

Durbin: Immigration Reform Will Drive Our Nation's Economic Recovery For Years To Come

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a speech on the Senate floor, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and lead author of the

Dream Act, today discussed the economic impact of immigration reform on our nation's economic recovery and Senate Democrats' continued efforts to include immigration provisions in the Build Back Better reconciliation package.

He also discussed his [visit](#) to Little Village in Chicago last week with U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA). They met with the Little Village Chamber of Commerce and local business leaders and discussed several federal programs that helped workers and small businesses stay afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic.



“Bilingual communities like Little Village make America richer, stronger—culturally and economically. They’re living proof that immigrants are still an essential part of America’s future. And there are millions of people who have been contributing to our economy and our communities for years, but they’ve been left behind by a broken immigration system... That’s exactly why we’re trying to include immigration reform in the Build Back Better package that will come before the Senate in the coming days,” Durbin said.

Durbin also shared the story of Dr. Manuel Bernal Mejia, who is an emergency room physician in Rockford, Illinois. Dr. Bernal’s parents brought him to the United States

when he was only two years old. He grew up in Memphis, Tennessee. He graduated in the top ten percent of his high school class, and he was a leader of several high school honor societies.

Dr. Bernal continued his education at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He graduated summa cum laude with a major in biology and minor in chemistry. In college, Dr. Bernal worked as a medical scribe for doctors in the emergency room of a small community hospital in Chattanooga. After this experience, he decided that he wanted to become an emergency room physician. Dr. Bernal continued his education at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine. He was one of dozens of DACA recipients at Stritch, the first medical school to admit DACA students.

“So let’s ask a basic question when it comes to immigration: would America be better? Would Illinois be better? Would Chicago be better without Dr. Bernal? All of the Dreamers who are working every day to save American lives in our hospitals? I don’t think so. For Dreamers like Dr. Bernal, DACA has been a lifeline. It has given them a chance to give back to the only home they’ve ever known,” Durbin said.

Durbin concluded, “With the Build Back Better plan, this Senate is finally taking up the important work of investing in America’s future. That means building railroads, transit networks, and connecting communities. Providing funding for high-quality child care so every parent can have a safe place to leave their child during the workday. And it also means providing immigrant families the stable footing they need to contribute to our future. For these families, make no mistake, America is home, and every day they help to make our communities better and our economy stronger. That’s the case we plan on making to the Senate Parliamentarian once again. This is the first opportunity we have had in a long, long time to begin building an immigration system that works for America, and for our own sake I hope we can get it done.”

Video of Durbin’s floor speech is available [here](#).