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CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
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29 March 2017

Ms Joanne Mak
Clerk to Panel on Constitutional Affairs
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Mak,

**Suspected theft of Notebook Computers
of the Registration and Electoral Office**

I refer to your letter dated 28 and 29 March 2017 respectively. Regarding the suspected theft of two notebook computers of the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”) stored in a locked room at the AsiaWorld-Expo, the fallback site of the 2017 Chief Executive Election, our response is set out below.

The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau attaches great importance to the incident. According to the preliminary information provided to us by the REO, one of the two notebooks contain the names of Election Committee members with no other personal information, while another contains the names, addresses and Hong Kong Identity Card numbers of electors of geographical constituencies which have been encrypted in accordance with the relevant security requirements. No voting records are stored on these notebook computers. The REO stressed that such information is protected by multiple encryptions which are extremely difficult to break through. The two notebook computers were stored by REO staff in a locked room at the AsiaWorld-Expo. Closed-circuit televisions were installed at the venue. When the REO staff picked up materials from the venue on March 27, they found that two notebook computers were suspected to be stolen. On the same day, the REO reported the incident to the Police, reported the incident to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, and also informed this Bureau.

In view of the severity of the incident, we have requested the REO to submit a detailed incident report as soon as possible, including the process of delivering the concerned computers from the REO office to AsiaWorld-Expo, computer data security and the various security measures that have been put in place in the room. The report should also mention if there is any maladministration. We understand that the Electoral Affairs Commission (“EAC”) has requested the REO to launch a comprehensive review on the handling of voter registration information in the Chief Executive Election to strengthen the security of information, and submit a detailed report to the EAC. Apart from the above, we understand the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD) has initiated a compliance check in relation to the incident. If the PCPD makes any recommendations on improvement measures, the REO will follow up and implement accordingly. Regarding the Police, we learn that the Police have accorded high priority to this incident and classified the case as theft. The Police are making every effort in launching a thorough investigation which includes taking statements with relevant persons related to the case and checking the closed-circuit television footages. We have already instructed the REO to fully assist in the Police investigation of the case. On the other hand, the REO will notify affected electors of the incident as soon as possible.

We hope that outcomes of the investigations carried out by the three parties mentioned above, i.e., the Police, the PCPD, and the REO, will be available as soon as possible. After the outcome of the investigations is available, the REO will report to the Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs details of the entire incident and follow-up actions to be taken. We hope the Chairman of the Panel on Constitutional Affairs will consider arranging a special meeting for the said incident.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ryan Chiu', written in a cursive style.

(Ryan CHIU)

for Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs