



# **Durbin: This Senate Cannot Escape Our Responsibility To Act On Gun Violence**

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, spoke on the Senate floor urging Senate Republicans to join Democrats and pass legislation to reduce gun violence following the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, that claimed the lives of 19 students and two teachers. Gun violence is now the leading cause of death among American children and teens. In 2020, 45,222 Americans died by gun violence.

Next week, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing to hear from experts about the lasting trauma that gun violence leaves on children. Tomorrow, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing on domestic terrorism following the mass shooting in Buffalo that killed ten Black Americans in a racist act of violence.

In speaking about the Columbine High School tragedy 23 years ago, Durbin said, “In shooting after shooting since, as America has been stunned and grieving and burying its children, the gun lobby has demanded that we not ‘politicize’ the issue of gun violence. They say we should wait until passions have cooled before taking any action to reduce gun violence in America... It is no longer possible to wait months or weeks -- or even days -- after a mass shooting for passions to cool. The shootings keep happening.”

Durbin went on to urge the Senate to pass legislation to help reduce gun violence in the United States, including closing gaps in the gun background check system that allow so-called “private sales” of firearms with no background checks, and supporting state “red flag” laws that would allow law enforcement to temporarily remove firearms from a person who is determined by a court to be at risk of hurting themselves or others. A recent investigation by gun safety organization Everytown found that in 2018, there were nearly 1.2 million ads on one website to sell guns without a background check.

“Last week, it listed an ad for a private sale in the Buffalo, New York, area for an AR-15 – the same kind of gun used to massacre grocery shoppers in Buffalo and

schoolchildren in Uvalde -- no background check required,” said Durbin. “Most background checks take less than five minutes. And no law-abiding citizen needs to worry about not passing one.”

In recent days, Durbin met with Chicago-area youth and doctors from Ann & Robert H. Lurie’s Children Hospital and Stroger Hospital to discuss the need to act to protect children from gun violence and the growing toll of trauma that gun violence is having on a generation of students and young adults. Durbin also visited his granddaughter’s 4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school class last week. Illinoisans he met with urged Congress to do something to stop gun violence for the sake of our children.

Durbin said “When I left my granddaughter's grade school last Friday, I thought about it all day long, those beautiful kids, and the kids down in Texas, and the kids at Sandy Hook, and the kids at Columbine, and the kids at Parkland – all of these kids are being butchered by gun violence. Many people think that because the Constitution and the Second Amendment gives a right to bear arms that we can't touch this issue. They're wrong... We have been elected to the United States Senate to respond to American crises. This is at the top of the list. After what we've been through in the last several weeks and what we're likely to go through in the weeks to come, how dare we say this is too big and too tough. How could anything be more important than the safety of our children and our families across America?”

“I will join in the Senate Judiciary Committee in any way that I can to support this bipartisan effort,” Durbin concluded. “I hope that it's meaningful. I hope when it's all said and done, we can point to it and say we achieved something in the name of those families and survivors and those who lost their lives, who have given so much to this madness that has become part of life in America.”

**Video of Durbin’s remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).**

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