



Durbin, Duckworth Statement On Expansion Of DOJ Operation Legend To Chicago

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today released the following statement regarding the Department of Justice (DOJ) announcing an expansion of Operation Legend to Chicago, Illinois. Operation Legend is DOJ’s violent crime reduction initiative with the stated goal to provide support and assistance to state and local law enforcement partners as they work to combat violent crime, and gun violence in particular. Durbin and Duckworth are set to speak with U.S. Attorney John Lausch about Operation Legend today.

“After needless threats from the President, we’re relieved the Trump Administration says they plan to work with local officials and authorities in Chicago rather than undermine local law enforcement and endanger our civil rights, as their agents have done in Portland. We will continue closely monitoring the Administration’s efforts to ensure they follow through with this commitment.

“More than three years ago, we sent President Trump a [letter](#) suggesting a range of ways in which the Federal Government could work in partnership with local officials to provide support and resources to assist in public safety, violence prevention, and economic development efforts in Chicago. While we are hopeful that today’s announcement means the Administration has reconsidered and will take a more positive approach, President Trump still has not replied to our letter nor followed through with our suggestions. We reiterate that these steps would be more effective in reducing violence in Chicago than any effort the Administration may take to replicate the destabilizing role it played in Portland.”

In their 2017 letter which they reiterated yesterday, Durbin and Duckworth recommended that the Trump Administration take steps to assist local violence prevention efforts, including:

- enhancing Department of Justice (DOJ) programs that improve community policing;
- directing DOJ to promote mentoring and job training programs for youth and formerly incarcerated individuals;
- improving mentoring and violence prevention initiatives and boosting funding for recidivism reduction programs;
- directing DOJ to abide by its commitment to help implement policing reforms recommended by the Department's Civil Rights Division;
- closing gaps in the FBI gun background check system and in federal firearm laws that enable straw purchasers and gun traffickers to flood Chicago's streets with illicit guns;
- prioritizing career and youth training programs to address lack of economic opportunity in neighborhoods hit hard by violence; and
- redirecting resources that are being devoted to construction of a border wall and committing those resources instead to the efforts discussed above.

The expansion of Operation Legend will consist of an increased federal law enforcement presence in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and in Chicago, Illinois. This federal law enforcement presence will consist of experienced investigative agents from FBI, DEA, ATF, U.S. Marshals, and HSI, focused on providing support to existing violent crime task forces.