



# Durbin Calls on McConnell to End Legislative Graveyard & Protect Our Elections From Foreign Interference

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter  
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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), a member of the Senate Judiciary and Rules Committee, today called on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to end his legislative graveyard and bring comprehensive election security bills to the floor. In a speech on the Senate floor, Durbin noted that one of the most important takeaways from Special Counsel Mueller’s report is that Russia was able to successfully attack our democracy in 2016. Page one of the Mueller report says, “The Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in sweeping and systematic fashion.”

“Several bills have been introduced to respond to this Russian threat, including the *Election Security Act*. This is a critical, comprehensive bill that would provide states with much-needed resources and establish a robust federal effort to protect our democracy,” Durbin said. “Unfortunately, Republican Senate Leader McConnell is blocking all efforts to bring this important legislation to the floor for a debate and vote.”

Durbin continued, “Quite frankly, we barely do anything in the legislative graveyard of the Senate under Republican control. You would think we would focus on a bipartisan basis on making certain that the outcome of the next election is not influenced by a foreign power, whether it’s Russia or some other malicious force in our world today. But because it bruises the President’s ego and it may evoke a nasty tweet, the Republican-controlled Senate prefers to do nothing. It’s time the Republican majority stop protecting President Trump at all costs. There reaches a point when the Senate Republican leadership needs to put the country before fear of the President’s tweets.”

Video of Durbin’s remarks on the Senate floor are available [here](#).

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Footage of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#) for TV Stations.

In 2016, top officials from the Obama Administration's national security and intelligence community came to Capitol Hill and warned Congressional leadership of Russia's ongoing attack on our election – rightly asking for a bipartisan statement to tell Vladimir Putin to halt such efforts. Senate Majority Leader McConnell refused to sign on.

In last week's testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, Special Counsel Mueller said, "Over the course of my career, I've seen a number of challenges to our democracy. The Russian government's effort to interfere in our election is among the most serious." He went on to say, "This deserves the attention of every American."

In May, Durbin helped introduce the [Election Security Act](#), which currently has 40 cosponsors. This critical, comprehensive election security legislation would provide significant election security funding to states for cyber improvements and audits and establish a robust federal effort to protect our democracy.

In June, the Senate took a small step forward when it passed the bipartisan [Defending Elections against Trolls from Enemy Regimes \(DETER\) Act](#), which was introduced by Durbin and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-SC). This bill will make "improper interference in U.S. elections" a violation of U.S. immigration law, and violators would be barred from obtaining a visa to enter the United States.

Beginning in June 2016, the Illinois State Board of Elections was the target of a malicious, month-long cyberattack that enabled the intruder to access confidential voter information and view the registration data of approximately 76,000 voters in Illinois. Last year, Illinois received \$13.2 million in new federal funding to strengthen its election security systems, part of the Fiscal Year 2018 federal omnibus spending bill that provided \$380 million to the Election Assistance Commission (EAC). State election officials have said more funding will be necessary to replace aging election equipment and maintain the Cyber Navigator Program, which is designed to support the efforts of local election authorities to defend against cyber breaches and detect and recover from cyberattacks.