

Durbin Meets With U.S. Sentencing Commission Chair As Commission Considers New Amendments To Sentencing Guidelines

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, today met with Judge Carlton Reeves, Chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, to discuss policy priorities for the upcoming sentencing guideline amendment cycle.

During their meeting, Durbin encouraged the Commission to consider an amendment to the Guidelines Manual that would prohibit the use of acquitted conduct in applying

sentencing guidelines. This potential amendment would align with Durbin's bipartisan [*Prohibiting Punishment for Acquitted Conduct Act*](#), which would preclude any federal court from considering acquitted conduct at sentencing, except for the purposes of mitigation.

Durbin and Judge Reeves also discussed reframing provisions used for sentencing youth, including by strengthening the existing downward departure at sentencing on the basis of an individual's age at the time of the offense.

“The U.S. Sentencing Commission is tasked with the delicate responsibility of establishing practices and policies that promote proportionality in sentencing and reduce sentencing disparities. They must carefully consider revisions to sentencing guidelines as they forever impact the lives of many facing the criminal justice system,” said Durbin. “In my meeting with Judge Reeves, Chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, I urged him to revisit guidelines related to acquitted conduct, as federal courts should only be considering acquitted conduct when mitigating a sentence.”

A photo of the meeting is available [here](#).

The U.S. Sentencing Commission is a bipartisan, independent agency within the federal judiciary that was created to establish policies and practices to reduce sentencing disparities and promote transparency and proportionality in criminal sentencing. To accomplish this, the U.S. Sentencing Commission collects and analyzes information on federal sentencing practices to help develop fairer and more effective criminal justice policies.

The Commission had not had a quorum since 2019, preventing the Commission from responding to important developments in sentencing law, including the enactment of the landmark *First Step Act of 2018*. Under the leadership of Chair Durbin, the Senate Judiciary Committee has filled these vacancies.