



Durbin Calls On Congress To Protect Immigrant Doctors & Nurses On Frontlines Of Covid-19 Pandemic

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WASHINGTON – In a speech on the Senate floor, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee, thanked the health care heroes on the front lines of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and highlighted one special group of health care workers – immigrants. Durbin also called on his colleagues to support the bipartisan *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act*, legislation to quickly address the plight of immigrant doctors and nurses who are stuck in the green-card backlog, which poses a significant risk to our ability to effectively respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

Durbin's floor speech was part of his initiative to share the stories of #ImmigrantHealthHeroes. On the floor, Durbin shared the story of Dr. Parth Mehta, a hospitalist at UnityPoint Health Methodist Medical Center in Peoria, Illinois.

"Dr. Mehta's story makes it clear why Congress needs to pass the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act*," Durbin said. "Under our bill, Dr. Mehta and thousands of others like him could receive their green cards. They and their families would get the permanent immigration status that they deserve and be able to use their skills to serve on the front lines of the pandemic where they are needed most."

Durbin continued, "It would be great in these times of political division if we could come together in this Congress to quickly aid these immigrant health care heroes... To Dr. Mehta and to his family, with all their fears, they should know that there are many here in Congress, particularly here in the Senate, who want to move as quickly as possible to make sure that their lives are better because they've done so much to make the lives of others better."

Footage of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).

Video of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).

Audio of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).

Last month, Durbin, along with Senators David Perdue (R-GA), Todd Young (R-IN), Chris Coons (D-DE), John Cornyn (R-TX), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT), introduced bipartisan legislation, the [Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act](#), to provide a temporary stopgap to quickly address our nation's shortage of doctors and nurses. This legislation would recapture 25,000 unused immigrant visas for nurses and 15,000 unused immigrant visas for doctors. These are visas that Congress has previously authorized but that were not used.

Durbin has also introduced [legislation](#) to eliminate the family and employment green card backlog by increasing the number of green cards.

Dr. Parth Mehta was born in India. As a child, he was inspired to pursue a career in medicine by his grandfather, who worked as an assistant to a physician and his older sister, who is a surgeon.

Dr. Mehta came to the United States in 2004. He obtained a Masters in Public Health at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, and then completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Saint Joseph Hospital in Chicago. In 2010, Dr. Mehta began working at as a hospitalist at UnityPoint Health Methodist Medical Center, in Peoria, Illinois.

Dr. Mehta lives in Peoria with his wife and his 10-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter. Now Dr. Mehta is on the frontlines of the pandemic treating COVID-19 patients. He also was selected as the principal investigator for a COVID-19 trial for which his hospital has applied.