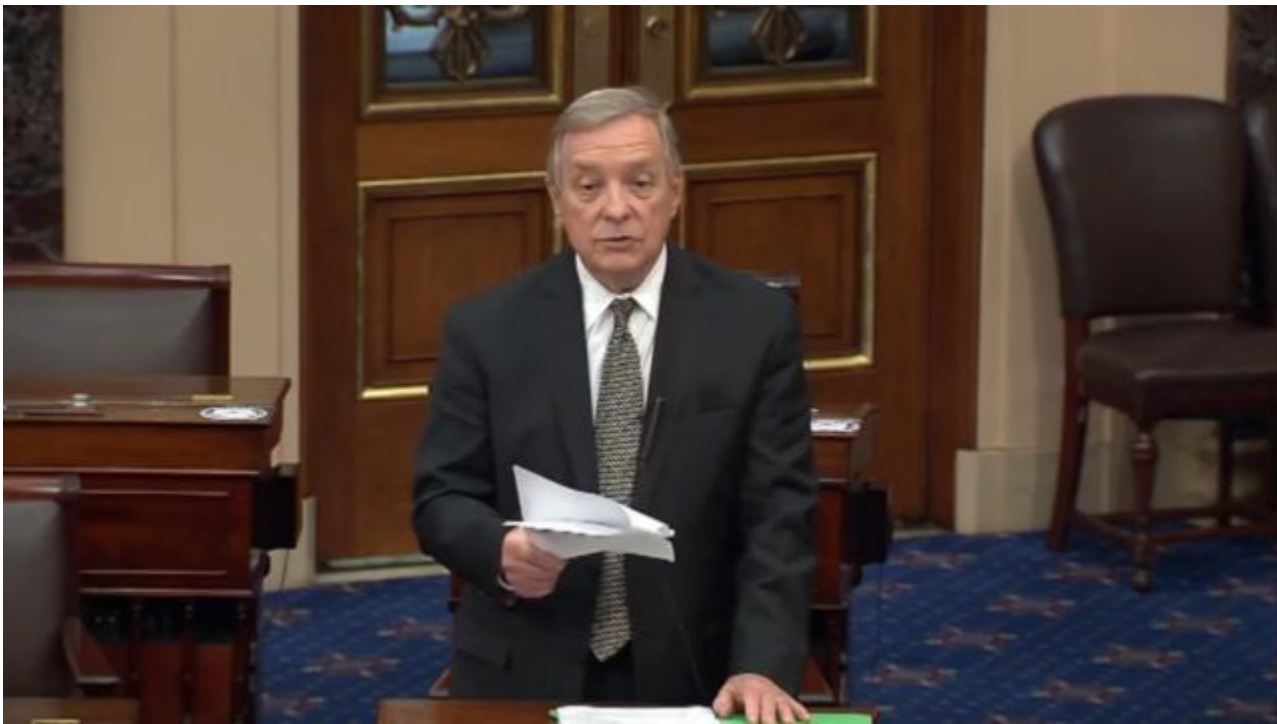


# **Durbin, Portman, Blumenthal, Grassley Urge Department Of Defense To Send More Advanced Artillery Rocket Systems To Ukraine**

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH), Co-Chairs of the Senate Ukraine Caucus, along with U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA), sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin urging him to send more advanced artillery rocket systems and ammunition to Ukraine, as the systems are vital in Ukraine's defense against Russia's brutal invasion. The Senators commended the decision by the Biden administration earlier this month to send M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems

(HIMARS) to Ukraine and urged the Administration to send additional such aid given the amount of artillery Russia has at their disposal. The Senators encouraged Secretary Austin to send additional systems urgently, like HIMARS or the M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), in order to level the playing field for Ukraine and allow them to halt Russian advances in the Donbas region and strengthen their counteroffensives in other parts of the country.

“The outcome of Russia’s war against Ukraine will hinge on how firmly the West supports Ukrainian forces,” said the Senators. “Following the incredible defeat of early Russian attempts to topple Ukraine’s elected government and seize the entire nation, battlefield needs have understandably evolved and we must be nimble in meeting these changing needs. As a result, we ask that you urgently provide a significant number of additional artillery rocket systems to Ukraine.”

You can view the full letter [here](#) or below.

Dear Secretary Austin:

We write regarding Russia’s illegal war in Ukraine and our military assistance to Ukrainian forces valiantly defending their country. We commend you for the administration’s support for Ukraine, including providing approximately \$5.6 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since the beginning of Russia’s brutal, unprovoked, and unlawful invasion on February 24<sup>th</sup> of this year. This aid has been indispensable as it has enabled Ukrainian forces to slow and even stop Russia’s advance in many areas of the country. Importantly, it even enabled Ukrainian forces to expel Russians from the north and away from the capital, Kyiv.

We also support the President’s decision this month to approve the transfer of M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) and ammunition to Ukraine, utilizing funds from the nearly \$40 billion supplemental that Congress passed last month. However, we are concerned that the Department of Defense only intends to send four M142 HIMARS systems to Ukraine thus far. While we recognize these mobile artillery rocket systems are much more advanced than Ukraine’s current artillery platforms and require extensive training to ensure their deployment, Ukraine will ultimately need more and time is of the essence.

Ukraine’s needs are urgent and we must give them the capability to not just fight but to win. It is well known that Russia’s artillery rocket systems capability outmatches Ukrainian forces, who primarily operate a small number of Soviet-era artillery rocket systems -- allowing Russian forces to strike Ukrainian positions almost at will from safe distances. The delivery of additional advanced artillery rocket systems, like M142 HIMARS or the M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), could help level the

playing field for Ukraine, allowing its forces to halt Russia's current advance in the Donbas and bolster its counteroffensives in other parts of the country. Additionally, sending a larger number of M142 HIMARS or M270 MLRS systems could inspire our allies and partners with similar systems to also provide them to Ukraine. We have already seen the United Kingdom and Germany follow suit and appreciate your continued efforts to coordinate with allies on robust security aid for Ukraine's defense.

The outcome of Russia's war against Ukraine will hinge on how firmly the West supports Ukrainian forces. Following the incredible defeat of early Russian attempts to topple Ukraine's elected government and seize the entire nation, battlefield needs have understandably evolved and we must be nimble in meeting these changing needs. As a result, we ask that you urgently provide a significant number of additional artillery rocket systems to Ukraine.

Sincerely,