



# Durbin applauds Senate passage of bipartisan bill to fight opioid epidemic

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today applauded Senate passage of a bipartisan opioid legislative package to help address both causes and effects of the nation's worst-ever drug overdose epidemic. The legislative package includes major provisions from Durbin's bipartisan bill to strengthen the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) ability to adjust quotas determining the number of opioid drugs allowed to be produced in the United States each year, and his bill to better support children who have experienced traumatic events. The bill will now be negotiated with the House of Representatives in a conference committee.

"Every zip code in Illinois and across the nation is struggling to combat the opioid epidemic—I'm glad we are finally doing something to tackle this crisis and give those on the front lines the tools and resources they need to help save lives," Durbin said. "This bipartisan bill includes several important initiatives that I've authored and supported – from strengthening the DEA's ability to limit the supply of painkillers allowed to be sold on the market, addressing trauma that can lead to future drug abuse and violence, supporting research into non-addictive pain medication, and creating new grant programs that provide naloxone for first responders. This legislation is an important step in addressing the aspects of this crisis, and we should waste no time getting it on the President's desk for signature. "

The legislative package includes Durbin's [Opioid Quota Reform Act](#), which he introduced with Senators John Kennedy (R-LA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), and Chuck Grassley (R-IA). The legislation will enhance the DEA's existing opioid quota-setting authority by allowing the DEA to consider addiction, overdose, and public health effects when setting opioid production quota levels.

The package also includes several key provisions from Durbin's [Trauma Informed Care for Children and Families Act](#), which he introduced with Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND), designed to support children who have been exposed to any Adverse Childhood

Experience (“ACE,”) such as violence or parental drug addiction), which can lead to future drug use as a way to cope. Individuals with multiple ACEs are ten times more likely to misuse illicit narcotics. Because of this link, the Senate opioid package includes major reforms to better identify and support children who have experienced trauma by:

- Creating a federal task force to coordinate federal efforts, establish a national strategy, and recommend best practices for identify, referring, and supporting children that have experienced trauma
- Promoting trauma-informed care in dozens of additional federal grant programs
- Creating a mental health in schools pilot program to integrate services, and increase student access to care
- Investing in the mental health workforce by expanding the National Health Service Corps loan repayment program, and enhancing masters-level graduate school education for behavioral health and social work professionals
- The Senate package includes several other key provisions that Durbin has supported, including supporting research into non-addictive pain medication, improving screening at the border and in mail packages for fentanyl, and creating several new grant programs that support naloxone for first responders, expanded treatment and recovery, and care for mothers and babies born with drug withdrawal.

Every day, more than 115 Americans die from an opioid overdose. In the past three years, there has been a 53 percent spike in drug overdose deaths in Illinois, with more than 2,400 lives lost in 2016.