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DEC. 21, 2018  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VOTER TURNOUT, CYBERSECURITY, AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION MARK EVENTFUL YEAR FOR SBE**

**SPRINGFIELD** – Turnout for the [Nov. 6 election](#) was the third highest for a midterm election in 40 years, with a midterm record 4.6 million votes cast and an all-time high 8.1 million voters registered statewide.

The Dec. 3 certification of the vote capped a busy year for the Illinois State Board of Elections, which also launched a major statewide cybersecurity initiative, helped establish the state's new Automatic Voter Registration law and administered campaign finance rules during an election cycle that featured unprecedented spending by candidates up and down the ballot.

The year also was noteworthy for the board of elections because of heavy nationwide media attention it received when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Justice Department confirmed that a [2016 breach](#) of the Illinois statewide voter registration database had been the work of the Russian government. With federal election officials warning of a likely repeat of Russian efforts to interfere with the election, SBE entered into an agreement with the Illinois National Guard's cybersecurity unit to serve as an emergency resource in the event of cybersecurity issues at any state election authority on Election Day and in the days immediately preceding it.

"This election cycle presented several unprecedented challenges," said William J. Cadigan, chairman of the State Board of Elections. "Working with state and federal law enforcement and cybersecurity agencies, along with county clerks and election authorities, we navigated those challenges successfully. I am very proud of our agency and its dedicated employees."

Among the SBE highlights in 2018:

**Cybersecurity**

- Early in 2018, SBE Executive Director Steve Sandvoss, along with other SBE division directors, attended briefings by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on possible cybersecurity threats to the 2018 elections. These briefings preceded SBE's participation in June in a statewide cybersecurity conference presented by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and DHS and organized by the Illinois Association of County Clerks and Recorders.
- SBE received a \$13.2 million grant in May from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission that was earmarked for cybersecurity. SBE has partnered with the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology and the Illinois State Police's State Terrorism Intelligence Center to use the federal grant to

implement the Illinois Cyber Navigator Program. Under the program, nine cybersecurity experts will work with the state's 108 local election authorities to make sure all parts of the state's election system have uniform cybersecurity practices and resources.

- In July, the U.S. Department of Justice [indicted 12 Russian military officials](#) on charges including an attack on Illinois' statewide voter database in 2016. With federal officials warning that similar attempts to disrupt elections could be coming in 2018, SBE partnered with the Illinois National Guard's cybersecurity unit to have experts at the ready to respond in the event of an election-related cyberattack anywhere in the state on Election Day and in the days immediately preceding it.

### **Voter Registration & Turnout**

- Illinois had the largest number of registered voters in state history with 8,099,372 registered for the Nov. 6 general election. Registration was helped by the July 2 start of the state's [Automatic Voter Registration law](#), under which 187,000 registrations have been processed through the Secretary of State's driver's license facilities so far. In April and May, SBE officials conducted five public hearings around the state to gather public suggestions for implementing the program.
- Turnout for [the Nov. 6 general election](#) was 57.23 percent, which was the third-highest for a midterm election since 1978 (topped by 65 percent in 1982 and 60.4 percent in 1978). The number of total votes cast – 4,635,541 – was a record for a midterm election.

### **Campaign Finance Disclosure**

- SBE's campaign disclosure division, which administers the state's campaign finance laws, processed more than 12,000 individual reports for contributions of \$1,000 or more during primary and general election cycles that broke all previous records for campaign fundraising and spending.

### **Assisting Local Election Authorities**

- Before the primary and general elections, SBE staff tested voting equipment and conducted election judge training throughout the state.
- After the elections, SBE's operations division assisted local election authorities in certifying the official results. This followed a 5 percent statewide random re-tabulation of election results to ensure their accuracy.

### **Transparency**

- For the first time ever, the SBE held [media availabilities](#) before the March primary and November general elections in which SBE Board and staff leadership and representatives of local election authorities, state and federal law enforcement and cybersecurity agencies made comprehensive presentations to inform the public of efforts to make elections secure.