

# **Durbin: Sessions is not the right person to stand up to President Trump**

February 8 2017 8:00 AM



*Argues America needs an independent Attorney General willing to defend constitutional rights of all*

WASHINGTON – As the Senate debates the nomination of Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) to be U.S. Attorney General, Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) spoke on the Senate floor about why he cannot support Sessions becoming the country's chief law enforcement officer. Durbin stressed the need for an independent Attorney General and questioned Sessions' ability to stand up to President Trump if his actions are unlawful.

In light of the Attorney General's vast authority and discretion over how the law is enforced, Senator Durbin also expressed deep concern over Sessions' checkered record on civil rights and immigration as well as his unwillingness to commit Justice Department resources to address gun violence in Chicago.

"This is not a decision I've come to lightly. Senator Sessions is a colleague of over 20 years. But the question we now face is whether he's the right person to be the number one law enforcement official in the United States of America. He comes to this new opportunity in a sharply divided nation. We have a controversial new president who already has seen an executive order blocked by the courts in what appears to be record time... In this context, the need for an independent Attorney General has never been greater," said Senator Durbin.

"We need an Attorney General who will not just serve as the President's lawyer and cheerleader but who will defend the constitutional rights of everyone – including protecting those rights from an overreaching Executive Branch, if necessary. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I have carefully considered this nomination, and I am not persuaded that Senator Sessions will serve with that level of independence."