



## **RICHARD J. DURBIN**

### **United States Senator**

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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 re-elected in 2002, 2008 and 2014. 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.

Senator Durbin is the first Illinois Senator in more than a quarter century to serve on the powerful Appropriations Committee. In his decade on the committee, he has helped secure funding for everything from veterans care and schools to highways and health care clinics. In 2013, Senator Durbin became chairman of the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Defense, which controls nearly half of the nation's annual discretionary budget, and now serves as vice chairman of the subcommittee. The role is an important one as Illinois is home to Naval Station Great Lakes, the Rock Island Arsenal and Scott Air Force Base. Senator Durbin is also a senior member of the Judiciary Committee and Rules and Administration Committee. He is the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution.

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

In 1988, Durbin authored landmark legislation to ban smoking on commercial airline flights. He also has worked to protect children from tobacco marketing and gun violence. He introduced gun-safety legislation that holds adults responsible if they fail to lock up their firearms and the guns are subsequently used by a child to kill or injure another person. Durbin also has been a champion of Illinois farmers and a proponent of the research and use of ethanol as a viable energy product.

In 2006, Senator Durbin was recognized as "One of America's 10 Best Senators" by Time magazine. Durbin was born Nov. 21, 1944, in East St. Louis. He received a bachelor's in foreign service and economics from Georgetown University in 1966 and his J.D. from the university in 1969. 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.

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

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