

Durbin Discusses Start Of New School Year During Covid-19 Pandemic With Teach For America

September 1 2020 6:00 PM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today spoke with the Teach for America (TFA) Chicago-Northwest Indiana Executive Director Aneesh Sohoni about how TFA is helping Illinois school districts meet the challenges of educating during the COVID-19 pandemic. On the call, Durbin and Sohoni discussed the teacher shortage in Illinois that disproportionately impacts students from low-income backgrounds and students of color and TFA’s instrumental efforts in filling these open positions to ensure that students in Illinois receive a quality education.

“Amid this pandemic, educators, school faculty, and Teach for America corps members have gone the extra mile for their students’ education by quickly transitioning their lesson plans to accommodate safety guidelines or remote learning. We owe them a debt of gratitude for educating the next generation, but we must do more to provide teachers with the pay they deserve and the resources they need to run their classrooms,” said Durbin. “Offering a fully refundable tax credit to teachers and staff is the first step in paying our teachers properly and addressing nationwide teacher shortages.”

To address the teacher shortage, Durbin introduced the [*RETAIN Act*](#) earlier this year to create a fully refundable tax credit for teachers, paraprofessionals, mental health providers, and school leaders in Title I schools and for educators, program providers, and program directors in head start, early head start, and Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funded early childhood education programs. The tax credits increase annually to incentivize professionals to keep their positions as they grow more experienced.