

Durbin Honors Former Congressman John Porter On Senate Floor

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today delivered a speech on the Senate floor honoring the legacy of former Congressman John E. Porter, who represented northern Illinois in Congress for 21 years. In his remarks, Durbin spoke about Porter’s reputation as a principled, bipartisan leader within the Illinois congressional delegation.

“John Porter was raised in a home where public service was a way of life... believed that public service was a noble profession, that government could make life better, and that America must remain a beacon of hope for the world. He supported efforts to protect the environment in the earliest days. He championed human rights efforts across the globe and efforts to protect the environment at home and was a founder of the

Congressional Human Rights Caucus. He was a key supporter of the Americans with Disabilities Act,” Durbin said.

Durbin went on to express his gratitude for Porter’s advocacy on behalf of the medical research community, which inspired Durbin to push for more funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

“As chair of the powerful House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education, he was a driving force behind the successful effort to double the funding for the National Institutes of Health... The new funding came at a critical moment in history. It made possible discoveries that changed the world, including the famous Human Genome Project... It was one of the greatest scientific breakthroughs of the 20th century... The mapping of the human genome continues to transform medicine on a daily basis and has provided lifesaving cures all around the world. It was the leadership of then-NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins, and the inspired example of John Porter that convinced me try to team up with Senators on the other side of the aisle and do the same in my time in the Senate... I teamed up with Roy Blunt, Republican of Missouri, and also, of course, with Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington, and we started our effort to see if we could increase dramatically the National Institute of Health budget. We did,” said Durbin.

Durbin concluded his tribute to Porter by acknowledging his family.

“Loretta and I send our condolences to John’s wife Amy, their children, stepchildren, and grandchildren... and to all who were inspired by his example to make our world and our nation a better, healthier, and fairer place,” Durbin said.

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

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