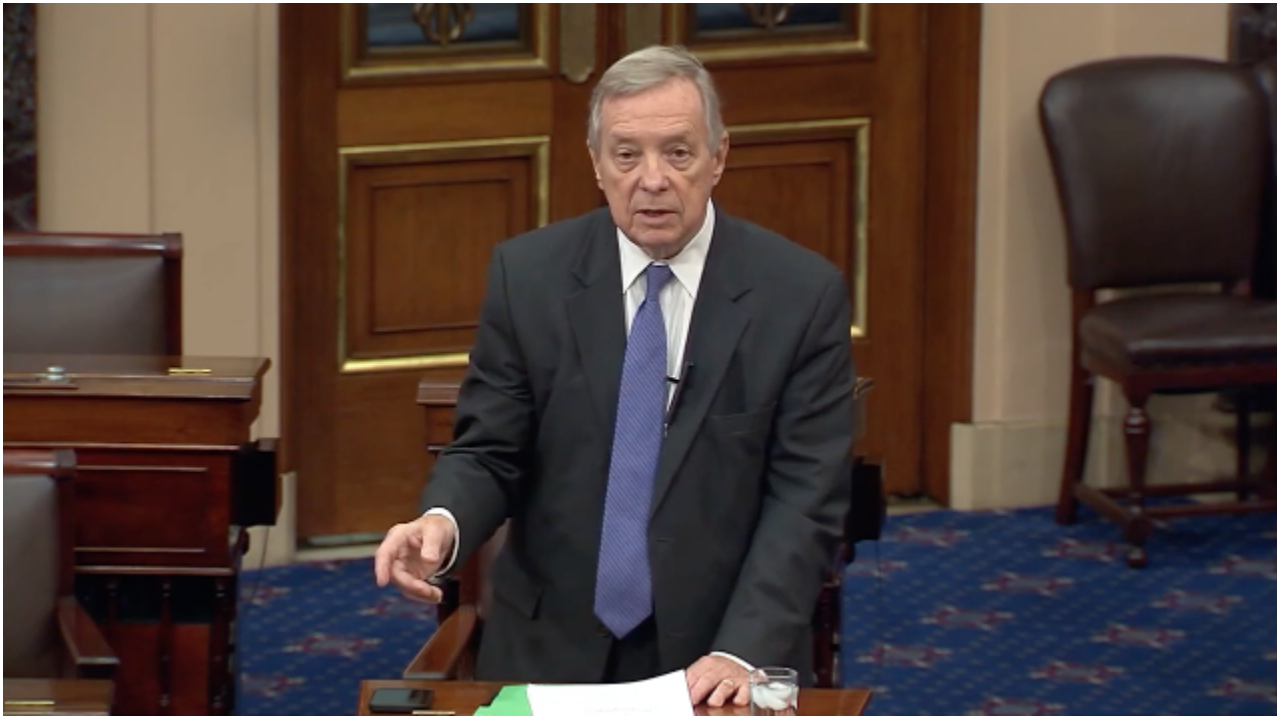


Durbin Calls For Police Reform Bill Following Tyre Nichols' Death

by Maddie Carlos

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WASHINGTON – In a speech on the Senate floor today, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, called on the Senate to pass a policing reform bill following the killing of Tyre Nichols by five former Memphis police officers.

“Many Americans are struggling with feelings of grief and disbelief after watching the videotapes of Tyre Nichols being beaten to death by a group of Memphis police officers. Mr. Nichols was a 29-year-old father of a young son. He worked the second shift at FedEx with his stepfather. He loved skateboarding and photography – and he loved his mother so much he had her name tattooed on his arm. He had no criminal record. One

friend told a reporter that Mr. Nichols was even thinking of becoming a police officer, to try to make the system better from the inside. The videotapes of the deadly assault on Mr. Nichols by Memphis police officers on January 7th are horrific and sickening,” said Durbin.

“They show at least five officers attacking Mr. Nichols with fists, boots, batons, tasers, and pepper spray while yelling contradictory orders,” Durbin continued. “They continued pummeling Mr. Nichols even as he screamed in pain, begged them to stop, and called out for his mother. One officer kicked him in the head so hard that the officer was limping. When the beating was over, one officer propped an apparently unconscious Mr. Nichols up against the side of a squad car while the others laughed, fist-bumped, and tried to justify their egregious behavior. It took 20 minutes for an ambulance to arrive, and even longer for medical aid to be rendered. Tyre Nichols died three days later in a Memphis hospital. An independent autopsy revealed he had ‘suffered extensive bleeding caused by a severe beating.’”

During his speech, Durbin recalled the devastating killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Laquan McDonald, and too many others.

“I agree with the attorney for Mr. Nichols’ family, Ben Crump, that the response by prosecutors could be a ‘blueprint’ for how such cases should be handled in the future, rather than waiting months to bring charges. There is no excuse for delayed justice when heinous acts occur and the facts are clear. I also want to extend my deepest condolences to Mr. Nichols’ family, especially his mother and stepfather, who have responded with dignity and grace to their unimaginable ordeal. Before the videotapes were released, they called repeatedly for any protests to be peaceful. I’d like to think that I would have the strength to do that having just lost my son and knowing the circumstances, but the Nichols family did,” said Durbin. “Americans – especially Black Americans – are exhausted by the injustice of officers who abuse their authority. They are tired of the systemic failures that can lead to a young man being beaten to death after a traffic stop.”

As Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Durbin is committed to working with his colleagues to bring forth meaningful police reform legislation to address these injustices. Last December, Congress enacted and President Biden signed into law the *Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act*. The legislation provides grants and training for law enforcement for de-escalation tactics. While this was a good first step, Durbin argued we need to do more.

“We need to have an honest conversation with law enforcement officers about training, inherent bias, use of force, and consequences for unjust actions,” Durbin continued. “We need to prohibit deadly and dishonorable police misconduct. We must recruit and train the next generation of law enforcement to protect and serve everyone in America... We

owe it to all of the families who have lost loved ones and for families who fear that their loved ones could be next to pass a law that will help ensure justice and accountability in our policing system.”

Durbin concluded, “As I mentioned, Tyre Nichols loved photographing the world as he saw it. One of his favorite images, which appears again and again in his photos, was bridges. It is time for us to build a bridge and pass a policing reform bill so that Tyre’s death will not have been in vain.”

Video of Durbin’s floor speech is available [here](#). Audio of Durbin’s floor speech is available [here](#).