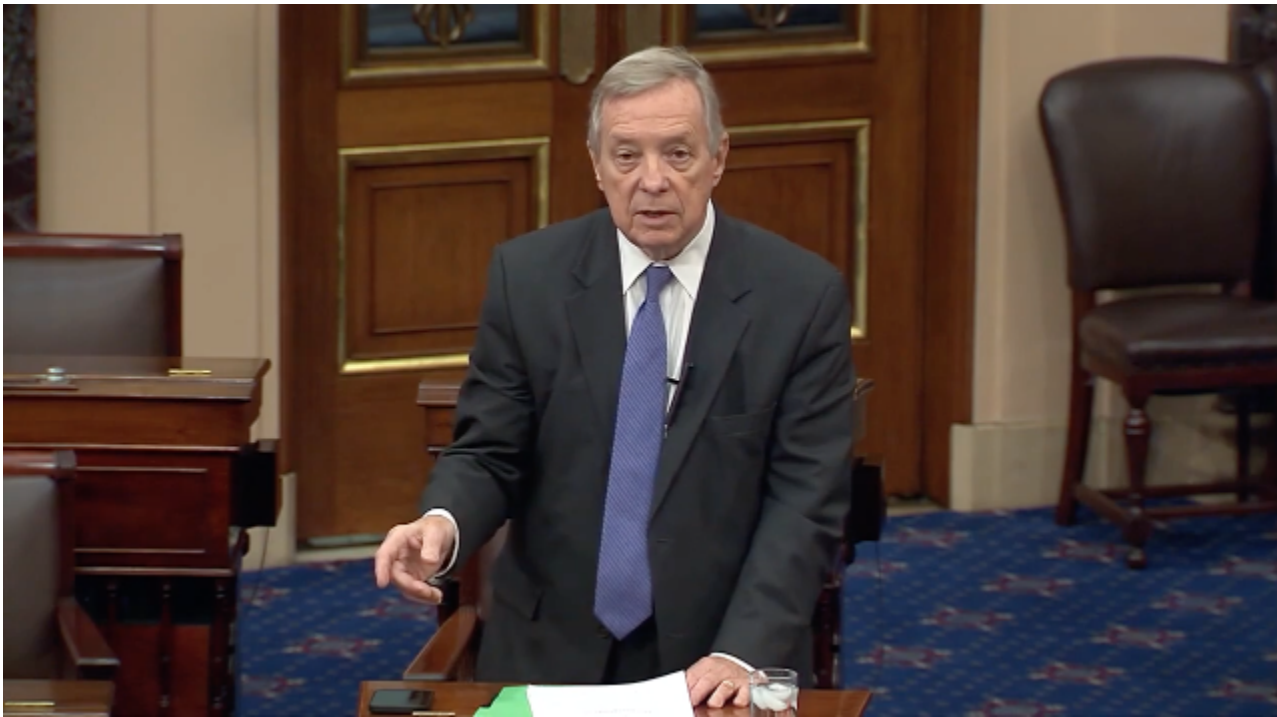


# **Durbin Presses For Further Investigation Into Systemic Failures At Customs And Border Protection Resulting In Years Of Deficient Medical Care**

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, pressed for further investigation into systemic failures at U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to ensure proper oversight of its medical care contractor, Loyal Source. Durbin is continuing his investigation in a series of three letters to CBP, Loyal Source, and the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

The letters follow a [report](#) by a CBP employee whistleblower alleging years of deficient medical care at CBP facilities and CBP's failure to ensure proper oversight, as well as the [death](#) of Anadith Danay Reyes Álvarez, an 8-year-old girl with sickle cell and congenital heart disease who died in CBP custody in Harlingen, Texas.

In his request to CBP, Durbin requests answers to reported systemic issues with the agency's oversight of medical services provided to migrants in custody. He writes: "As you know, Anadith Danay Reyes Álvarez, an eight-year-old girl with sickle cell disease and congenital heart disease, tragically died on May 17, 2023, in U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody, following several days of illness. I write to express my concern that failure to provide adequate medical care—which resulted in the avoidable death of Anadith Álvarez—is not an isolated incident."

Durbin continues before making his series of requests, "According to investigations of substandard medical care in CBP facilities, the circumstances that resulted in Anadith's death are not an aberration, but are indicative of systemic problems with the provision of medical care in CBP facilities and CBP's broader failure to properly oversee that care. ... In addition to inadequate medical care, we are concerned about the length of time individuals, including children, are held in CBP custody and how this impacts overall health outcomes."

In his request to Loyal Source, Durbin outlines substandard medical care in CBP facilities before requesting detailed responses. He writes: "I am deeply concerned by reports of a pattern of poor medical care provided to migrants in U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody, culminating in the death of Anadith Danay Reyes Álvarez, an eight-year-old girl with sickle cell and congenital heart diseases, in CBP custody in Harlingen, Texas. Because Loyal Source is contracted to provide medical care to such migrants, I write to request information about the corrective steps that Loyal Source is taking to improve the quality of medical care provided in CBP custody."

In his request to GAO, Durbin requests a follow-up audit of CBP's oversight of Loyal Source. He writes: "I write to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) thoroughly and expeditiously review U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) medical care for individuals in its custody across all its facilities."

Durbin continues before making his series of requests, "GAO and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General both have identified numerous challenges with CBP's provision of medical care at its facilities and with its oversight of contracted medical services. For example, in July 2020, GAO identified gaps in CBP's implementation and oversight of medical care, including that the agency inconsistently

conducted health interviews and medical assessments for individuals in custody and had not developed training for all CBP agents and officers on how to identify medical distress in children.”

The full text of the letter to CBP can be found [here](#).

The full text of the letter to the President and Chief Legal Officer at Loyal Source can be found [here](#).

The full text of the letter to GAO can be found [here](#).

Earlier this month, Durbin and U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) [led](#) a bicameral comment in support of the Biden Administration’s proposal to codify the *Flores* settlement agreement, which has set minimum standards for more than 25 years for the placement, release, and treatment of unaccompanied immigrant children detained in federal custody.

Since the beginning of the Biden Administration, the Senate Judiciary Committee has held three DHS oversight hearings under Durbin’s leadership, as well as under the Biden Administration, the [latest](#) in March this year. In 2021, after Durbin became Chair, the Committee [held](#) the [first DHS oversight hearing](#) since January 16, 2018 – the lone occasion that the Republican-controlled Committee held a DHS oversight hearing during the four years of the Trump Administration.