



Durbin: GOP Must Stand Up to Gun Sales Lobby & Act to Prevent the Next Slaughter

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WASHINGTON—Following the tragic mass shooting at First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, that killed at least 26 people and injured 20 more, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) called on his congressional Republican colleagues to work with Democrats on a bipartisan basis to reduce gun violence. The only vote the U.S. Senate has held this year on guns has been to overturn a regulation to keep guns out of the hands of individuals with mental illness.

“It is so sad that when people go to Church on Sunday, they are not safe from gun violence and gun massacres that are occurring way too frequently across the United States. There are things that we need to do, and only we can do, in Congress to make the laws better and safer. The owners of firearms – overwhelmingly when they are asked – believe that we should have comprehensive background checks to keep guns out of the hands of those who misuse them. Overwhelmingly, a majority of gun owners feel that way, as most Americans feel. Why can’t we do that? We certainly know that it’s within our power,” Durbin said in a speech on the Senate floor. **“Why doesn’t the United States Congress take this up? Why don’t we even have a debate? I’m on the Senate Judiciary Committee – we’ve not had a single bill this year that addresses gun safety. Not one, despite the gun violence that takes place every day and despite tragedies like this tragedy over the weekend at Sutherland Springs, Texas.”**

Two weeks ago, Durbin joined Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) and 27 other Senate colleagues to [introduce](#) the *Background Check Expansion Act*, which will expand federal background checks to the sale or transfer of all firearms by private sellers, with certain reasonable exceptions. Under current law, unlicensed or private sellers are not required to conduct a background check prior to transferring a firearm.

Research indicates that as many as a quarter of all gun sales in the United States may occur without a background check even though [94 percent](#) of Americans support comprehensive background checks.