

Durbin, Capito, Colleagues, Introduce Bipartisan Legislation To Address Childhood Trauma

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RISE From Trauma Act would expand support for children who have experienced trauma and address the cycle of violence and addiction

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Shelly Moore Capito (R-WV), along with U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), today introduced bipartisan legislation to increase support for children who have been exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma, including witnessing community violence, parental addiction, or abuse. The *Resilience Investment, Support, and Expansion (RISE) from Trauma Act* dramatically increases funding for community-based efforts to prevent and mitigate the impact of

trauma, and expands training and workforce development efforts to support health care, education, social service, first responders, and community leaders to foster resilience and deliver services to heal the impact of trauma.

“To effectively treat the root causes of violence and addiction in our communities, we must focus on the impact that exposure to violence and traumatic experiences have on children,” said Durbin. “Unaddressed trauma can harm mental and physical health, life expectancy, school success, and employment, so we must take serious action to prevent the ripple effect that trauma can have. Our bipartisan legislation invests in communities and the workforce to support children and families facing trauma to heal their emotional scars and build a brighter future for our communities.”

“I’m glad to once again work with Senator Durbin to address the impact of trauma on children,” Capito said. “The *RISE from Trauma Act* builds on our past work and reflects the needs I continue to hear across West Virginia. By increasing resources for our communities and expanding our trauma-informed workforce, we are helping to prevent future substance abuse and violence, provide assistance and hope to our most vulnerable, and empower our next generation.”

“Far too many people across our country have been forced to deal with the harmful impact of violence and addiction in their communities and many have lost family members, friends and neighbors to senseless violence and to addiction themselves. We need to do everything we can to ensure those who grieve or have endured trauma are able to receive the care and support they need, especially children who have been affected at such a formative age,” said Duckworth. “I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing this important bipartisan bill to provide more resources for communities where they are needed most.”

“Traumatic experiences—such as a child witnessing domestic violence or a drug overdose in the home—can have real and lasting impacts on a person’s long-term behavioral health and well-being. We can’t always prevent the trauma from taking place, but we do have the opportunity to help mitigate the impacts by providing parents, schools, social service and healthcare providers with the training and tools they need to provide children with safe, nurturing environments,” said Murkowski. “This legislation would expand the trauma-informed workforce and increase resources for communities in need, giving more Alaskans access to much-needed supports and services.”

U.S. Representative Danny Davis (D-IL-07) will soon introduce companion legislation in the House of Representatives to continue his leadership on this issue.

Nationwide, nearly 35 million children have had at least one traumatic experience, and nearly two-thirds of children have been exposed to violence. A recent study found that

nearly 60 percent of the youngest children in Chicago lived in neighborhoods that accounted for 91 percent of homicides. Far too many kids carry the emotional weight of community violence and other traumatic experiences, such as the daily stress of abuse or neglect at home, a parent battling addiction, or an incarceration or a deportation of a loved one. Trauma can create stress on the developing brain and force children into constant “survival mode”, impacting the way they process fear or form healthy relationships. Decades of research, including from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), have established the link between a child’s exposure to trauma, its effect on neurological and behavioral development, and long-term negative outcomes. In fact, studies show that individuals who have experienced six or more ACEs have a 20 year shorter average life expectancy, and those who have experienced four or more ACEs are ten times more likely to use illicit narcotics and 12 times more likely to attempt suicide. Yet only a small fraction of the children in need of support to address trauma receive such care.

The *RISE from Trauma Act* builds upon the conclusions published in a [2019 GAO report](#) requested by Durbin and Davis and calls for increased resources and trauma-informed workforce for communities to support children who have experienced trauma. This bipartisan legislation also expands upon provisions that Durbin, Capito, Murkowski, and Davis helped to pass in 2018 to create a federal task force across agencies to establish a national strategy and promote trauma best practices across all relevant federal grant programs; created a new \$50 million mental health in schools program; increased funding for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) National Child Traumatic Stress Network by \$17 million; increase funding for CDC research into ACEs; and expanded the National Health Services Corps loan repayment program to allow clinicians to serve in schools.

The *RISE from Trauma Act* would expand the trauma-informed workforce in schools, health care settings, social services, first responders, and the justice system, and increase resources for communities to address the impact of trauma. Specifically, the bill:

- Creates a new, \$600 million annual HHS grant program to fund community-based coalitions that coordinate stakeholders and deliver targeted local services to address trauma;
- Creates a new HHS grant program to support hospital-based trauma interventions, such as for patients that suffer violent injuries, in order to address mental health needs, prevent re-injury, and improve long-term outcomes;
- Increases funding for the National Health Service Corps loan repayment program, in order to recruit more mental health clinicians—including from under-represented populations—to serve in schools;

- Enhances federal training programs at HHS, U.S. Department of Justice, and the U. S. Department of Education to provide more tools for early childhood clinicians, teachers, school leaders, first responders, and community leaders; and
- Establishes training and certification guidelines to enable insurance reimbursement for community figures—such as mentors, peers, and faith leaders—to address trauma.

The legislation is endorsed by the following organizations: American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychological Association, Children’s Defense Fund, YMCA of the USA, Zero to Three, Futures without Violence, National Head Start Association, Center for Law and Social Policy, Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice, American Psychiatric Association, Trust for America’s Health, First Focus Campaign for Children, Family Focused Treatment Association, Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, Afterschool Alliance, Committee for Children, Prevent Child Abuse America, Girls Inc, Starr Commonwealth, MENTOR, and National Crittenton.