



# Durbin, Young bill to support congenital heart defect research passes senate

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Todd Young (R-IN) announced today that their bipartisan bill, the *Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act*, unanimously passed the Senate. This legislation will promote federal research on congenital heart defects (CHD) and raise awareness of the impact these health problems have throughout patients' lives. The Senate-passed *Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act* increases the funding authorization level for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to \$10 million per year, compared to the current funding level of \$4 million, which will help states collect data on the prevalence of CHD and understand trends, health care needs, and disparities among the one million children and 1.4 million adults living with CHD.

Last year, Durbin and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced a similar version of this bipartisan bill, which was also cosponsored by Senators Young, Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Chris Coons (D-DE), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and Roger Wicker (R-MS).

“If a loved one ever has the misfortune of getting sick or being born with a serious medical condition, you hope there’s a treatment or care option for them. That’s why I’ve fought to increase biomedical research—resulting in a \$9 billion funding increase for our National Institutes of Health over the past four years. And that’s why passing the bipartisan *Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act* is so important. It will improve research, data collection, and awareness so we can establish a standard of care for the 2.5 million American survivors with this serious birth defect, and provide real hope for their futures,” said Durbin.

“Gaining a better understanding of congenital heart defects is critical to the nearly 1 in 100 babies born with CHD and the millions of survivors living with this disease,” said Young. “That’s why I helped lead the *Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act*

with Senator Durbin, to increase research funding and awareness for congenital heart defects. I'm proud this bipartisan legislation has passed the Senate and is now one step closer to becoming law and saving lives."

Durbin first introduced the *Congenital Heart Futures Act* in 2009 with Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) and Representatives Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Zack Space (D-OH). The bill was included in the *Affordable Care Act*, and supported research to build a set of best practices and understanding for how to screen and care for newborns with health defects.

The *Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act* is supported by the Pediatric Congenital Heart Association, Adult Congenital Heart Association, American Heart Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, Children's Hospital Association, American College of Cardiology, Society for Thoracic Surgeons, Children's Heart Foundation, and Mended Little Hearts.

Heart defects are the most common and deadliest form of birth defects, with one in twenty children not living to see their first birthday. Early detection of congenital heart defects can be lifesaving. Thanks to significant strides in screening rates and surgical procedures, an estimated 90 percent of youth with CHD now survive into adulthood. However, there is no cure. As adult survivors age, they require lifelong, specialized care, and some patients face ongoing and additional health challenges, including an increased risk of disability and premature death.