

Durbin: why I am attending the inauguration of Donald Trump

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) released the following statement:

On Friday, January 20, 2017, I will be standing several feet to the side of Donald John Trump as he is sworn in to serve as the 45th President of the United States of America.

This will be the ninth inauguration I have personally witnessed as a Member of Congress. I stood respectfully as Ronald Reagan was sworn in to his second term

though I disagreed with him on many issues. I stood as well for the inauguration of George W. Bush's second term though I thought his war in Iraq was a tragic mistake. And I stood with admiration as my colleague from Illinois, Barack Obama, placed his hand on Abraham Lincoln's bible and became the 44th President of our nation.

My presence is an acknowledgement that once again America has achieved what so many nations have failed to do: peacefully transition to new leadership. Absent clear and convincing evidence that the new President was not legitimately chosen, it is critical to a democracy that those who lose the election acknowledge the choice of the American electorate.

I know the case against the legitimacy of Donald Trump, starting with our anachronistic electoral college. Since 2000, I have proposed changing the Constitution so that our popular vote decides the Presidency. But the Constitution as written makes a majority of the electors the standard of victory.

I am disgusted by the blatant efforts of Vladimir Putin and the Russians to interfere in this election to defeat Hillary Clinton. I have called for a bi-partisan national commission to investigate this act of cyber war and deeply resent the refusal of the Republican congressional leadership and the incoming President to concede this is a serious threat to our sovereign nation. But although all of our intelligence agencies agree that Russia is guilty of this cyber invasion of America, none have suggested that they were able to compromise the actual casting or counting of ballots.

Many of my colleagues will boycott the inauguration to protest Donald Trump's repulsive attack on my friend and colleague, John Lewis, who questioned the legitimacy of Trump's election. John Lewis paid in blood on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, for his right to his beliefs on the legitimacy of Donald Trump's presidency. I will honor John Lewis by pledging to fight for the civil rights of Americans every minute of this new Administration.

On Friday I will stand in respect of our Constitution and the office of the President. As President Trump lifts his hand from the Bible, I will then accept my Constitutional responsibility to support him when he is right and to oppose him with every fiber of my being when he is wrong.