



Pelletier Demands Department of Justice Launch Criminal Probe into the National Rifle Association Finances

*Evidence Points to Russia Helping Fund the NRA's \$30 Million
Expenditure to Elect Trump*

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McLean, Virginia – Paul Pelletier, a Democratic candidate for Virginia's 10th Congressional District and former federal prosecutor today sent Attorney General Jeff Sessions a criminal referral to investigate the National Rifle Association's business dealings and murky financial ties to the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Russia, Alexander Torshin, as well as other Russian officials. Pelletier questioned the origins of the unprecedented \$30 million NRA expenditures to elect Donald J. Trump and whether any of the funds came from Russia.

During the press conference Pelletier presented a timeline showing the continued corrupt relationship between NRA leaders and Russian nationals going back as far as 2011. The NRA leaders include former presidents of the organization, CEO Wayne LaPierre and the chair of the NRA's Golden Ring of Freedom million dollar donor club. The complicit relationship was fostered over several meetings which took place when NRA executives visited Moscow and when Russians attended numerous NRA conventions in the U.S. as VIP Guests.

The Russian officials include Torshin, a known mobster, money launderer and affiliate of the Russian Spy Service. Additionally, other Russians include Torshin associate Maria Butina and U.S.-sanctioned Russian Defense Minister Dmitry Rogozin. Torshin is also currently on the U.S.-sanctions blacklist. These illicit associations occurred prior to and during the Trump presidential campaign.

Pelletier established that the source of the NRA's unprecedented spending of tens of millions of dollars in the Presidential election remains hidden.

"It is troubling that the source of the more than \$30 million of dollars in 'dark money' that the NRA plowed into the election of Trump after establishing illicit relationships both here and in Moscow with sanctioned Russian officials remains unknown," said Pelletier. "I spent almost ten years as Chief and Principal Deputy Chief of the DOJ Criminal Division's Fraud Section investigating, prosecuting and convicting the most corrupt executives, companies and organizations in the United States."

"There is more than enough evidence surrounding the nefarious interactions between NRA officials and Putin confidants to meet the criteria for opening a DOJ file jacket and initiating a criminal grand jury investigation," Pelletier continued.

Pelletier established an inculpatory timeline of NRA executives and Russian official interactions, such as:

Torshin and Butina, as NRA VIP guests, attending "Golden Ring of Freedom" ceremonies reserved for million dollar NRA donors;
Butina's visit to NRA headquarters in Virginia with ex-NRA President Keene;
NRA member Paul Erickson's attempt to create a "back channel" between Trump and the Kremlin via Torshin;
Torshin attending a private dinner with Donald Trump, Jr at the 2015 NRA Convention;
Torshin receiving a commendation medal from the FSB upon his return to Moscow;
And, for the first time in decades, former NRA President Pete Brownell, declining election to a second term after Senate Judiciary Committee made inquiries questioning the source of the funding the NRA spent to elect Trump.

"The American people deserve to know the truth about whether the NRA tampered with our democracy by allowing secretly structured Russian money to support a Presidential candidate." concluded Pelletier. "I am on a mission to get to the bottom of this."

"My opponents in the Democratic primary for Congress will say they can't wait to receive an F from the NRA, but I won't be happy with just a bad grade. It has been shown that the NRA is corrupt and needs to be criminally investigated; if the DOJ wont do it, then I will when I get to Congress. They need to be held accountable."

Last week the Senate Judiciary Committee released their findings on Russian interference during the 2016 Presidential election. While all revelations from the report were disturbing, the Committee found that the Kremlin – channeled through relationships built by Torshin and his colleague Maria Butina – may have used the NRA to secretly fund the campaign of then candidate Donald J.Trump. The Committee also found that Torshin and his allies repeatedly used the NRA as an avenue for connecting and supporting the needs of the Trump campaign.

After serving as a federal prosecutor for over 27 years, Pelletier retired from the Department of Justice in 2011. While there, Pelletier developed a reputation as a fearless fighter who would successfully prosecute the biggest and baddest criminals, including international drug kingpins, Wall Street and banking executives and corrupt politicians on both sides of the aisle.

The 10th Congressional District is located in Northern Virginia and includes portions of Fairfax and Prince William Counties, all of Loudoun, Clarke and Frederick Counties and the cities of Winchester, Manassas and Manassas Park. A primary for the Democratic nomination will be held June 12, 2018.

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