



Durbin joins colleagues in calling for action on legislation to fund gun violence research

March 16 2018 11:08 AM

CHICAGO — U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today joined Senator Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and 25 other Senators in calling on leaders of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee to immediately act on legislation to fund gun violence prevention research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A Republican appropriations rider, first authorized by then-Congressman Jay Dickey (R-AR) in 1996, prohibits the CDC from using federal funds to advocate or promote gun control. Some have misconstrued this rider as a ban on CDC research into the causes of gun violence.

“In the wake of the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, it has become increasingly clear that gun violence in America is going to continue unabated until Congress takes meaningful action,” the Senators wrote in a letter to Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Patty Murray (D-WA). “On behalf of families across the country, we urge you to join the medical professionals in recognizing gun violence as a public health issue, and respectfully request that the HELP Committee consider S.834 at its next Executive Session.”

In the letter, the Senators point to the overwhelming support from the medical and public health communities for recognizing gun violence as a public health crisis. Just today, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar again stated that there is no impediment to his agency from conducting gun violence research. In 2015, a CDC official released a statement noting it had commissioned an agenda of possible research goals on gun violence but still lacked the dedicated funding to pursue it: “It is possible for us to conduct firearm-related research within the context of our efforts to address youth violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, and suicide, but our resources are very limited.” In their letter, the members urged Senators Alexander and Murray to consider S.834, legislation to provide \$60 million in funding for the CDC to conduct or

support research on firearms safety and gun violence prevention, during their next Executive Session.

Also signing the letter are Senators Bill Nelson (D-FL), Bob Casey (D-PA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Tina Smith (D-MN), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Chris Coons (D-DE), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Tom Carper (D-DE), Jack Reed (D-RI), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Ben Cardin (D-MD), and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI.).

Full text of the letter is available [here](#).