

DHS 'stands by' statement Russian hackers targeted Wis. election system

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The federal Department of Homeland Security says it “stands by” its statement that Wisconsin and 20 other states were targeted by Russian government cyber actors trying to breach election systems.

State officials yesterday said they hadn’t received any information indicating that was the case.

They also pointed to an email from a DHS official that seemingly declared Wisconsin’s voter registration system wasn’t a target — and that the issue DHS had flagged for the state was actually regarding an attempted breach at another state agency.

That email centered around a “scanning” attempt from a specific IP address that state officials had blocked last year after it tried accessing Department of Workforce Development servers.

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But DHS spokesman Scott McConnell said yesterday evening that “discussions of specific IP addresses do not provide a complete picture of potential targeting activity.”

McConnell said DHS’ announcement to states on Friday was based on several sources, such as attempts from malicious IP addresses and intelligence information that the agency can’t publicly disclose.

“The Department stands by its assessment that Internet-connected networks in 21

states were the target of Russian government cyber actors seeking vulnerabilities and access to U.S. election infrastructure,” he said.