



# Durbin, Colleagues Introduce Bill To Restore Amtrak Riders' Legal Rights & Protections

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), along with Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and U.S. Representatives Conor Lamb (D-PA-17) and Denny Heck (D-WA-10), introduced legislation to restore legal rights and protections to Amtrak riders who are currently prevented from seeking justice in the courts and joining together to seek accountability for their claims.

Amtrak implemented its forced arbitration and class action ban policy last January, specifically writing it to be “as broad as legally permissible,” including discrimination and any personal injury claims. The policy also includes passengers who have tickets bought for them, including minors. The company put the policy in place after incidents like the 2015 train derailment in Philadelphia and the 2017 derailment in Washington State, which resulted in multi-million dollar settlements for the victims. If a similar incident were to happen today, passengers would not be able to file lawsuits.

“Amtrak riders unknowingly sign away their rights to go to court when they purchase a ticket for a trip on the train,” Durbin said. “If something were to happen on that train ride, they’d be limited in their ability to seek justice. That’s plain wrong, and our bill restores fairness to this process for Amtrak customers.”

The *Ending Passenger Rail Forced Arbitration Act* is co-sponsored by Sens. Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Gary Peters (D-MI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT).

The legislation is also supported by a number of consumer and industry groups, including the American Association for Justice, Rail Passengers Association, and Public Citizen.

The full text of the legislation is available [here](#).

In November, Durbin joined a group of 14 Senators writing the company to “demand that Amtrak immediately eliminate anti-consumer arbitration and class action policy.” The full text of the Senators’ letter to Amtrak is available [here](#).

Durbin is also a cosponsor of the *Forced Arbitration Injustice Repeal (FAIR) Act* in the Senate. The legislation would increase Americans’ rights to seek justice and accountability through the court system by eliminating forced arbitration clauses in employment, consumer, and civil rights cases, and would allow consumers and workers to agree to arbitration after a dispute occurs.