

Durbin: If We Want This Pandemic To End, More Americans Have To Roll Up Their Sleeves And Get Vaccinated

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today delivered a speech on the Senate floor highlighting the growing death toll from COVID-19 and the necessity of more Americans getting vaccinated in order to put the pandemic behind us.

Durbin shared the story of Springfield, Illinois, resident Candace Ayers, who tragically passed away from COVID-19 this month. Ayers was fully vaccinated but contracted a breakthrough infection in Mississippi. In her obituary, Ayers family wrote she “was vaccinated but was infected by others who chose not to be. The cost was her life.”

“Candace was hospitalized and moved to an ICU. She spent the last three weeks of her life on a ventilator. She died of COVID on September 3rd at the age of 66, leaving behind her husband, their son, and daughter, and 5-year-old triplet grandchildren,” Durbin said.

Durbin urged more Americans to step up and get vaccinated in order to protect vulnerable people like Candace and young children who are still unable to get vaccinated.

“Last Thursday was the fourth day in a row every ICU bed in Southern Illinois was filled. In a 20-county area, home to 400,000 people, there were no ICU beds available. Doctors, nurses, and first responders working around the clock to care for sick patients, but after 18 grueling months, they are reaching a breaking point,” Durbin said. “So much of this suffering and expense could be avoided if we take the politics out of the COVID debate and stop the spread of misinformation that is literally killing people. As Candace Ayers’ family would tell you, the most important thing is that more people get vaccinated. Vaccines are safe, effective, and free and widely available to anyone over the age of 12.”

Durbin went on to applaud the Biden Administration’s recent announcement of workplace safety policies that will require more Americans to be vaccinated. He also slammed Republican politicians in 24 states for threatening to sue the Biden Administration for these public health requirements. Durbin shared alarming statistics showing that those 24 states over the past three months have COVID-19 infection rates twice as high as the rest of the country, and death rates nearly three times higher.

“Other nations have already instituted policies which encourage vaccinations. It's time for us to do the same. If we're ever going to see this pandemic come to an end, kids get back in school, and life return to normal, more Americans have to roll up their sleeves and face the reality that vaccination is the pathway to that result. Now, sadly, while this debate is going on nationally, politicians in two dozen states, with vaccination rates below the national average, are threatening to sue the Biden Administration over its new COVID policy... In the war against COVID, these lawmakers in these two dozen states are siding with the virus. Their actions, if they follow through on these threats, will result in more illness, more death, and more harm to the economy,” said Durbin.