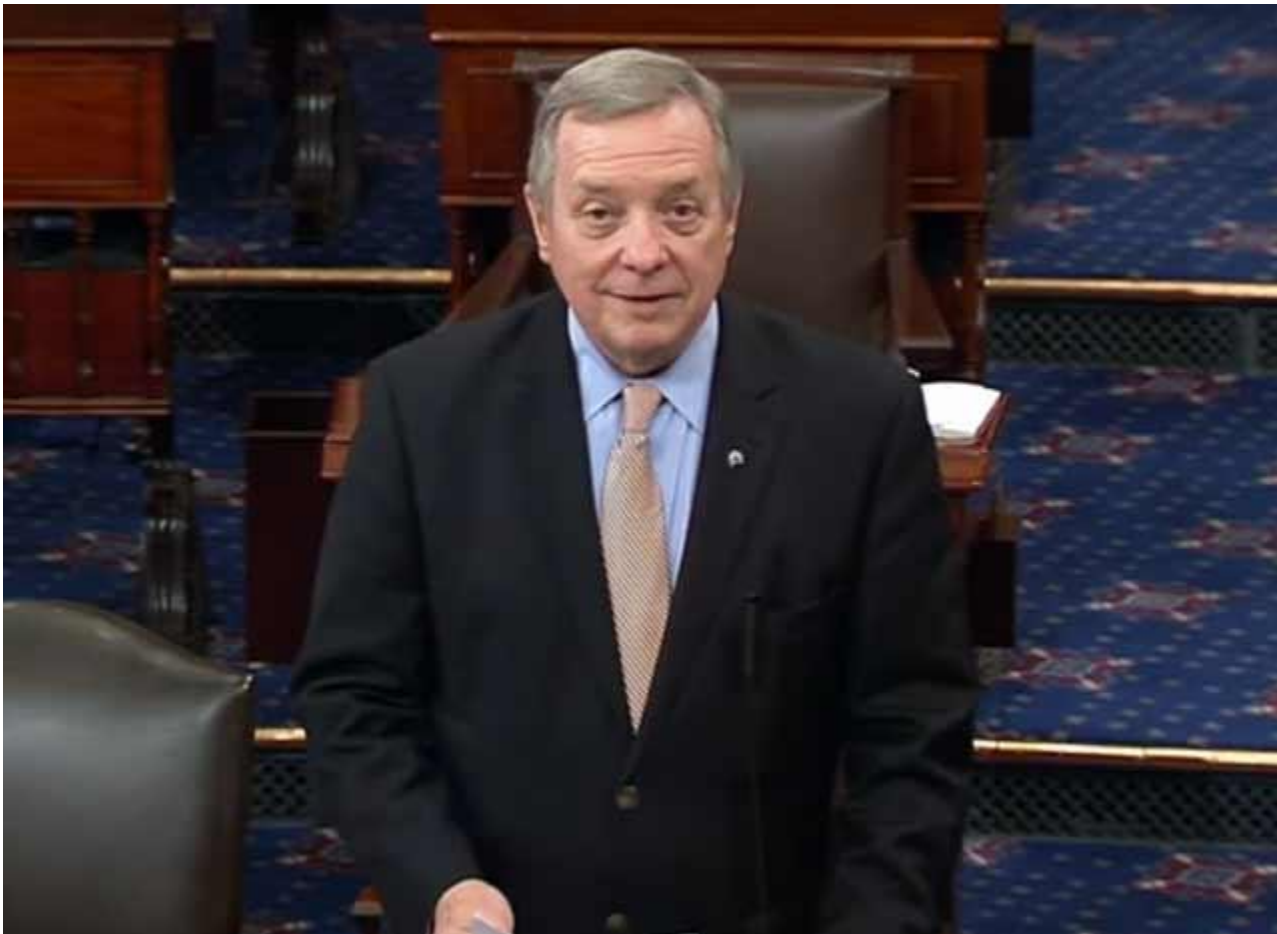


# Grassley-Durbin Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act expands bipartisan support

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**WASHINGTON — Assistant Senate Democratic Leader Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA), co-authors of the *Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act* today announced revisions to the legislation to broaden bipartisan support for criminal justice reform. Durbin and Grassley were joined**

by co-sponsors Assistant Majority Leader John Cornyn, Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Patrick Leahy, and Senators Mike Lee and Sheldon Whitehouse. Durbin spoke about the bill on the floor of the Senate immediately after the announcement:

**Video of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor are available [here](#).**

The revised bill is now cosponsored by a bipartisan group of 37 senators and supported by a broad and diverse array of organizations and interests. In a recent letter of support from the [National District Attorneys Association](#), the largest association of prosecutors in the country, the organization's president wrote, "As a result of months of changes and good faith negotiations, our organization feels the latest version of the bill strikes the appropriate balance between targeting the highest level drug traffickers plaguing our communities, while simultaneously decreasing crime rates and addressing the burgeoning prison population." The bill enjoys support from coalitions representing more than 400 groups and organizations across the political spectrum.

**"This legislation represents more than three years of work on criminal justice reform, and months of bipartisan negotiations with my colleagues. We believe this bill can pass the Senate with a majority of Democrats and majority of Republicans supporting it," said Durbin. "The United States incarcerates more of its citizens than any other country on earth. Mandatory minimum sentences were once seen as a strong deterrent. In reality they have too often been unfair, fiscally irresponsible and a threat to public safety. Given tight budgets and overcrowded prison cells, our country must reform these outdated and ineffective laws that have cost American taxpayers billions of dollars. This is the best chance in a generation to reform our federal drug sentencing laws. We cannot squander it."**

**"After nearly a year of bipartisan collaboration, we developed a comprehensive plan that goes a long way to address over-incarceration, reduce recidivism, and save taxpayer dollars, all while preserving tools to keep violent and career criminals out of our communities," said Grassley. "We've taken that same proven strategy of good-faith negotiations to our Senate colleagues to fine tune and improve this proposal. In doing so, the bill has gained even broader bipartisan support. I'm grateful for the work of the other authors and all of my colleagues for their willingness to come together on a historic bill worth of consideration by the full Senate."**

The revised legislation leaves intact important tools to help prosecutors take down large criminal operations, and still reduces minimum penalties for low-level, non-violent offenders. The bill still expands the existing safety-valve provision and creates a second safety-valve so that judges are able to exercise greater discretion in sentencing for low-level, non-violent drug traffickers. And the bill maintains two new mandatory

minimums for offenses involving interstate domestic violence and providing weapons to prohibited countries or designated terrorists. Importantly, the revised bill also leaves in place important prison reforms that encourage qualifying inmates to earn reduced sentences through recidivism reduction programs.

After seeking input from Senate colleagues, the authors fine-tuned some provisions to ensure violent criminals do not benefit from reduced sentence opportunities established by the bill. It now expressly excludes offenders convicted of any serious violent felony from retroactive early release. It also substantially limits the changes to the firearm provisions, striking all changes to the Armed Career Criminal Act. The revised bill also establishes a mandatory sentencing enhancement for offenses involving fentanyl, a dangerous opioid responsible for thousands of drug overdoses and deaths.

The revised bill also provides greater opportunity for relief for low-level, non-violent drug offenders. Prior misdemeanors and other minor drug offenses are excluded from an offender's criminal history calculation for purposes of the safety valve. The bill makes clear that minor, non-violent participants in large drug conspiracies can be eligible for relief under the "second safety valve." And a defendant who cooperates with law enforcement may not be subject to an enhanced sentence unless the defendant was involved in any acts of violence. Finally, outdated, non-violent narcotics convictions cannot serve as predicate offenses for the enhanced mandatory minimum for repeat offenders.