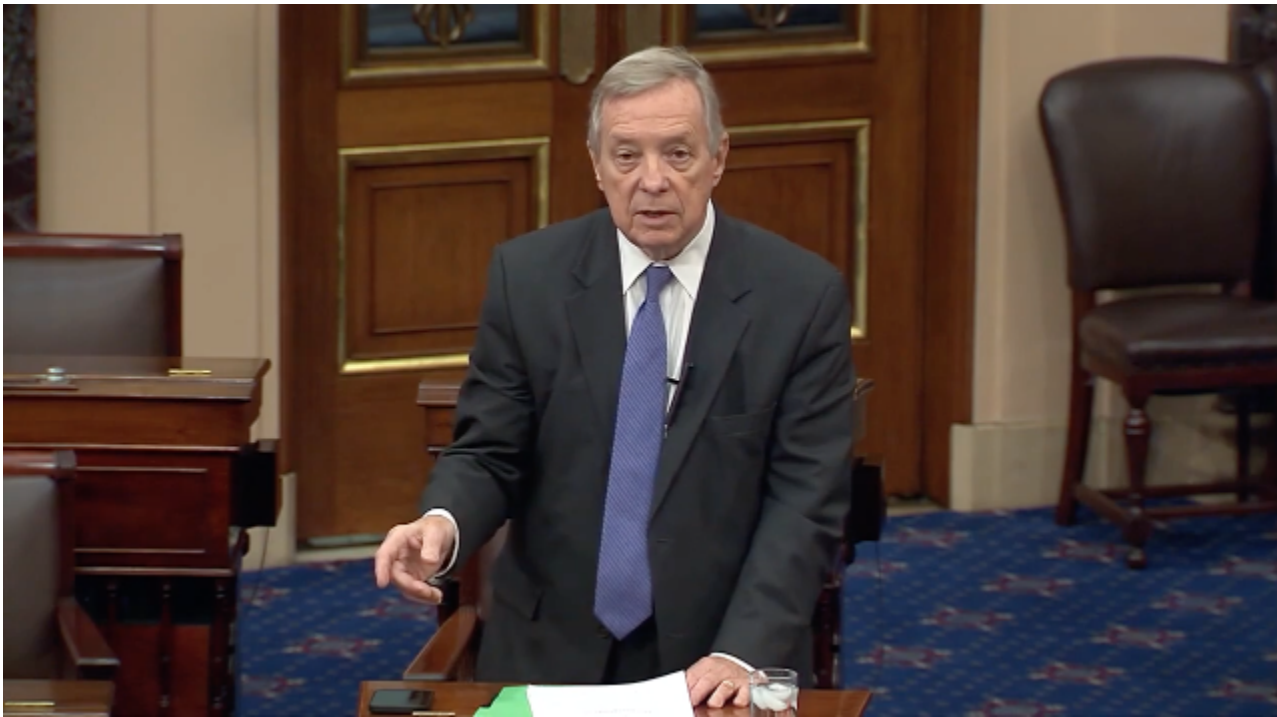


# **Durbin, Collins Introduce Bipartisan, Bicameral Legislation To Help Runaway And Homeless Youth**

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced the *Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2023*. This bipartisan legislation will reauthorize key federal grant programs to provide states with funding to help thousands of homeless young people nationwide.

“This legislation is an investment in the future of our nation and a promise not to give up on any child,” said Durbin. “It will help us empower our youth—especially those in underserved communities—to realize their dreams for a better and brighter future, regardless of the traumatic experiences they may have faced.”

“Having a caring and safe place to sleep, eat, grow, and study is crucial for any young person’s development,” said Collins. “Our bipartisan legislation would support young people who run away, are forced out of their homes, or are disconnected from their families, by extending basic social services to these most vulnerable youth in our communities.”

“We applaud our congressional champions for introducing the important *Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act*, because our young people continue to face limited access to housing options, education, and living wage employment. This legislation makes critical expansions to meet the needs of today’s youth, and continues the powerful legacy of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act program. Further, it builds on what we already know: ending youth homelessness prevents human trafficking,” said Darla Bardine, Executive Director, National Network for Youth.

The landmark *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act* was first passed by Congress in 1974, providing nationwide support to address youth and young adult homelessness. This reauthorization would expand protections to youths who are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and would authorize funding for state and local programs to help provide transitional housing, street outreach, and crisis intervention programs to address the needs of homeless and runaway youth.

Among other improvements, this legislation would:

1. Reauthorize, modernize, and increase authorization levels for programs under the *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act*;
2. Create a new Prevention Services Program that would make additional resources available to organizations providing counseling, mediation, and other services aimed at preventing youth from running away or becoming homeless;
3. Increase annual competitive grants for rural youth demographics from \$100,000 to \$200,000;
4. Require the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a national estimate of the prevalence of homeless youth every three years; and
5. Increase the allowable length of stay in the Basic Center Program from 21 days to 30 days.

Companion legislation was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressman Don Bacon (R-NE), Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Congressman Zach Nunn (R-IA), and Rep. Morgan McGarvey (D-KY).

The legislation is supported by youth advocacy organizations including the National Network for Youth, which has supported the *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act* since it was first enacted in 1974.