Vladimir Putin was not included on the itinerary and that because he was not sanctioned, you could lead a delegation meeting with him.
 - a) Identify who at the State Department you and your company consulted with and/or received guidance from concerning your participation on the 2015 Moscow trip.
 - b) Identify any and all Brownells employees and NRA staff who participated in these communications with the State Department related to your participation on the 2015 Moscow trip.
 - c) Provide copies of any paperwork, itineraries, e-mails and any other communication you submitted to or received from the State Department as part of this process.
 - d) Confirm whether you or your employees told the State Department that you knew you should not meet with Rogozin before you traveled to Moscow and met with him.
 - e) Confirm whether you informed the State Department that the FSB was involved in arranging your travel to Russian arms manufacturing facilities.
 - f) Confirm whether you informed the State Department that you would be visiting a Russian defense arms manufacturing facility.
 - g) Confirm whether you informed the State Department that you were aware of plans for the NRA delegation to meet with Vladimir Putin.
- 2) A copy of your itinerary for the NRA’s December 2015 trip to Moscow shows that trip organizers provided biographical briefing materials for and scheduled meetings with several high-level Russian government officials or oligarchs close to President Putin. For each individual listed below please answer the following series of questions:
 - Evgeny Lukyanov
 - Igor Pisarsky
 - Konstantin Nikolaev
 - Pavel Gusev
 - Sergei Lisowski
 - Sergey Yastrzhembsky
 - Leonid Sonin
 - Alexander Lisitsin
 - Vadim Zadorozhny
 - Vitaly Kruchin
 - Igor Shchyogolev

- Dmitry Rogozin
- a) Confirm whether, when, and where you met each individual.
- b) Identify any other participants in meetings you had with each individual.
- c) Describe the substance of any meetings that took place between you and the individuals identified above.
- d) Identify any off-the-record or off-schedule meetings or conversations that took place between any other Russian government officials, weapons manufacturers, or sanctioned individuals and yourself, identify any additional participants, and describe the substance of those meetings.

3) Documentation provided by you and the NRA indicate that members of the delegation would be meeting with Vladimir Putin. Confirm whether you or any members of the delegation met with Vladimir Putin. If so, please describe that meeting, its timing and location, and attendees, and any discussions that occurred.

Business relationships:

4) Documentation you provided describes a series of meetings that you were to have had with Russian arms companies prior to the arrival of the rest of the NRA delegation, including a visit to a facility that manufactured arms for the Russian military. Documents show that Maria Butina introduced you to several Russian weapons manufacturers in Moscow and that your company engaged at least one of her contacts after your trip in pursuit of lucrative business deals. Documents indicate that at least one Russian manufacturer – AKademia – shipped product samples to your company by way of an unnamed Florida company, though AKademia's CEO, Alexander Gorodetsky, separately referenced a Florida-based weapons company, Legion USA, in emails to your employees. Emails you provided between Mr. Gorodetsky and Brownells employees do not clarify how your employees resolved possible import/export violations before Brownells accepted delivery of controlled weapons parts. Florida state filings identified Jacob Finkelshteyn as the Director of Legion USA before it appears to have been voluntarily dissolved on September 19, 2017. At the time, Brownells also had a Russian subsidiary, B-SS LLC, located in St. Petersburg, Russia. Documents provided by you include a proposal by Ms. Butina to expand your presence in Russia.

- a) Please identify by name and company all individuals who you met in Russia during your December 2015 trip related to the conduct of business with Brownells or associated firms, the timing and location of each meeting, and describe any conversations or negotiations that occurred.
- b) Identify any individuals you or representatives of your company met with, spoke to, or otherwise engaged who you met through or because of your relationship with Ms. Butina following the 2015 trip related to the conduct of business with Brownells or associated firms.
- c) Identify any contracts, import/export agreements, or other business arrangements your company or any of its subsidiaries entered into or expanded with any Russian manufacturer or distributor after your December 2015 trip to Russia.

- d) Please describe any relationship you or your company has or had with Legion USA or any other intermediary company used by AKademia or any other Russian manufacturer your company engaged.
- e) Please explain whether proper customs clearance was received for any weapons or parts shipments Brownells received, identify who the importer of record was for any shipment received, and confirm that any delivery made was done so in full compliance with the law.
- f) Describe your visit to the Russian defense arms manufacturing facility, the identity of the facility and company, the timing and location and attendees, and the nature of any discussions that occurred there.
- g) Describe the extent of Brownells' business activities, including through any subsidiaries, in and with Russia and Russian manufacturers at the time of 2015 Moscow trip and extending through 2017.
- h) Describe any consulting or business development arrangements you or your company or affiliated companies had with Ms. Butina, Paul Erickson, and Bridges LLC or any other related entity subsequent to the 2015 Moscow trip.

Expenses Incurred Related to the Moscow 2015 Trip

5) Itemize your expenses related the Moscow 2015 Trip including the portion that occurred prior to the arrival of the rest of the NRA delegation, any additional expenses you incurred that you or your company reimbursed the NRA for, those covered by the NRA, and those paid for by Maria Butina and/or her organization.

6) Documents provided by you and the NRA indicate that you directly or through your company reimbursed the NRA for expenses incurred by other NRA delegation participants, including David Clarke and his spouse. Itemize any additional expenses delegation members incurred that you or your company paid for directly or reimbursed the NRA for and explain why you did so.

Financial Transactions with Maria Butina and Paul Erickson:

7) Documents that you and the NRA provided show a series of e-mail conversations about paying a \$6,000 invoice to a Maria Butina and later to shell company – Bridges LLC -- set up by Maria Butina, to cover additional expenses related to the NRA's December 2015 Moscow trip ostensibly incurred by Outdoor Sportsman Group CEO Jim Liberatore and his spouse.

- a) Identify who ultimately paid the \$6,000 invoice to Ms. Butina's shell company – Bridges LLC -- and how, when, and why the payment was made.
- b) Identify any additional payments made by you personally or by your company or any related entities to Ms. Butina, Paul Erickson, or any shell company connected to either individual or entity.

Domestic interactions with Maria Butina:

8) Documents you provided show repeated domestic interactions with Ms. Butina outside of activities hosted or arranged by the NRA, such as debate watch parties, firearm industry related events, Republican presidential campaign office tours, and dinners.

- a) Identify by date and location all domestic interactions you had with Ms. Butina, Mr. Torshin, or any other Russian national who you met with subsequent to or because of the NRA delegation's trip to Moscow in December 2015.

9) On August 4, 2018, the New York Times published the article *Beyond the N.R.A.: Maria Butina's Peculiar Bid for Russian Influence*. Included in the story was your picture, captioned with "The N.R.A.'s Pete Brownell, left, with Ms. Butina and Donald Trump Jr. at a 2016 dinner hosted by the gun-rights group."

- a) Provide the date and location when and where this picture was taken.
- b) Confirm whether this image was taken at a dinner connected to the NRA's 2016 annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky.
- c) Identify any additional meetings or encounters between yourself, Mr. Torshin, Ms. Butina, any other Russian nationals, and any member of the Trump family or 2016 Donald Trump presidential campaign and summarize the content of any discussions that took place.

Notarized Statement of Accuracy

I certify that the statements I have made and the materials that I have provided in response to the Committee's letter of April XX, 2019, are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____