

Gun Trafficking Strike Force, Investments In Community Violence Prevention Programs In Chicago, Durbin, Lightfoot, Attorney General Garland Discuss

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today joined Attorney General Merrick Garland in Chicago to discuss several initiatives to address gun violence in the city, including the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) implementation of a firearms trafficking strike force in the city. Durbin, Lightfoot, and Garland visited the

Chicago Police Department (CPD) 11th District Office for a briefing about law enforcement efforts to investigate gun violence and homicides. Durbin and Garland then traveled to St. Agatha Church to meet with READI Chicago participants and hear how trauma-informed care is helping prevent the cycle of violence among at-risk individuals.

“I was honored to accompany Attorney General Merrick Garland today. This Attorney General and this President care about the City of Chicago. We have a challenge we have to meet together and I’m honored to be working with the Mayor to address gun violence in the City of Chicago. It breaks my heart to hear the sad stories of the lives lost and people’s lives that change forever because of this violence. This gun trafficking strike force is an important first step to get guns off the streets and start making our communities safer for all,” Durbin said.

“Day after day, our residents are waking up to learn that one of their neighbors, friends, or family members have been lost to gun violence,” said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. “This is a reality that we simply cannot afford to accept nor one that can be tackled alone. Time and time again I have said that it is going to take people from all levels of government to step up and do their part to stem the scourge of gun violence that plagues our communities. That’s why I am incredibly grateful to Attorney General Garland and the Biden Administration for taking the time to have productive conversations about how we can prevent gun crime, effectively prosecute illegal gun traffickers and straw purchasers and ultimately save lives.”

In June, President Biden and Attorney General Garland announced that as part of the Administration’s comprehensive strategy to prevent and reduce gun crime, DOJ would launch five new law enforcement strike forces to combat illicit firearms trafficking into Chicago as well as four other cities. The strike forces will coordinate federal, state, and local efforts to identify and dismantle firearms trafficking schemes. Durbin has announced his [support](#) for the President’s efforts and for the creation of these strike forces. Durbin is also an original cosponsor of bipartisan Senate legislation, the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act, that would strengthen federal laws against straw purchasing and illicit firearm trafficking.

Last month, Durbin introduced the bipartisan *RISE from Trauma Act*, which would support community-based efforts to break the cycle of violence and address trauma, such as through the work of READI. READI is a large-scale trauma-informed initiative run by the Heartland Alliance that connects individuals most at-risk of gun violence involvement with cognitive behavioral therapy, paid transitional jobs, and wrap-around support services. READI serves about 2,500 participants, primarily from Chicago’s South and West Sides, and READI has shown significant results in reducing arrests and shooting victimizations among its participants.