

# **Durbin Joins Shaheen, Tillis, Bipartisan Congressional Delegation Statement As Path Clears For Finland & Sweden's Accession Into NATO**

June 29 2022 9:32 AM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Thom Tillis (R-NC), Chris Coons (D-DE), Deb Fischer (R-NE), Roy Blunt (R-MO), and Joni Ernst (R-IA) in a joint statement on the [announcement](#) that an agreement was reached and Turkey will drop its hold on Finland and Sweden's application to join the transatlantic Alliance. Durbin and the Senators are currently at the

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Madrid to discuss congressional support for the transatlantic relationship, as well as continued Russian aggression and interference in western democracies.

The Senators previously stopped in Sweden to meet with heads of state and partake in other important bilateral meetings with the respective nations' administration officials.

“It is important that all NATO Allies work together to accelerate Finland and Sweden’s accession into NATO, which is why we are very encouraged that an agreement was reached that will allow their applications to advance,” said the lawmakers. “Finland and Sweden’s contributions to the Alliance will strengthen our response to an emboldened and revisionist Vladimir Putin. We appreciate the Secretary General working diligently with President Erdogan and Finland and Sweden’s leadership to reach this moment. Our bilateral and multilateral meetings with NATO member states and NATO aspirant nations have been productive, and we look forward to sharing that progress with fellow lawmakers upon our return to the United States to increase U.S. support for NATO and push for a swift approval process in the Senate for Finland and Sweden. For more than seventy years, NATO has upheld transatlantic security. That mission endures, and with the inclusion of Finland and Sweden, we are best positioned to rebuke Putin’s aggression that is targeting Ukraine and threatening democracies worldwide.”

Durbin, Co-Chair of the Baltic Freedom Caucus and the Senate Ukraine Caucus, was previously in Vilnius, Lithuania, as part of travel to three European nations. In Vilnius, Durbin [received](#) the Aleksandras Stulginskis Star Award—only the second individual and first American to receive this award. The new award honors Aleksandras Stulginskis, former President of Lithuania who served from 1920-1926 and was a strong advocate for a democratic republic. It was granted to Durbin for his decades-long support of Lithuanian independence and democracy and his promotion of parliamentary values. Durbin’s mother was born in Lithuania and came to the United States with her mother and siblings in 1911.