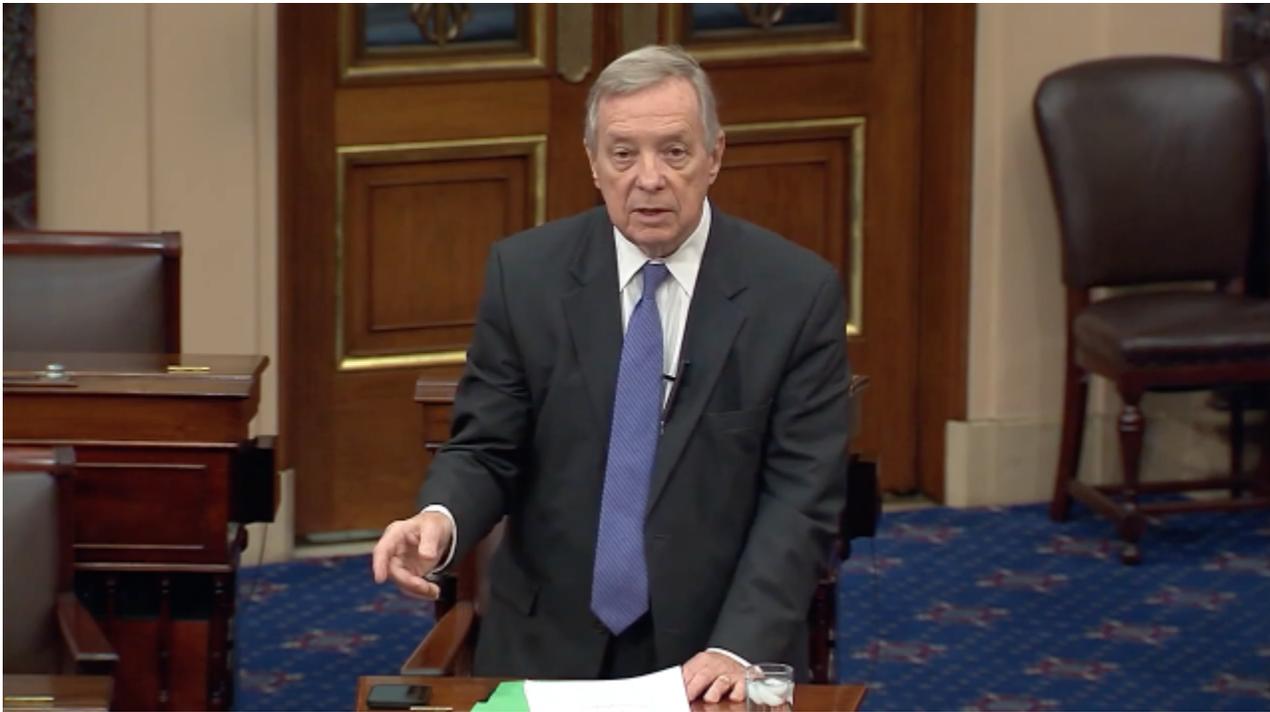


Durbin, Kaine, Fetterman Introduce Resolution Condemning The Arbitrary Arrest Of American Citizens By The Russian Government

by Maddie Carlos
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WASHINGTON – Following the one-year anniversary of the arbitrary arrest of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan *Gershkovich*, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Co-Chair of the Senate Ukraine Caucus, along with U.S. Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA) and John Fetterman (D-PA), introduced a resolution condemning the Russian government for their arrests of several American citizens and calling for their immediate and unconditioned release. Mr. *Gershkovich* was detained by Russia’s Federal Security Service on fraudulent charges of espionage in March 2023. The resolution is cosponsored by Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Bob Casey (D-PA), Chris Coons (D-DE), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Angus King (I-ME), Patty Murray (D-WA), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Jeff

Merkley (D-OR), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Peter Welch (D-VT).

“Putin’s cruelty and cynicism were on full display when he decided that he would invade Ukraine and bring it back into the Soviet orbit. He tried to silence anyone in Russia who might dissent from his strategy, including reporting on any Russians who might have the audacity to suggest there should be democracy or freedom in their country, which is why *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan Gershkovich is in jail,” said Durbin. “By introducing this resolution, we’re yet again bringing to light the cruelty of the Russian government. As fellow Americans, we demand the release of all American citizens who face arbitrary arrests by the Russian government.”

“Russia’s arrests of journalists, many of which are U.S. citizens, are disturbing reminders of the lengths Vladimir Putin will go to in order to suppress peoples’ most basic freedoms,” said Kaine. “I urge the State Department to utilize every tool at our disposal to bring our fellow Americans home, including Virginian Vladimir Kara-Murza.”

“I’m proud to stand with my colleagues today and again call for the immediate release of all Americans arbitrarily detained in Russia, including Marc Fogel, a Pennsylvanian. Marc is a history teacher who dedicated the last 35 years of his life to teaching young people. When he returned for his tenth and final year teaching in Russia, Marc was detained for carrying a small amount of medical marijuana, which was prescribed by his doctor. But Marc has now spent over a year of a fourteen-year sentence in a Russian prison because of a bogus ‘large-scale drug trafficking’ conviction. A fourteen-year sentence is absurd – even by Russian standards. The bottom line is that Marc’s punishment simply does not match the crime. We must bring Marc, and all other unjustly detained Americans, home,” said Fetterman.

In the resolution, the Senators also cite the arrest of American citizen Paul Whelan by the Russian government, who was convicted on June 15, 2020, on fraudulent espionage charges. The resolution also notes the jailing on spurious charges of additional American citizens, including Radio Free Europe journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, Marc Fogel, and Ksenia Khavana. It also calls for the release of Russian opposition leader and U.S. Legal Permanent Resident Vladimir Kara-Murza, who was sentenced for criticizing Putin’s disastrous war in Ukraine.

In addition to American citizens, Durbin has called out the inexcusable death of Alexei Navalny, the opposition leader and anticorruption activist who led the political opposition against Russian President Vladimir Putin for more than a decade. Durbin recently introduced legislation to rename a section of the street near the Russian Ambassador to the United States’ residence as “Alexei Navalny Way.”

Durbin recently [called for the immediate release](#) of Kara-Murza—as well as other political prisoners across the globe—in a speech on the Senate floor. In 2021, Durbin joined a group of bipartisan Senators to introduce the *Holding Russia Accountable for Malign Activities Act of 2021*, a targeted bill that would impose sanctions on Russian officials complicit in brazen violations of international law, including the poisoning and imprisonment of Mr. Navalny. Durbin also cosponsored the *Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act*.