

# The Dallas Morning News

## Dallas senator, twin brother go to Moscow to demand 'Russia stop meddling in our elections'

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AUSTIN — How far would a Texan go to tell Russia to back off?

If you're Texas Sen. Don Huffines, oh, just about 5,753 miles. On Monday, the Dallas Republican was spotted in Moscow at a roundtable discussion hosted by U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky and Cato Institute CEO Peter Goettler.

Texas politics watchers were confused at first — was that the senator or his twin brother, Phillip, who ran unsuccessfully this year to join his brother in the state Legislature? Capitol staffers quickly confirmed to *The Dallas Morning News* that the senator was indeed in Moscow.

Here's why.

"Don Huffines regularly hears from Texans who are concerned about the security of our elections, and who are alarmed by Russia's efforts to undermine our democratic institutions," Huffines' chief of staff, Brent Connett, told *The News*. "In meetings with Russian officials, Senator Huffines is having frank discussions, relaying Texans' concerns, and demanding that Russia stop meddling in our elections.

***"Don Huffines believes in the power of face-to-face conversations, even with antagonists."***

But, wait! *The News* then confirmed Phillip Huffines was also in attendance.

"Both Don and Phillip are in Russia right now," said Matt Langston, a consultant for both Huffines brothers. "Phillip has not put out any sort of statement as to why he's over there, but it's going to be the same as Don's."

The Huffines brothers have been huge supporters of the Pauls. Don Huffines was the one-time financier to Rand Paul's father, then-Texas Congressman Ron Paul. The Huffines family owns a vast car dealership empire in the Dallas area. But Langston said there was no reason to speculate the brothers would be exporting the business abroad, and he added that taxpayer money and campaign donations were not used to fund the visit.

"They personally paid for the trip," Langston confirmed. "Senator Rand Paul extended the invitation to the brothers to join."

Rand Paul was there, according to a press release, to "continue dialogue on vital issues such as nuclear non-proliferation and combating terrorism." Paul also invited Russian lawmakers to visit Washington, D.C., later this year, ABC News reported.

Paul, the Huffines brothers and the other Americans met with the Russians for about an hour, according to ABC News. Afterward, Paul said the meeting was "wonderful" and achieved his goal of having "open lines of communication" with Moscow.

"I'm pleased to announce that we will be furthering this conversation," Paul said. "We have invited members of the foreign relations committee of Russia to come to the United States and meet with us in Washington."