Durbin meets with Illinois Board of Elections director to discuss election security

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WASHINGTON – Amid House and Senate Intelligence Committee public hearings on Russia's efforts to meddle in the 2016 presidential election, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) met with Steve Sandvoss, the executive director of the Illinois Board of Elections to discuss preventive measures that should be taken to address election security. Mr. Sandvoss testified at the public Senate Intelligence Committee hearing today.

"Russia has been refining its tactics of cyber warfare against democracies for more than a decade, all with the aim of disrupting democratic institutions and supporting those who are sympathetic to Russian interests. And in 2016, according to our intelligence community, Russia brought this type of election warfare here, to America and to Illinois," said Durbin. **"Both the federal and state government must work together to implement additional security in order to prevent this sort of meddling in our elections ever again. Mr. Sandvoss and I will work diligently to safeguard our elections and the personal information of all Illinois voters."**

Beginning in June 2016, the Illinois State Board of Elections was the target of a malicious, month-long cyberattack. At a May 4, 2017, hearing in the Illinois State Senate Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Illinois State Board of Elections officials testified that hackers gained access to the information of nearly 80,000 Illinois voters. Authorities have confirmed that Illinois was one of at least two states targeted, along with Arizona—and recent reports indicate that these attacks may have been broader and targeted more states than previously understood.

Last week, Durbin and Illinois State Senator Michael E. Hastings (D-IL-19) sent letters to 110 local Illinois election authorities in order to assess the current state of Illinois' election system's cybersecurity and to see how the federal and state governments might best assist their efforts to strengthen the cybersecurity of Illinois' election systems.