

Sen. Durbin "We Are Sleepingwalking Into The Next Potentially Deadly COVID Wave"

May 15 2022 7:30 AM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) spoke on the Senate floor on the need to quickly pass a bipartisan COVID-19 supplemental funding package, in order to ensure adequate supplies of tests, vaccines, and other medical supplies. Most urgently, it was reported last week that, without additional funding, COVID vaccines will soon be in shortage if the Food and Drug Administration authorizes second booster shots for all adults. This week, the U.S. officially hit one million deaths due to the COVID-19 virus, including more than 33,600 Illinoisans.

“Right now, we are sleepwalking into the next potentially deadly wave. And we know the virus will continue to mutate and pose threats. We need to learn from the past two years—from our experience with Delta and Omicron—and act now to be ready for whatever comes next. Over the weekend, the Biden Administration warned that new sub-variants could fuel a wave that is forecast to infect 100 million Americans over the fall and winter,” Durbin said.

Durbin urged his colleagues to work together to pass new, urgently needed COVID funding. Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and U.S. Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT) had previously announced a bipartisan \$10 billion emergency COVID package. New COVID-19 funds are necessary to procure additional vaccine booster doses, oral antivirals, and other therapeutics to treat patients who contract a serious case, maintain testing infrastructure at hospitals and health clinics, and more.

Durbin continued, “It’s not everything we want, it’s not everything we need, but it is an urgent measure that seeks to address the crisis. Instead of getting the job done, Republicans are playing politics. They’re asking for poison pill riders on unrelated issues.”

Durbin concluded, “It is incredible to me that after what this nation has already gone through—one million dead Americans—we are still in a fierce debate over whether we should be prepared for the next stage of the virus. Without this funding, we could very well lose the progress we have made in containing COVID...To my Republican colleagues: drop the partisan antics. Join us in making this responsible investment to save lives and prevent the pandemic from once again spinning out of control.”

Durbin also highlighted three Illinoisans who passed away from the virus. Maria Elena Sifuentes of Chicago, who left behind five children, and Sergeant Ken Thurman and Officer Brian Shields, two 51-year-old veteran police officers at the Aurora Police Department who died the same week.