

Durbin Joins Booker, Colleagues To Reintroduce Bipartisan Bill To Help Improve Clearance Rates For Homicides And Gun Violence

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WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, joined U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ), John Kennedy (R-LA), and Thom Tillis (R-NC), also members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, to reintroduce the bipartisan *Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods Act (VICTIM Act)*, a bill to help improve the clearance rate for murders and violent gun crimes. The legislation would establish a grant program at the Department

of Justice (DOJ) to provide funding to State, Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies to hire, retain, and train detectives and victim services personnel to investigate unsolved homicides and support victims.

The national clearance rate for murders – or the percentage of murder cases solved by law enforcement agencies— has been in continual decline for decades and, in recent years, has reached its lowest point. Between 2019 and 2022, murder clearance rates fell from 61 percent in 2019 to 53 percent, marking an all-time low. This means that today, almost half of murders in the United States go unsolved – leaving families with no answers, closure, or justice.

Tragically, people of color disproportionately suffer from murders and poor clearance rates. Despite comprising 13.4 percent of the U.S. population, Black victims made up at least 54 percent of those murdered in 2022, and local and national reports show that cases involving Black and Hispanic victims go unsolved at substantially higher rates than those involving white victims.

The problem of low clearance rates is not just limited to homicide. For all violent crimes, the clearance rate went from almost 46 percent in 2019 to 36.7 percent in 2022, a decline that occurred in both big cities and rural communities. Failure to solve homicides and violent gun crimes deprives families of justice, erodes community trust in law enforcement, and jeopardizes the safety of our communities.

“Gun violence and violent crime must be addressed with a holistic approach,” said Durbin. **“This bipartisan, bicameral bill will help ensure our law enforcement agencies have the resources needed to keep our communities safe, while also supporting victims and families who are rebuilding their lives in the aftermath of violent crime.”**

Specifically, the *Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods Act*, or the *VICTIM Act*, will be used to improve clearance rates for homicides and violent gun crimes by allocating funds for:

1. Hiring and retaining detectives and evidence-processing personnel to investigate and solve, homicides and violent gun crimes;
2. Acquiring, upgrading, or replacing investigative, evidence-processing, or forensic testing technology or equipment;
3. Training detectives and personnel in effective procedures and techniques;
4. Developing evidence-based practices to improve clearance rates; and,
5. Ensuring victims and family members of homicide victims receive mental health treatment, grief counseling, relocation support, emergency shelter, and transportation.

The bill would require grantees to report their use of the funds and how it affected clearance rates to DOJ. Additionally, the National Institute of Justice will conduct periodic evaluations of the grant programs to identify practices and procedures that successfully improved clearance rates for homicides and have potential to be scaled nationally. All reports and data collected from individual grant recipients will be compiled by DOJ and provided to Congress.

The *VICTIM Act* is endorsed by the following organizations: Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), Major County Chiefs Association (MCCA), Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA), the Niskanen Center, and Arnold Ventures.

To read the full text of the bill, click [here](#).