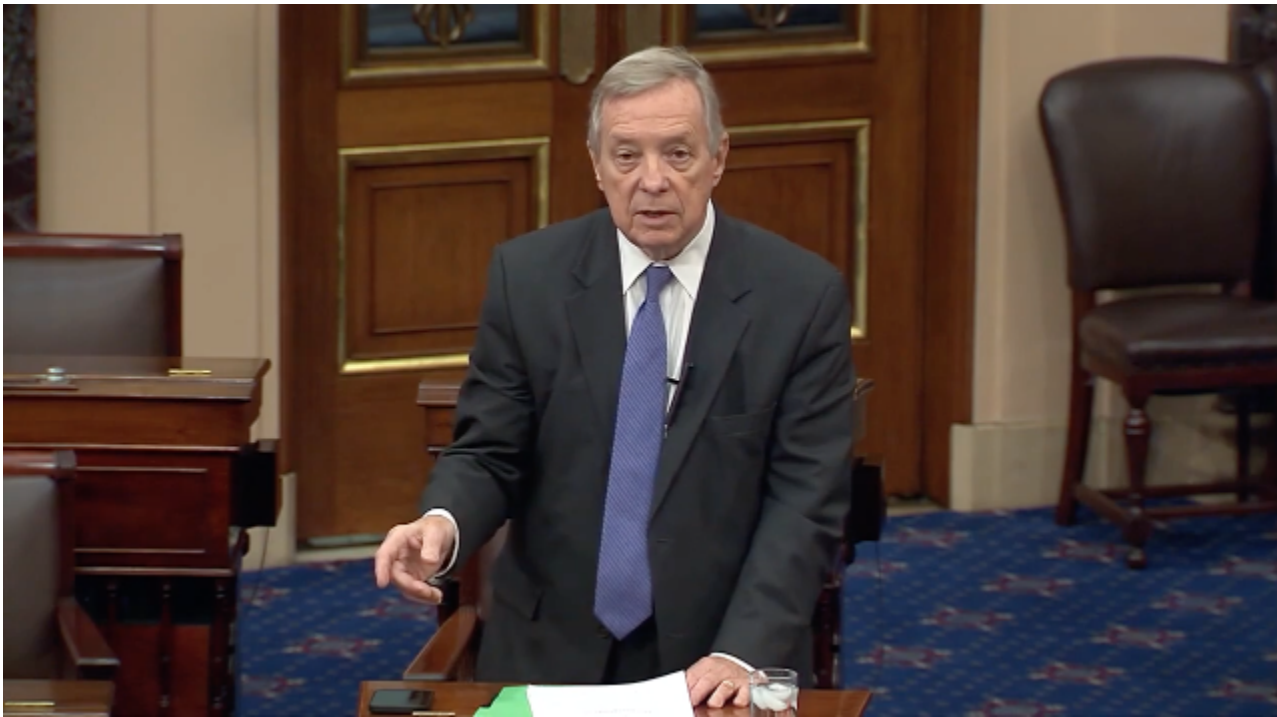


# **Durbin To Republicans: Work With Democrats To Fix Our Broken Immigration System**

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WASHINGTON – In a speech on the Senate floor, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, today called on his Republican colleagues to work with Democrats on comprehensive immigration reform that will help secure America’s border and address our nation’s shortage of workers. During his speech, Durbin condemned Republicans’ attempt to attach punitive border policies to essential national security emergency funds for Ukraine, Israel, the Indo-Pacific, and humanitarian crises.

“I'm a person who believes in immigration. My mother was an immigrant to this country, and I'm proud to be in the Senate first-generation American representing the great state of Illinois. But I understand the overwhelming numbers we are facing at the border, and President Biden is facing— really argue for us to take a hard look at the way we approach this,” Durbin said. “It's hard to explain in the United States of America, a nation of immigrants, why immigration is such a hot, controversial topic.”

Durbin noted that the U.S. military is experiencing low levels of recruitment, which have become a grave threat to our national security. Durbin argued in his speech that we are also in desperate need of workers to fill key jobs in industries like health care and agriculture, which can be filled by immigrants.

“Do you know what the recruiting numbers are at the Army, Navy, and the Air Force? They can't reach their quotas each month. They can't find enough people to join our military forces. And there are those who are undocumented who want the chance to serve and risk their lives for this country. Should we give them a chance? I think we should. In my state of Illinois, in Chicago, in the rural areas downstate, we're holding our breath hoping that we can keep hospitals open. You know why? We don't have enough medical personnel. And yet there are people all around this world who have medical credentials as doctors and nurses and skilled technicians who want to come to the United States, but we don't give them the chance,” Durbin continued

Durbin also told the story of Mitchell Soto-Rodriguez, a Dreamer, who came to Blue Island, Illinois, at nine-years-old with her family. When Mitchell was in high school, she got into a car accident and the responding police officer made a lasting impression on her by speaking Spanish to make her mother feel more comfortable. From that moment on, Mitchell decided that she wanted to serve her community as a police officer as well. Today, Mitchell is a part-time police officer while she is attending the police academy and working as a security officer at a local high school. However, as a DACA recipient, Mitchell's future is still in limbo. Until the *Dream Act* is passed, Mitchell's service to her community and to our nation is at risk.

“But DACA was always intended to be a temporary solution for Dreamers like Mitchell. Since President Obama established the program, Republicans have waged a relentless campaign to overturn it and deport these Dreamers back to countries they may not even remember. The permanent solution is enacting a piece of legislation I first introduced more than twenty years ago: the *Dream Act*. It would provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers all across the country. Without permanent protections, these young people have been forced to live in limbo and in fear that DACA will be overturned in the courts. They have to renew their status every two years—which means they plan their lives in two-year increments,” Durbin continued. “Until the *Dream Act* is passed,

Mitchell's service to her community and to our nation is at risk—as is the service that so many Dreamers are providing to their communities through their work as teachers, medical professionals, service members, and so much more.”

If DACA is struck down, experts predict that our economy would lose an estimated \$11.7 billion each year in lost wages. And without continued immigration, the U.S. working-age population will shrink by over six million by 2040. As more Americans retire, this could contribute to a 23 percent reduction in the monthly Social Security checks that beneficiaries have been promised. With over nine and a half million jobs open last month, our farmers, hospitals, and small business owners desperately need immigrants to meet their workforce needs.

Durbin continued, “To resolve these challenges, we should create additional lawful pathways for immigrants to work in the United States. We should also give our undocumented population—most of whom have been here for decades—legal status, so that they can fully contribute to our society. I am ready to negotiate with my Republican colleagues in good faith to solve our problem at the border. It needs a solution. I readily acknowledge that. But at the same time, I hope they will take a positive approach as well, knowing that we desperately need legal immigration. And if people are clear to come into our country for that purpose, we will be better for it at so many different levels.”

Durbin concluded, “There are some on the other side, I'm going to be very blunt about this, who believe in the theory of ‘not one more immigrant’ in this country. They don't know the history of the United States. They don't know what these immigrants have meant to us. In my family and the families across the whole country, you can point to immigrants who made a solid difference in building a family, building an economy, which we all prosper from today. So let's get it right when it comes to enforcement at the border, but let's not tell half the story. Let's tell the other half of the story that legal immigration is critical to our future and people like Mitchell Soto-Rodriguez who is wanting to serve as a police officer in her community in Illinois is an asset to this country, and we need her in our future.”

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

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