

Durbin cosponsors bipartisan legislation to combat gun trafficking and straw purchasing

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today joined a bipartisan group of Senators in introducing legislation to combat the practice of straw purchasing and illegal trafficking in firearms. The ***Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act of 2016*** – sponsored by Senate Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Patrick Leahy (D-VT)

and cosponsored by U.S. Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) – responds to calls from law enforcement officials for more effective tools to investigate and deter straw purchasers and gun traffickers.

Currently, there is no federal law that explicitly makes straw purchasing a crime, and it is only unlawful to traffic a firearm if the transferor had actual knowledge that the firearm would be used in connection with a crime. The recent terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California highlighted this gap; the rifles in that shooting were allegedly acquired through a straw purchaser. Straw purchasing and gun trafficking help supply the criminal gun market in Chicago; last year over 6,500 illegal guns were seized by the Chicago Police Department.

“Last year nearly 3,000 people were shot in Chicago, and so far this year there have been at least 340 more shooting victims in the city. Chicago and other cities across the country are being flooded with guns that have been straw purchased or trafficked into the hands of dangerous people. It needs to stop,” Durbin said. “We’ve reached a tipping point and Americans all across the country are now saying ‘enough.’ This bipartisan bill will crack down on the illegal trafficking of guns and impose strict punishments for straw purchasers. Buying a gun for another to use in a crime will mean a hard time-federal crime.”

The *Stop Illinois Trafficking in Firearms Act of 2016* would make clear that the straw purchasing and trafficking of firearms are federal crimes. The bill does not affect lawful purchases from federal firearms licensees, nor does it prohibit the innocent transfer of a firearm as a gift, or in relation to a legitimate raffle, auction or contest. The measure is supported by numerous law enforcement organizations, including the National Fraternal Order of Police, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the National Tactical Officers Association, the National District Attorneys Association, and the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

A similar version of the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act of 2016 [drew the support](#) of a bipartisan majority of the Senate in 2013.