AUDITOR JB MCCUSKEY, SENATOR RYAN WELD BAN TIKTOK

Today, West Virginia State Auditor JB McCuskey and Senate Majority Whip Ryan Weld, former Air Force intelligence officer and Vice Chair of the Judiciary Committee, are banning the use of TikTok on state government issued devices and networks in an effort to protect the state from the growing threat of the Chinese Communist Party.

As of noon, Monday, Auditor McCuskey issued a directive to his office, banning TikTok on state government devices and all computer networks associated with the Auditor’s Office. The ban includes government issued devices used by WV Oasis, which is the central repository for all the state’s financial data, including payroll, and devices within the many departments of the State Auditor’s Office.

The Auditor’s Office functions as the chief information officer for the state and this move will serve to protect the state’s core financial infrastructure from intrusion by those who wish to harm us.

McCuskey and Weld are also calling for all state, county, and city governments to ban the use of TikTok on their government issued devices, with an exception for public safety.

“I am so thankful to work with Senator Weld on this incredibly important initiative, we have seen the threat that China and its government poses to our critical infrastructure and this move is a proactive approach to protect the taxpayers of West Virginia,” McCuskey said.

“Auditor McCuskey is absolutely making the right move by banning this app. TikTok collects a significant amount of data from its users’ devices – much of which is not related to the app’s supposed use. It has no place on government devices,” Weld stated.

There are serious security concerns surrounding the Chinese-owned app and McCuskey and Weld say this step is necessary to protect the state. The FBI has said that the Chinese government could use the app to control data collection on Americans.

As a corollary to this effort, Auditor McCuskey and Senator Weld are preparing legislation that prohibits nations of concern from acquiring property through the West Virginia property tax sale process. There have already been instances where countries from this list, which includes Russia, China and North Korea, are harming American interests through this process. This is another proactive step to protect West Virginia taxpayers and we look forward to introducing this legislation during the upcoming legislative session.