

Ahead of presidential election, FBI gives clean chit to Hillary in e-mail case, Trump cries foul

07/11/2016 19:01 by admin

Washington: FBI Director James Comey told lawmakers Sunday the agency hasn't changed its opinion that Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton should not face criminal charges over her use of personal e-mail server during her stay in the State Department, after a review of new e-mails.

Comey had dropped a bombshell 11 days from the November 8 election when he informed Congress that the FBI had discovered e-mails in its separate investigation of Anthony Weiner, the estranged husband of top Clinton aide Huma Abedin, that could be connected to its investigation of whether Clinton mishandled classified information by using a private e-mail server, CNN reported.

"Based on our review, we have not changed our conclusions that we expressed in July," Comey said in a letter to top Republicans on the House Oversight Committee.

Comey's letter was the culmination of a fast-paced review of the newly discovered e-mails, law enforcement sources said on Sunday.

"We went through this as fast as we could," a senior law enforcement official told CNN.

The e-mails, thousands found, were mostly duplicates of what had already been seen and personal e-mails, law enforcement officials said in explaining how the conclusion was reached so quickly. The laptop which was found was around a decade old, with lots of personal content on it not relevant to the investigation, according to one source.

In July, Comey said Clinton had been careless but not criminal in handling sensitive material on her private e-mail server as Secretary of State.

It's impossible to know before results are tallied what impact Comey's actions -- first raising a vaguely worded red flag 11 days out, and then lowering it two days from the election -- will have on the contest.

But the news could help Clinton put to rest a controversy that has dogged her in the 2016 race's closing days, helping her rival Donald Trump narrow a polling gap nationally and in key battleground states.

Â

Ahead of On the other hand, Donald Trump continued to seize on the email issue, despite the FBI's finding.

"Hillary Clinton is guilty. She knows it, the FBI knows it, the people know," he said at a rally that drew thousands to an amphitheater in the Detroit suburbs. "And now it's up to the American people to deliver justice at the ballot box on November 8th."

Comey's announcement on Sunday capped a stunning chapter in the bitter, deeply divisive contest.

The FBI began investigating the handling of classified material on Clinton's private email server shortly after she announced her bid in April 2015. The issue has dogged Clinton's campaign and contributed to the questions a majority of Americans have about her honesty and trustworthiness.

Based on that review, Comey told lawmakers the FBI was not changing the conclusion it reached this summer. Then, Comey said, "no reasonable prosecutor" would recommend Clinton face criminal charges for using a private email system while at the State Department.

The director's initial decision to make a renewed inquiry into Clinton's emails public on Oct. 28 upended the campaign at a crucial moment, sapping a surging Clinton's momentum and giving Trump fresh ammunition to challenge her trustworthiness.

Clinton's campaign, furious at Comey's handling of the review, welcomed his latest announcement. Communications director Jennifer Palmieri told reporters, "We're glad this matter is resolved," though Clinton herself did not mention the issue at her campaign events.

The new review involves material found on a computer belonging to Anthony Weiner, the disgraced former congressman and estranged husband of Clinton aide Huma Abedin. While Comey was vague in his initial description of the inquiry, he said Sunday that the FBI reviewed communications "to or from Hillary Clinton while she was secretary of state."

Clinton still appears to hold an edge over Trump in the campaign's final stretch. The Republican has a narrow path to victory that requires him to win nearly all of the roughly dozen battleground states up for grabs.

The candidates spent Sunday sprinting across swing states as they sought to lock up support ahead of Election Day. As the campaign's final weekend drew to a close, more than 41 million Americans had already cast their ballots in early voting.

Clinton's high-wattage allies also fanned out across the country, including President Barack Obama, who was joined by musical icon Stevie Wonder at a rally in Florida. He'll join Clinton and her husband, former President Bill Clinton, first lady Michelle Obama along with rock stars Bruce Springsteen and Jon Bon Jovi at an evening rally in Philadelphia on Monday. She'll also campaign in Grand Rapids, Pittsburgh and Raleigh.

Trump's campaign manager Kellyanne Conway told reporters Sunday that Trump planned to keep up the breakneck campaign pace through Election Day. On Monday, he'll go to Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and New Hampshire. After voting in New York Tuesday morning, Trump was expected to return to Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, North Carolina and New Hampshire later in the day, Conway said.

- IT