

Durbin, Duckworth Call On Biden Administration To Increase Funding For Programs Addressing Root Causes Of Gun Violence In FY25 Budget

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today sent a letter to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Shalanda Young urging the agency leader to increase funding for a variety of programs that have been shown to prevent gun violence,

including housing and economic development, job opportunities, education, public health, and community policing. In their letter, the Senators underscored the unacceptable level of gun violence in the U.S., noting that curbing gun violence requires a holistic approach.

“As you prepare the Administration’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Budget Request, we urge you to use this budget to accelerate efforts to prevent gun violence and help save lives in Chicago and across the country,” the Senators wrote in the letter. “For too long, shootings and homicides have plagued Chicago and communities throughout the nation.”

“We applaud the White House for the creation of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and for the Administration’s continued efforts to establish common-sense gun laws. Homicides and shootings are on the decline in Chicago this year, in part because of intentional investments in gun violence prevention efforts. Funding in the President’s FY 2025 Budget Request should signal support for Chicago and other cities to continue these efforts,” the letter said. “While the gun violence epidemic is a complex challenge that no single line item can solve, funding the programs outlined below holds the promise of delivering meaningful benefits to communities in Chicago and across the United States.”

The Senators continued the letter, laying out how investing in safe, affordable housing will boost employment and community development, as well as describing the positive impact that job opportunities have on neighborhoods.

“Violence in Chicago is often concentrated in communities with higher unemployment and years of neglect and disinvestment. The federal government can help stabilize these neighborhoods by ensuring access to safe, affordable housing and good paying jobs and by encouraging economic and community development. Increasing funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program—the largest federal block grant designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households—will help provide housing in areas where there is access to quality education and jobs,” the Senators wrote.

“When young people are chronically unemployed, it increases the likelihood that they will become involved in crime,” the Senators continued. “We urge you to prioritize important youth mentoring and job training programs at the U.S. Departments of Labor, Justice, and Education that pursue innovative strategies for connecting young people to career pathways.”

The Senators also delivered a strong argument for bolstering educational programs as they build a strong foundation for success both in and out of the classroom.

“Quality education is the cornerstone of economic opportunity, and it is important to start early for it to be cost-effective and have the greatest impact,” the letter continued. “Research shows that low school attendance and engagement rates can negatively impact a student’s academic performance and serve as an indicator for increased involvement in the criminal justice system. We also urge you to support resources for Illinois’ highest-need K-12 students through expanded investments in Titles I and IV of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*.”

The letter also urged OMB to address the gun violence epidemic through a public health approach. Durbin and Duckworth encouraged OMB to adequately fund programs that offer services to those exposed to trauma or violence.

“Combatting Chicago’s community violence is not just an economic or education issue—it is also a serious public health matter. Gun violence is responsible for approximately 25 percent of the life expectancy gap between Black and White Chicagoans, and nearly half of Chicago residents witness violence by the age of 40. One of the best ways to break the cycle of violence is by supporting strong families, building environments that promote health, and starting early to prevent and mitigate the effects of experiencing trauma,” the Senators continued.

Durbin and Duckworth urged the Biden Administration to support an effective community policing strategy built on a relationship of trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

“Finally, we cannot reduce violence in Chicago without an effective community policing strategy ... The federal government can help in Chicago by enhancing funding for programs that improve community policing, such as the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and Byrne-JAG programs. As outlined above, the federal government also should increase funding for community violence intervention programs and school-based mental health and trauma-informed care that can help disrupt and break the cycle of violence in the city of Chicago,” they wrote.

The Senators concluded the letter by emphasizing their urgency around curbing gun violence as the U.S. has already seen more than 500 mass shootings in 2023 alone.

“The President’s annual Budget Request is an important reflection of the Administration’s priorities and the direction in which the President hopes to take the country. Gun violence has cut short far too many American lives and scarred communities across the United States. It is time that changes,” the Senators wrote.

“We urge you to use the President’s FY 2025 Budget Request to continue to address this urgent problem by increasing investment in federal programs that will help stop the violence, lift people out of poverty, and save lives,” the letter concluded.

A copy of the letter is available [here](#).