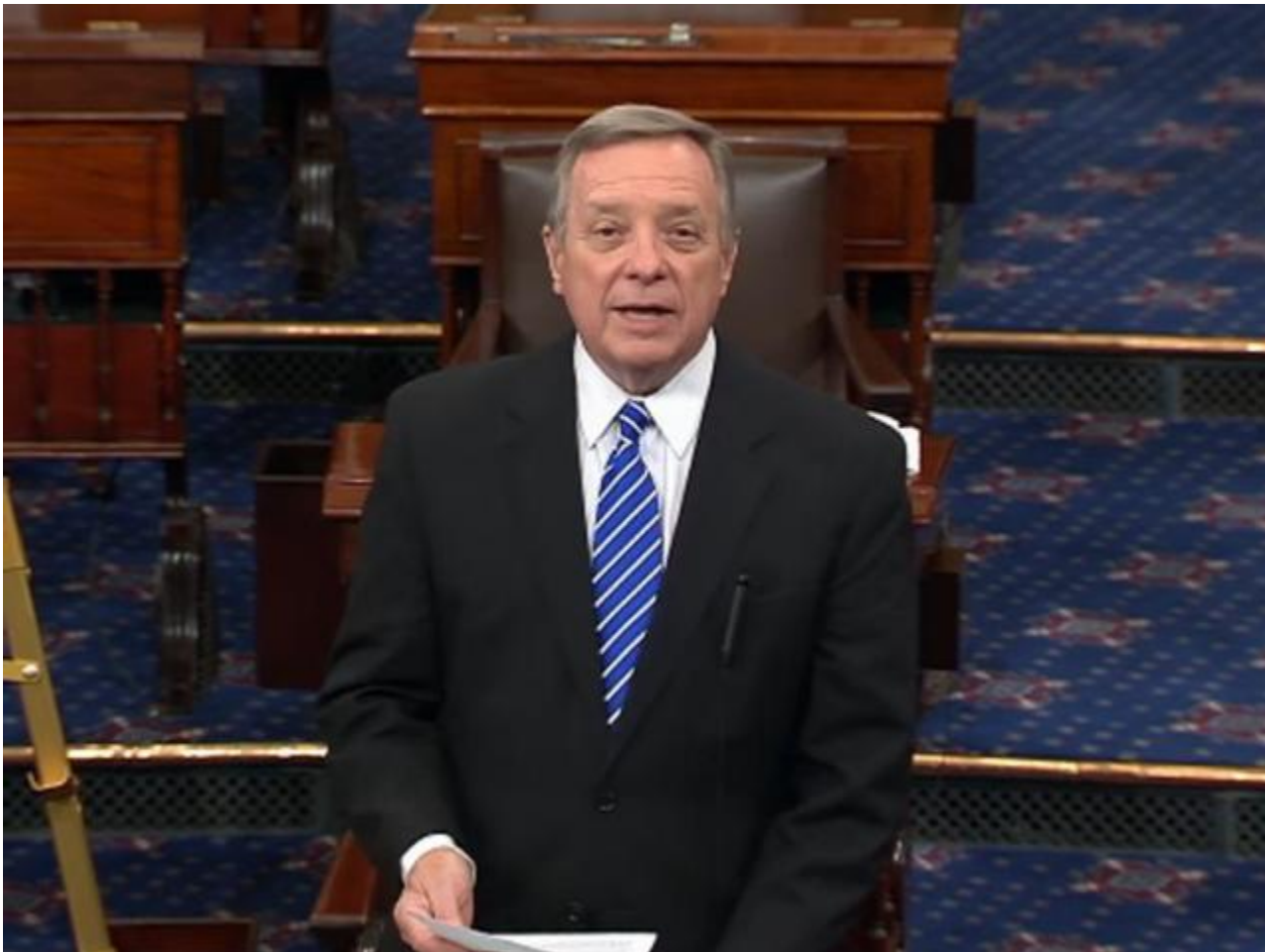


Durbin to Trump: generating real solutions to Chicago's violence requires more than 140 characters

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WASHINGTON – In anticipation of the release of President Donald Trump's first budget request to Congress, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, today pressed the President to include increased investments in federal programs that will help Chicago reduce violence by expanding economic

opportunities and addressing health and education disparities in the hardest-hit communities. In a letter to President Trump, Durbin broadly outlined the need for a more comprehensive approach from the federal government in addressing the root causes of Chicago's violence by identifying five areas for much-needed federal investment: housing and economic development, jobs, education, public health, and community policing.

“As you prepare your Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request, I urge you to use this budget as an opportunity to do more than tweet about the recent surge of gun violence in Chicago,” Durbin wrote in the letter to President Trump. **“While it may be easy to tweet that ‘Chicago needs help!’, generating real and measurable solutions to help Chicago reduce gun violence requires more than 140 characters. Reducing violence in Chicago requires a comprehensive approach involving partnerships with local officials, law enforcement, community stakeholders, and the federal government. Through sustained and targeted investment of much-needed federal funding in low-income communities, the federal government can play an integral role in addressing the economic and societal issues that lead to violence.”**

Full text of Durbin's letter to President Trump is available below:

March 8, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

As you prepare your Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request, I urge you to use this budget as an opportunity to do more than tweet about the recent surge of gun violence in Chicago. I urge that you instead include in your request federal support and resources that will help Chicago reduce violence by expanding economic opportunities and addressing health and education disparities in the hardest-hit communities.

The number of shootings and homicides that Chicago continues to experience is tragic and unacceptable. But while it may be easy to tweet that “Chicago needs help!”, generating real and measurable solutions to help Chicago reduce gun violence requires more than 140 characters. Reducing violence in Chicago requires a comprehensive approach involving partnerships with local officials, law enforcement, community

stakeholders, and the federal government. Through sustained and targeted investment of much-needed federal funding in low-income communities, the federal government can play an integral role in addressing the economic and societal issues that lead to violence.

Housing and Economic Development

The violence in Chicago is often located in communities with higher unemployment and years of neglect and disinvestment. Two of the most important ways the federal government can help break the cycle of violence and provide stability in these neighborhoods is by ensuring access to safe, affordable housing and encouraging economic and community development. Increasing funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program—the largest federal block grant designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households—will help provide housing in areas where there is access to quality education and jobs. In 2016, the HOME program was projected to provide more than 8,000 low-income and moderate-income families in Chicago with affordable housing. Further investment in programs like the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative and Community Development Block Grants can help revitalize neighborhoods, attracting businesses and creating much needed jobs. Providing reliable access to job opportunities is also crucial, which is why more federal funding for programs like Core Capacity Grants is needed to modernize and expand public transportation.

Job Opportunities

When young people are chronically unemployed, it increases the likelihood that they will become involved in crime. I urge you to prioritize important youth mentoring and job training programs at the U.S. Departments of Labor, Justice, and Education that pursue innovative strategies for connecting young people to career pathways. The Department of Labor's Summer Jobs and Beyond Grant Program helped Chicago expand its summer employment program and provide year-round work opportunities for 300 at risk youth last year. I also urge you to strengthen mentoring and violence prevention initiatives at the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and boost funding for recidivism reduction programs under the federal Second Chance Act.

Education

Quality education is the cornerstone of economic opportunity and it is vital to start early—the first five years of a child's life are crucial years for development—to be cost-effective and have the most impact. I urge you to make strong federal investments in high-quality early childhood education, such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Preschool Development Grants that prepare at-

risk children with a strong foundation to succeed in school and life and help meet the needs of working families. In 2014, these programs helped over 630,000 Illinois children under age six and employed more than 69,000 people in full-time jobs. I also urge you to support resources for Chicago's highest-need K-12 students through expanded investments in Titles I and IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Title I provides federal resources to schools with high concentrations of students in poverty. Title IV provides resources to ensure students' access to a well-rounded education, including school-based mental health programs, mentoring, and computer science. Together, more resources for these programs can remake communities and help to end the culture of violence.

Public Health

Combating Chicago's community violence is not just an economic or education issue—it is also a serious public health matter. One of the best ways to tackle this crisis is by supporting strong families, building environments that promote health, and starting early to prevent and mitigate the effects of experiencing trauma. In order to address these social determinants of health, I urge you to provide in your budget tools and training for communities to promote health through the Administration for Children & Families (ACF), including providing robust funding for Community and Social Services Block Grants. Harmful childhood environments can shape lifelong health and behaviors, which is why I also urge you to invest in maternal and child health promotion programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), including providing strong funding for the Maternal & Child Health Block Grant. I urge you to increase support for prevention and treatment programs at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), including the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, because mental health and substance use disorders can affect overall health and wellbeing. In addition, improving data collection and research by supporting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) lead poisoning and violence prevention activities is vital to understanding where to target our efforts.

Community Policing

And finally, we cannot reduce violence in Chicago without an effective community policing strategy where law enforcement officers are properly trained and resourced and where there is a relationship of trust and cooperation between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The federal government can help in Chicago by enhancing funding for programs that improve community policing such as the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and Byrne-JAG programs. The Department of Justice must also follow through on its commitment to negotiate sustainable and enforceable policing reforms in Chicago.

In his first year in office, President Obama provided a public safety and economic development funding surge for Chicago and other communities through the Recovery Act and the appropriations process. I urge you to include a similar funding surge in your first budget.

The President's Budget Request is an important reflection of the Administration's priorities and the direction that the President hopes to take the country. During the 2016 presidential campaign and in tweets and comments since the election, you have lamented about the recent surge in gun violence in Chicago, but now is the time for action.

I urge you to use your first budget to deliver real solutions to this urgent problem by increasing investment in federal programs that will help stop the violence, save lives, and lift people out of poverty.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin