



RICHARD J. DURBIN

United States Senator

Dick Durbin (Democrat) is Illinois' 47th U.S. Senator. He was first elected to the Senate in 1996 to fill the seat vacated by his political mentor, the late U.S. Senator Paul Simon. Durbin was reelected in 2002, 2008, 2014 and 2020. He has served as the Democratic Whip — the second-ranking position in the Democratic caucus — since December 2004 and is only the fifth Senator from Illinois to serve as a Senate leader.

Durbin is the first Illinois Senator in more than a quarter century to serve on the Appropriations Committee, where he advocates for federal priorities important to Illinois. In his more than two decades on the committee, he has helped secure funding for everything from veterans care and schools to highways and health care clinics.

In 2021, Durbin became chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, after previously serving as ranking member of the Subcommittee on Immigration. He is committed to promoting justice both in Illinois and across the nation and is a leading voice on issues such as immigration, criminal justice reform and civil rights. Durbin is one of the lead authors of the bipartisan First Step Act, which was enacted into law in 2018 and is the most significant criminal justice reform legislation in decades. The law reduces sentences for certain nonviolent drug crimes, invests in programs that help prevent recidivism and saves taxpayer money.

During his time in the Senate, Durbin has focused on economic development, education, transportation, immigration reform, medical research, and access to affordable, quality health care. He has also pushed to keep the Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security programs strong; reform campaign finance; protect the environment; and control rising energy costs.

In 2019, Durbin joined the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. Illinois is one of the top agriculture states in the nation, and Durbin pushes for Illinois agricultural priorities that strengthen the economy and rural communities across the state.

In 1988, Durbin authored landmark legislation to ban smoking on commercial airline flights. Durbin has also worked to protect children from the harm caused by tobacco and gun violence, and he has authored several pieces of legislation to address both the causes and effects of the nation's opioid epidemic. Durbin has been a champion of Illinois farmers and a proponent of the research and use of ethanol as a viable energy product.

Durbin makes approximately 50 round trips a year between Washington and Illinois. Durbin was born on Nov. 21, 1944, in East St. Louis, Illinois. He received both a bachelor's in foreign service and economics in 1966 and a J.D. in 1969 from Georgetown University. He began his public service to the State of Illinois in 1982 when he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives representing the 20th Congressional District.

Durbin and his wife, Loretta, reside in Springfield. They have three children (one deceased) and six grandchildren.

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