

Durbin releases statement on reports of conflict minerals executive order

February 9 2017 11:09 AM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today issued the following statement after [reports](#) that the Trump Administration is considering an executive order rolling back a rule requiring companies registered in the United States to disclose to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) what they are doing to mitigate sourcing from conflict mines in and around the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

“This law was passed to help save the lives of the children, women, and men who were being slaughtered as a result of the illegal trade of conflict minerals in Africa—and it has worked. It has helped create clean and effective supply

chains and saved lives, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, known as the rape capital of the world.

“Before these rules, not a single smelter of tin, tungsten, tantalum, or gold had submitted to and passed an audit to prove they weren’t dealing in conflict minerals. Today, seventy-six percent of the world’s smelters of the 3Ts or gold have passed such an audit.

“That the Administration is considering weakening this law is senseless and immoral, and would lead to more bloodshed. How can this Administration claim that more violence in Africa would be in the national security interests of the United States? As Americans become increasingly conscious about the origins of the products they buy, reducing transparency and eliminating incentives for responsible sourcing in this industry would be a grave mistake.”

In 2009, and around multiple visits to Eastern Congo, including a visit with victims of the DRC’s rampant sexual violence who were recovering at one of the area’s only hospitals, Senator Durbin joined Senators Sam Brownback (R-KS), Russ Feingold (D-WI), and 19 other bipartisan cosponsors in pursuing legislation to address the troubling link between the illicit mineral trade and violence in the region. *The Congo Conflict Minerals Act* was drafted to foster collective industry efforts to clean up the supply chain of these critical minerals and allow transparency for consumers concerned about such minerals in everyday products. Thanks to the efforts of Senator Durbin and Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA), the bipartisan legislation eventually became part of the *Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* that passed the following year.

In 2012, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the US Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Roundtable filed a lawsuit against the SEC challenging its recently introduced rules. Senator Durbin filed an amicus brief with other Members in support of the law, and the US District Court largely upheld the rules and the SEC’s authority to implement them.

Senator Durbin has long been concerned about the humanitarian crisis in the DRC. In 2008, he hosted Dr. Dennis Mukwege, the director and chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Panzi Hospital in Bukavu in eastern Congo, at his Judiciary Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law hearing on sexual violence as a weapon of war, during which Mukwege detailed the region’s horrific sexual violence.