

Durbin Slams President Trump's Refusal To Condemn White Supremacists

September 30 2020 4:42 PM



WASHINGTON – In a speech on the Senate floor, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) slammed President Donald Trump’s refusal to condemn white supremacists during the course of last night’s Presidential debate. Durbin also called on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to bring Durbin’s bill, the [Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2020](#), to the floor for a vote. Last week, on a unanimous vote, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the House companion to Durbin’s *Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2020*. The bill would enhance the federal government’s efforts to prevent domestic terrorism by requiring federal law enforcement agencies to regularly assess this threat, focus their resources on the most significant domestic terrorism threats, and provide training and resources to assist state, local, and tribal law enforcement in addressing these threats.

“Like most Americans, I was stunned by the President’s refusal last night to condemn white supremacists during the course of last night’s Presidential debate,” Durbin said. “Trump’s comments were quickly embraced by the Proud Boys, an alt-right self-described ‘western chauvinist’ group who clearly viewed it as a call to action. The group immediately turned the President’s words in the debate into a logo that’s been widely circulated on social media.”

Durbin continued, “For years now, in letters, briefings, and hearings, I have repeatedly urged the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Homeland Security to take a strong stand against the ongoing threat of violent white supremacy and other far-right-wing extremists. Unfortunately, instead of following up with a comprehensive, coordinated effort, to no surprise, the Trump Administration has repeatedly chosen to downplay this deadly threat. A law-and-order President who looks the other way—winks, nods, and says ‘stand by’ to the militia groups and white supremacists.”

Durbin concluded, “Last week, the House of Representatives passed the House companion to my bill—unanimous voice vote. Democrats and Republicans all agreed. Senator McConnell has a chance to take it up. Are we going to stand together as the House did on a bipartisan basis, condemning white supremacists who resort to violence and terrorism? Or are we going to say to them ‘stand back and stand by?’ It’s time for us to step up together on a bipartisan basis.”

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

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

Footage of Durbin’s remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#) for TV Stations.

Since May 2019, Durbin has led two [letters](#) to Attorney General Bill Barr and FBI Director Chris Wray, asking what the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the FBI are doing to combat the growing threat of white supremacist violence targeting religious minorities and communities of color. In January, Durbin again [pressed](#) DOJ and FBI to take the initiative in leading a coordinated nationwide effort by federal, state, and local law enforcement and intelligence agencies to disrupt and prevent these violent domestic terrorism and hate crime incidents before they take place.

On September 17, FBI Director Christopher Wray testified to Congress that “the top threat we face from domestic violent extremists stems from those we identify as racially /ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVE)” and that most of these are white supremacists.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, in 2019, domestic extremists killed at least 42 people in the United States in 17 separate incidents. This number makes 2019 the sixth deadliest year on record for domestic extremist-related killings. Last year, a Trump Administration Department of Justice official wrote in a New York Times op-ed that

“white supremacy and far-right extremism are among the greatest domestic-security threats facing the United States. Regrettably, over the past 25 years, law enforcement, at both the Federal and State levels, has been slow to respond.”