

116TH

# CONGRESS IN REVIEW

OFFICE OF

**U.S. SENATOR  
TAMMY DUCKWORTH**

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## U.S. SENATOR **TAMMY DUCKWORTH**

**U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth** (D-IL)'s 116th Congress in Review report highlights her work and accomplishments for the people of Illinois during the past two years in the 116th Congress. This report outlines Duckworth's efforts to protect Illinoisans throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, support our troops and Veterans as well as help our working families.

In the 116th Congress, two of Senator Duckworth's bills – the **Friendly Airports for Mothers Improvement Act** and the **Route 66 Centennial Commission Act** – were signed into law and another two of her bills passed the Senate.

Senator Duckworth also had a number of her key provisions included in the 2020 and 2021 **National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)** and COVID-19 emergency relief packages.

During this past Congress, Senator Duckworth served on the **U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee**, the **U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation**, the **U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works** and the **U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship**.

She served as Ranking Member of the Transportation and Safety subcommittee as well as the Fisheries, Water and Wildlife subcommittee. Senator Duckworth also co-founded the Senate's first-ever **Environmental Justice Caucus** in 2019.

# SERVING ILLINOIS

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During the 116th Congress, Senator Duckworth's office assisted more than 4,000 Illinoisans experiencing difficulties navigating the federal bureaucracy, dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 or receiving federal benefits they were owed. These efforts helped Illinois families recover approximately \$1.5 million they were owed in Social Security payments, Veterans' benefits, tax refunds and more. With the COVID-19 pandemic changing the way the world communicated, the Office of Senator Duckworth responded to more than 1.1 million emails and other messages in 2020 alone. Over the past two years, Senator Duckworth also helped announce more than \$11.6 billion in federal grants awarded to Illinois organizations and governments, including more than \$7.7 billion in funding to Illinoisans to address and recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

## BY THE NUMBERS

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Responded to **1,124,794** emails and other messages



**4,286** cases in 116th Congress  
**1,477** in 2019 and **2,809** in 2020



**2** bills signed into law  
Sponsored **77** bills  
Co-sponsored **456** bills



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# PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING ILLINOISANS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health crisis, Senator Duckworth led efforts on a wide range of issues to better support middle-class working Americans, protect our citizens and help our nation more effectively respond to and overcome the pandemic, including pushing for passage of [the Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) and [the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#). The landmark CARES Act legislation put cash directly into the pockets of consumers, greatly expanded emergency unemployment insurance and provided immediate relief for small businesses. Duckworth also helped secure more than \$4.6 billion in COVID-19 relief grants in the state of Illinois and [supported](#) the nearly \$500 billion package to provide further funding for small businesses, hospitals and healthcare workers. Duckworth has also continued to [push](#) Senate Republicans to bring the House-passed *HEROES Act* to a vote in the Senate in order to deliver additional support to Americans and small businesses to help them weather this public health and economic crisis.

Though far from perfect, Senator Duckworth [voted to support](#) the bipartisan COVID-19 relief deal passed in December 2020, which came after months of attempts from Democrats to provide substantial relief to struggling Americans were blocked by Mitch McConnell and Senate Republicans. Duckworth led and supported a [number of initiatives](#) included in the COVID-19 relief and government funding bill, such as:

- Senator Duckworth's bipartisan [Relief for Working Families Act](#) that authorizes states to waive Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) payments that were improperly provided to residents who acted in good faith and played no role in securing the surplus PUA overpayment.
- Proposals led by Senator Duckworth to strengthen the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Microloan Program by providing \$57 million to help participants with technical assistance and leveraging approximately \$64 million in SBA Microloans to support minority-owned small businesses and other underserved small business interests.
- Senator Duckworth and Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) led a [provision](#) to block the Trump administration's harmful effort to eliminate Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at Senior Living Facilities (SLF) in Illinois, enabling the more than 150 Illinois SLFs to continue serving as SNAP providers of three healthy meals to over 8,000 total Illinois residents they serve every day.
- Senator Duckworth [helped secure](#) \$250 million in additional emergency funding for Head Start, which urgently needs this support to continue operating safely in providing early childhood education and other vital services to low-income children and family during the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.



- Senator Duckworth [helped secure](#) \$120 million for the U.S. Army Rock Island Arsenal major Army installation that employs more than 6,000 military, civilian and contractor personnel.
- Senator Duckworth's *Promotes Aviation Regulations for Technical Training (PARTT) 147 Act*, [bipartisan legislation](#) to establish performance-based regulations to ensure aviation maintenance education institutions have the flexibility to teach core curriculum reflective of the ongoing technical advances and innovation happening across the aviation and aerospace industry, was also included.

To build on and improve the CARES Act's benefits for working families, Senator Duckworth introduced bipartisan legislation to ensure more new parents would quickly receive stimulus payments without having to wait until the following year. The CARES Act allocated \$500 per child in stimulus payments to parents, but payments were based on the existing Child Tax Credit (CTC) rules, leaving parents with children born in 2020 unable to receive stimulus payments. Introduced in May, the [Newborn CARES Act](#) would waive the existing CTC rules and require the Internal Revenue Service to develop a system to provide payments to families with newborns once a Social Security Number is assigned to the child, and not have to wait until the following year.

Senator Duckworth was one of the first Senators to [urge](#) the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to immediately establish clear diagnostic testing procedures, capabilities and production capacity to better mitigate the spread of COVID-19. After [calling on the President to swiftly take action under the Defense Production Act to boost production of lifesaving ventilators](#) and other equipment needed to control the pandemic, Duckworth helped [introduce new legislation](#) requiring him to do so to save lives [and introduced](#) the *COVID-19 Health Care Worker Protection Act* to help keep frontline healthcare workers safe. Duckworth also cosponsored the *Free COVID-19 Testing Act* to expand access to free tests, [helped introduce](#) the comprehensive *COVID-19 RELIEF for Small Businesses Act of 2020* to support small businesses by providing needed resources and helped introduce legislation that [was signed into law](#) to prevent student Veterans and their loved ones receiving benefits through the GI Bill from losing those benefits as universities moved online. Duckworth also [joined her colleagues](#) on the *PAID (Providing Americans Insured Days) Leave Act* to ensure workers can take time off when ill and [helped introduce](#) the *Small Business Debt Relief Act of 2020*, which was [included](#) in the CARES Act, to support small businesses affected by the pandemic by relieving certain federal loan payments.

Senator Duckworth strongly advocated for small businesses during the pandemic, [authoring legislation](#) to prevent the U.S. Small Business Administration's 7(a) flagship loan program from shutting down and leaving many small business owners without access to critical working capital funds. Duckworth also [urged SBA and Treasury](#) to alleviate some of the burdens on small businesses and helped introduce [legislation](#) to better target Paycheck Protection Program funding toward Black and Brown-owned small businesses that had largely been shut out because of a lack of pre-existing relationships with big banks. Part of this legislation was [included](#) in the *HEROES Act*.



As cases began to rapidly spread in March, Senator Duckworth [penned an op-ed as a public service announcement](#) that appeared in more than seven major news outlets across Illinois, arguing that the COVID-19 pandemic is a test of our faith in the American founding doctrine. Duckworth argued that in this time of crisis, we need to think of the “we” in “We the People” by heeding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and public health officials’ calls for social distancing, as the only way we can defeat the virus is if every American individually acts to protect all of us collectively.

## HEALTHCARE

To address health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities as well as women, the LGBTQ+ community, rural populations and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities across the U.S., Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Health Equity and Accountability Act](#) with Senator Maize Hirono (D-HI), which would expand access to healthcare for immigrant and rural communities, improve care for underserved communities through enhanced language access services and more.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act](#) with Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) to create a \$4.5 billion core public health infrastructure grant program to strengthen our nation’s public health system and ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as other public health challenges moving forward.

Senator Duckworth took to the Senate floor to [condemn the GOP attacks on the disability community](#) after Republicans proposed a woefully insufficient COVID relief bill that gutted the ADA, failed to provide desperately-needed funding for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services and threatened to deprive Americans living with disabilities of their fundamental rights to live independent, regular and productive lives.

Senator Duckworth held virtual roundtables with [Black](#) and [Latinx](#) community leaders to discuss the disproportionate public health impact of COVID-19 on people of color as well as plans to equitably [distribute](#) a safe vaccine to these communities in Chicago and across Illinois. As Duckworth [received the COVID-19 vaccine](#) herself, she continued to help urge communities of color to receive the vaccine when it is available to them.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [COVID-19 Bias and Anti-Racism Training Act](#) with then-Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) to create a \$200 million grant program aimed at supporting anti-bias and anti-racism training for individuals involved in COVID-19 testing, treatment, vaccine distribution and response.

Senator Duckworth [introduced](#) the *COVID-19 Special Enrollment Period Act* to create a special healthcare insurance enrollment period to allow Americans who needs healthcare during this pandemic the opportunity to purchase it. In April, the Senator also [urged the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) to open a public health emergency special enrollment period on the Affordable Care Act Marketplace to allow more Americans to get health insurance during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Senator Duckworth [pressed Senate leadership](#) to ensure that any forthcoming COVID-19 legislation include robust federal subsidies for *Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act* (COBRA) health benefits so that individuals who lose their job as a result of this pandemic can maintain their employer-sponsored health coverage.

As Black and Brown communities across Illinois saw higher COVID-19 case rates and death rates, Senator Duckworth [expressed concerns](#) to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and called for more reporting of demographic data on the national level. This level of reporting would help in assessing the scope of the virus and help inform public health departments on how best to respond to the unique challenges facing communities of color.

Senator Duckworth [urged the Trump Administration](#) to act to prevent price gouging of medical supplies, as well as fraudulent and counterfeit supplies, which were hampering efforts to treat patients and combat the spread of COVID-19.

Senator Duckworth [continually called](#) out the racism and harassment against the AAPI community during the COVID-19 pandemic and [called on](#) the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to issue guidance to federal agencies on preventing and addressing anti-Asian racism and xenophobia related to COVID-19.

Senator Duckworth [urged](#) the Trump Administration to protect and guarantee healthcare access for Americans with HIV and the LGBTQ community during COVID-19.

In an effort to ensure all Americans were able to get tested and treated for COVID-19 without fear of unexpected medical bills, Senator Duckworth [called on major health insurers](#) to cover all COVID-19-related treatment and services at no additional costs to patients.

Senator Duckworth [helped urge](#) the Federal Communications Commission to waive current rules and increase subsidies to healthcare providers through the Rural Health Care Program to help rural communities address COVID-19.

## ECONOMY

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [HEROES Small Business Lifeline Act](#) with Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) to provide over \$370 billion for the hardest-hit, most vulnerable small businesses—including minority-owned businesses, restaurants and live venues—to help them make it to the other side of this pandemic.

Senator Duckworth [highlighted the impacts](#) on Amtrak's workforce that the Senate Republican's obstructing of a COVID-19 relief package as the CEO Amtrak confirmed to Duckworth during a Senate hearing that the company had begun to furlough roughly 2,000 employees due to revenue losses as a result of the pandemic.



Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Cultivating Opportunity and Response to the Pandemic through Service \(CORPS\) Act\*](#), which would double the AmeriCorps positions available this year and provide an additional 600,000 national service opportunities over the next three years. This legislation contains a number of provisions inspired by Senator Duckworth's [\*21st Century American Service Act\*](#), including increasing the living allowance to ensure individuals' financial resources do not limit participation, increasing the education award to offset two years of average in-state tuition and more. The *CORPS Act* builds upon the [\*Pandemic Response and Opportunity Through National Service Act\*](#), which Duckworth also introduced.

In an effort to help provide much-needed support for our nation's small and mid-sized businesses facing financial strain as a result of the pandemic, Senator Duckworth [wrote to the Federal Reserve and U.S. Department of the Treasury](#) to request an expansion of the eligibility rules for the Main Street Lending Program.

With in-person visits suspended for people incarcerated in local and state facilities, Senator Duckworth [led the call to include in future relief proposals provisions](#) to provide access to free phone and video calls so those individuals could stay connected with their loved ones. Studies have shown that keeping in touch with family members while incarcerated can help reduce recidivism, enhancing public safety and saving taxpayer dollars.

During a U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship hearing about capital access for minority-owned small businesses, Senator Duckworth [highlighted the barriers](#) facing minority-owned small businesses and asked what changes Congress should make to the Paycheck Protection Program and to traditional lending structures to help ensure borrowers of color can better access small business loans.

Senator Duckworth [urged Senate leadership](#) to provide an additional \$32 billion in emergency supplemental funding for public transit agencies as part of a future COVID-19 stimulus package. These public transportation agencies have continued to keep our economy afloat while also ensuring that essential workers and others using public transit can do their jobs and stay safe.

Senator Duckworth [helped introduce legislation](#) with Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Ron Wyden (D-OR) to remove arbitrary Congressional deadlines on unemployment benefits to help ensure those benefits remained available for working families during the COVID-19 pandemic and other periods of persistent unemployment.



Senator Duckworth [called on](#) Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza to streamline and simplify the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness application process so the smallest and most underserved businesses can fully take advantage of the program. In a separate ask, Senator Duckworth [called on](#) these same officials to streamline the PPP loan forgiveness application for borrowers with loans of \$100,000 or less. The complexity and high cost burden of the forgiveness application process for PPP loans disproportionately affects very small and underserved businesses, including microbusinesses, sole proprietorships, rural and minority-owned small businesses. In addition, the complex process contributes to barriers to entry for new borrowers and could heighten existing hurdles to inclusion, with recent survey data indicating that close to a fifth of minority business owners did not apply for assistance from programs like PPP because they viewed the application process as overly cumbersome and long.

Senator Duckworth urged Senate leadership [to include additional emergency funding for nonprofit organizations](#)—an essential part of the frontline pandemic response—in upcoming COVID-19 relief legislation.

Senator Duckworth called for a [temporary expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit](#) and the Child Tax Credit to put money back in the pockets of working Americans as they continue to weather the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. She also [helped urge the U.S. Department of the Treasury](#) to increase its efforts to make Economic Impact Payments available to the most vulnerable populations—including those without access to the internet who cannot file a tax return electronically. Senator Duckworth also [pressed the U.S. Department of Labor](#) to ensure that the workers who Congress intended to be covered by the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program were able to receive the benefits they deserved.

Senator Duckworth [called for federal relief](#) for rural radio and television broadcasters, as well as for local newspapers, during the COVID-19 pandemic to help Americans stay up to date with the latest news and information.

To help ensure the stability and safety of our food supply during the pandemic, Senator Duckworth urged the Trump Administration to [take action to prevent food supply chain breakdowns](#) and protect essential workers in the sector. She also [joined a bipartisan letter](#) that called on the Administration to ensure the continuity of our country's food supply and to support rural areas during the coronavirus pandemic by providing needed relief to farmers.

Following reports that small businesses across the country were not receiving Emergency Economic Injury Grants (EEIG) advances as quickly as required by law, Senator Duckworth [called on the U.S. Small Business Administration](#) to help those businesses keep their employees on payroll and pay their rent by ensuring applicants received their EEIG advances within three days as required by Congress.



Senator Duckworth and a bipartisan group of senators [urged the Trump Administration](#) to provide relief for local farmers who sell directly to consumers, schools, institutions, food hubs, regional distribution centers, retail markets, farmers markets and restaurants. Duckworth also called for more assistance for [specialty crop producers](#) and [Illinois pork and beef producers](#).

Senator Duckworth joined with colleagues from both sides of the aisle to [request additional funds](#) be allocated to the biofuel industry so that facilities can remain open during the unprecedented economic circumstances brought on by COVID-19.

Senator Duckworth [expressed concerns about the confusing application](#) and evaluation processes for accessing the aviation industry workforce stabilization funds included in the *CARES Act*, which could contribute to severe financial hardships for the entire aviation industry and its workforce.

Senator Duckworth [urged Administration officials](#) to take steps to ensure that the most vulnerable small businesses have access to the grants that make up the \$349 billion Paycheck Protection Program authorized by the CARES Act. This access was especially critical for small businesses, such as those owned by Veterans, minorities and women, that don't have relationships with traditional lenders.

After hundreds of passengers were forced to wait in close quarters for hours on end in order to clear medical screenings at customs at Chicago O'Hare International Airport in March 2020, Senator Duckworth [demanded additional federal resources](#) be immediately directed to airports.

## FULLY UTILIZING THE DEFENSE PRODUCTION ACT AND EXPANDING TESTING RESOURCES AND PPE ACCESS

Senator Duckworth [helped introduce an NDAA amendment](#) with Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) to require that the Trump Administration use the full authority and power of the *Defense Production Act* to scale up nationwide production of testing supplies, personal protective equipment and medical equipment needed to combat COVID-19. In an [op-ed in USA Today](#), also Duckworth called on Donald Trump to more fully use the DPA.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [Public Health Emergency \(PHE\) Production Act](#) to ensure the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services fully leverages their authorities under the *Defense Production Act* to boost production and distribution of personal protective equipment while maintaining effective oversight.

After Trump's mismanagement of the COVID-19 crisis led to shortages of testing supplies, personal protective equipment and other medical equipment, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Medical Supply Transparency and Delivery Act](#) with Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) to fully utilize the DPA to increase production of lifesaving equipment and add oversight and transparency to the supply chain for critical medical supplies and equipment.



Senator Duckworth urged U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar to support and expand the University of Illinois's COVID-19 saliva testing program through additional HHS funding. The program, known as SHIELD T3, is an innovative system of COVID-19 testing and tracing developed by University of Illinois Urbana Champaign with rapid results in two to six hours at costs significantly below current market alternatives. Duckworth urged HHS to consider UIUC's work as it worked to scale up the testing regimen at the national level.

After the Trump Administration announced its intent to end federal funding for testing sites in five states, including Illinois, Senator Duckworth [called on](#) Donald Trump to continue funding.

At the beginning of the pandemic when testing capability was more limited and lab processing times were longer, Senator [Duckworth called for additional regulatory flexibility](#) for hospitals and private laboratories so they could more easily scale up testing capacity for COVID-19. In March, after health officials in Illinois indicated they might not have enough testing supplies to cover their diagnostic needs, Senator Duckworth [pressed](#) the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for information on the potential shortage of enzymes needed for CDC COVID-19 test kits.

## SUPPORTING STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Since March, Senator Duckworth spoke with hundreds of [state and local government leaders](#), [small business owners](#), [healthcare and hospital workers](#), [health centers](#), [labor unions](#), [manufacturers](#), [farmers](#), [nonprofit organizations](#), [educators](#), [military leaders](#), [faith leaders](#), [restaurant owners](#) and [live event venue owners](#) to [discuss](#) what they needed from the Federal Government during the pandemic. To help provide local and state governments with the resources needed to fund first responders, essential workers and healthcare systems during the pandemic, Senator Duckworth [called on Senate leadership](#) to support levels of funding and proposed flexibility for state and local governments that were included in the House-passed *HEROES Act*. Duckworth also [called for funding](#) to local governments serving small communities in a future relief package, and [called for flexibility and clarity](#) in the distribution of relief funds to state, county and local governments.

Senator Duckworth [joined members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation to express concerns](#) over the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s processing of the state's requests for Public Assistance to help cover COVID-19 expenses like personal protective equipment and testing supplies. At the time, FEMA had approved less than 5 percent of Illinois' submitted claims, while taking an average of more than 90 days to process a claim.

Senator Duckworth [called on](#) the Federal Communications Commission to boost its Lifeline program, which makes basic internet and telephone service more affordable for low-income Americans, in an effort to help students stay connected when millions were returning to school both virtually and in-person.

Senator Duckworth [called on Senate leadership](#) to provide further support for essential workers like hazard pay and paid medical leave in COVID-19 relief packages.



Senator Duckworth led 15 of her colleagues in calling on Senate leadership to [include assistance in COVID-19 relief packages for environmental justice](#) communities, many of which are especially vulnerable to the virus and often found in low income areas.

Senator Duckworth [hosted a telephone town hall](#) with UChicago Medicine's Executive Medical Director, Dr. Emily Landon, reaching roughly 50,000 Illinoisans and providing updates on the COVID-19 pandemic as well as answering constituents' questions during these difficult times.

To help local governments serving smaller communities overcome COVID-19-related revenue losses, Senator Duckworth [called on Senate leadership](#) to include funding for these municipalities in relief legislation.

## GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND OVERSIGHT

Following reports of persistent and widespread political interference from the Trump White House into COVID-19 public health information, including reports that the Trump Administration pressured the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to play down the risks of sending children back to school in person, Senator Duckworth [requested an investigation](#) into the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' scientific agencies. Senator Duckworth also helped introduce the [Science and Transparency Over Politics \(STOP\) Act](#) with Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) to push back against political interference by the Trump Administration in the work of experts and the nation's public health agencies responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as urge Republicans to let science, not politics, lead our nation's pandemic response efforts.

When the Trump Administration changed the way hospitals reported COVID-19 data in a manner that could have delayed critical supply shipments and reduced transparency, Senator Duckworth [requested](#) they reverse these changes.

After public reports showed possible evidence of mismanagement and secrecy around Project Air Bridge, raising concerns about the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force's ability to appropriately distribute the life-saving equipment to state and local governments, Senator Duckworth [requested an investigation](#) from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General to ensure compliance with federal law in distributing critical medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Because political pressure to overrule experts could erode public trust and hamper efforts to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, Senator Duckworth [expressed concerns](#) to Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar regarding reported political interference in decisions on scientific matters, including the authorization of experimental COVID-19 treatments and guidance for COVID-19 testing.

Senator Duckworth [highlighted concerns](#) about how a reported U.S. Environmental Protection Agency non-enforcement policy allowing companies to operate without regulation during the COVID-19 pandemic could severely impact environmental justice communities.



## WORKER SUPPORT AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Duckworth introduced the [Federal Worker Leave Fairness Act](#) to make sure that all federal workers who have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic can carry over the time off they had earned if the crisis prevented them from taking time off of work.

As part of her efforts to protect essential workers during the pandemic, Senator Duckworth [urged the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA) to utilize its emergency enforcement mechanism to require employers to develop and implement comprehensive plans to protect all those who are required to work during this public health crisis. She also helped introduce the [COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act](#) with Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) to require OSHA to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard establishing a legal obligation for all workplaces to implement comprehensive infectious disease exposure control plans. Duckworth also [harshly criticized](#) the Department of Labor and OSHA for failing to protect essential and frontline workers from COVID-19 exposure, illness and death on the job after the vast majority of OSHA complaints went uninspected.

Senator Duckworth [helped introduce legislation](#) with Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) extending and expanding the federal eviction moratorium for renters to prevent families from worrying about losing the roof over their heads during a global pandemic.

To alleviate the burden on seniors and individuals who experience disabilities, Senator Duckworth [called for](#) the U.S. Department of the Treasury and Social Security Administration to ensure that all Social Security beneficiaries, as well as all [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries](#), automatically received direct assistance during the pandemic without having to file tax returns. Duckworth also [urged](#) the U.S. Department of Labor to better support workers who experience disabilities and may be at particular risk as a result of COVID-19.

After learning that potentially hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans still had not received their CARES Act economic stimulus checks by August of 2020, Senator Duckworth [called on the Trump Administration](#) to deliver the remaining payments as soon as possible without requiring additional burdens on taxpayers.

Senator Duckworth [helped introduce legislation](#) with Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) to remove arbitrary Congressional deadlines in order to ensure unemployment benefits remained available for working families during the COVID-19 pandemic and other periods of persistent unemployment.



## MILITARY

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, National Guard troops served on the frontlines of the crisis, working to help keep their communities and their nation safe, but the Trump Administration repeatedly worked to shortchange our servicemembers and slash federal funding that supports the deployment of these troops. In response, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [National Guard COVID-19 Response Stability Act](#) with Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY) to restore full federal funding for all National Guard troops activated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Duckworth led a number of other efforts related to this issue, including [urging](#) the U.S. Department of Defense to take proactive steps to ensure readiness of National Guard and Reserve units to support local civilian authorities and [requesting](#) that all National Guard troops activated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic be transitioned to Title 32 authority, which would provide states with certainty and critically-needed funding. Duckworth also [called for](#) the Trump Administration to [extend](#) Title 32 authority for all National Guard troops activated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic for at least 180 days.

Senator Duckworth [joined U.S. Army Secretary Ryan D. McCarthy](#) in April, 2020, to tour key COVID-19 response centers in Illinois—including McCormick Place, the Cook County Emergency Operations Center and Rock Island Arsenal—to assess how the federal government could continue to support efforts to mitigate this public health crisis.

After reports that interim U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) guidance would block some survivors of COVID-19 from joining the military, Duckworth urged the DoD to consult with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health to begin [developing long-term standards](#) for military eligibility informed by scientific knowledge of COVID-19.

Senator Duckworth [condemned Donald Trump](#) for unnecessarily gathering 1,000 cadets for an in-person West Point graduation speech in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senator Duckworth [requested](#) that U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) act swiftly to cover the costs of COVID-19 treatment for Veterans living and travelling abroad under the VA's Foreign Medical Program. She also [urged the VA](#) to properly equip all medical facilities in Illinois to promptly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide for the wellbeing of Veterans as well as VA employees.



## HUNGER AND NUTRITION

With many Illinois Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients shut out of being able to access online grocery shopping options through the program, Senator Duckworth [introduced legislation](#) to expand the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s online SNAP purchasing choices and enable other online retailers to participate SNAP. The Duckworth-supported legislation would provide grocers of all sizes with the technical assistance needed to ensure all families have the same opportunity to safely purchase groceries online. Duckworth [also called on USDA](#) to immediately work to ensure that those who rely on SNAP can safely purchase and receive food via home delivery and curbside pickup during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an effort to help college students access critical nutrition assistance and put food on the table during the COVID-19 pandemic, Duckworth joined 18 of her colleagues in calling for the [activation of the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) as an eligible form of Individual Assistance throughout the global health crisis.

Senator Duckworth [joined a bipartisan effort](#) to target COVID relief to reach local farmers through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. Duckworth also [expressed concerns](#) to USDA about how food deserts are hurting low-income communities and communities of color during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After [repeated calls](#) from Senator Duckworth to help students have access to school nutrition programs, regardless of if they are attending school in person or not during the COVID-19 crisis, the U.S. Department of Agriculture [extended school meal waivers](#) through the end of the 2020-21 school year.

## EDUCATION SUPPORT

Recognizing that students and their families shouldn't have to worry about defaulting on their student loans in midst of a global health crisis, Senator Duckworth [helped introduce a resolution](#) calling on the Trump Administration to use its existing authority under the *Higher Education Act* to cancel up to \$50,000 in federal student loan debt for federal student loan borrowers. Duckworth also [urged Congressional negotiators](#) to cancel student loan payments and debt as it considered COVID-19 relief.

Senator Duckworth helped call for [greater support for students with disabilities](#) by introducing legislation to help ensure that school districts and educators have the resources necessary to effectively serve these students during the pandemic.

To support families and children who rely on Head Start programs, Senator Duckworth [called on Senate leadership](#) to include emergency funding for Head Start programs that have experienced an uptick in operational costs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As students across the country transitioned to virtual learning, Senator Duckworth [joined her colleagues to call on](#) the Federal Communications Commission to immediately utilize the E-Rate program to help provide internet connectivity to prevent students from falling behind in school.



# STRENGTHENING ILLINOIS AND HELPING CREATE JOBS

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Senator Duckworth's bipartisan [\*TSA Credential and Endorsement Harmonization Act of 2019\*](#) passed the Senate unanimously. Following Senate passage, the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) proactively moved forward in implementing key requirements of the bill by expanding TSA PreCheck program eligibility to all active holders of a Transportation Worker Identification Credential or a Hazardous Materials Endorsement – resulting in a more efficient program and faster travel for vetted transportation workers.

During the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, Senator Duckworth helped announce more than \$11.6 billion in federal grants awarded to Illinois organizations and governments, including more than \$7.7 billion in funding to help Illinoisans address and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Senator Duckworth helped secure a number of major awards for Illinois projects, including \$20 million in BUILD Infrastructure funding to the [City of Joliet](#), more than \$20 million for America's Central Port District in the [Metro East](#), \$13 million to the Town of Normal and more than \$13 million to the City of Carbondale.

Senator Duckworth's [\*Route 66 Centennial Commission Act\*](#) was signed into law. The legislation will establish a centennial commission in preparation for the 100th anniversary of Route 66, which begins in Chicago and continues through six other states before ending on the Pacific Coast of California.

## TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

To [help keep students safe](#) as they travel to and from school while also helping prevent school bus accidents, Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*School Bus Safety Act\*](#). The legislation, which was featured on the Today Show, would implement safety recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board to make school buses safer by ensuring there are seat belts at every seat and buses are equipped with safety measures like stability control and automatic braking systems. Duckworth highlighted this legislation during a [visit to Chicago Public Schools](#).

To help modernize airport infrastructure in Illinois and across the country, Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation \(TIFIA\) for Airports Act\*](#) to expand eligibility for TIFIA credit assistance to state and local airport projects, including passenger terminals and runways. TIFIA funding has helped finance major projects in Chicago such as the 95<sup>th</sup> Street CTA Red Line Terminal, and can now be used to help fund O'Hare modernization projects.



As a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, Senator Duckworth [secured important Illinois priorities](#) to improve safety, rebuild aging roads and bridges, reduce congestion, spur innovation as well as address climate change in the surface transportation reauthorization bill.

After Senator Duckworth [called on the Federal Railroad Administration \(FRA\)](#) to extend grant funding for the Quad Cities Amtrak Route, the [agency granted](#) the Illinois Department of Transportation a six-month extension for federal funding for the project to provide needed flexibility to finalize an agreement on this critical Illinois infrastructure project. The FRA later [extended the funding through 2024](#).

Senator Duckworth joined Metra officials for the [inaugural run of trains](#) over the new Z-100 Fox River Bridge in Elgin. Duckworth was a long-time supporter of the project, leading a Congressional coalition in helping Metra secure \$14 million in federal funding through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program when she was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for Illinois's 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

Senator Duckworth [secured commitments from top transportation officials](#) to address Positive Train Control (PTC) interoperability issues in the Chicagoland area. PTC is a federally-mandated advanced system designed to prevent certain types of train-to-train collisions, help avoid derailments and other accidents caused by excessive speed or human error as well as increase safety for rail workers.

In March 2019, Senator Duckworth [co-founded the bipartisan Congressional Global Positioning System \(GPS\) Caucus](#), which focuses on discussing the economic, national security and infrastructure benefits of increasingly efficient GPS technology. The Senator's [bipartisan resolution recognizing the positive impacts of the GPS constellation](#), which contributes an estimated \$68.7 billion to the U.S. economy, unanimously passed the Senate.

To improve education and training programs at aviation maintenance technician schools, Senator Duckworth introduced [The Promoting Aviation Regulations for Technical Training \(PARTT\) 147 Act of 2019](#). This legislation was included as part of the *Aircraft Safety and Certification Reform Act of 2020*, which [passed](#) the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. She also [urged](#) the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration to fully implement two aviation workforce grant programs that would invest in and expand the development of the next generation of aircraft pilots and maintenance technicians.

Senator Duckworth secured several provisions included in the [NASA Reauthorization Act of 2019](#) to help reduce exposure to toxic pollution and boost NASA's scientific integrity, external partnerships and STEM investments.



## HELPING SMALL REFINERIES AND PROTECTING THE RENEWABLE FUEL STANDARD

Senator Duckworth is a strong supporter of reforming the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) small refinery exemption (SRE) program to help farmers instead of giving more handouts to large oil companies. After the Trump Administration's EPA undermined the original intent of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) by issuing dozens of SRE waivers to large and profitable oil companies like Exxon and Chevron, Duckworth helped introduce the bipartisan [RFS Integrity Act of 2019](#) with Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE) to reform the program and make applications for SREs public. Duckworth also wrote to the Trump Administration [multiple](#) times to urge EPA to stop undermining the RFS. Duckworth highlighted her legislation with a visit to [Marquis Energy](#) in Hennepin, Illinois, the nation's largest dry-mill ethanol facility. In September 2019, Duckworth also wrote to the Trump Administration to [urge 31 SREs](#) to be rescinded.

After a report exposed how top U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials lied to Congress and the American public about why they started granting a large number of waivers to oil refineries, [Senator Duckworth called for the EPA Office of Inspector General to launch an independent investigation](#) into whether top officials violated the law by inappropriately exempting a number of oil refineries from having to use legally required levels of biofuel.

## ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND GREAT LAKES

[In the Senate's first-ever hearing](#) of the Special Committee on the Climate Crisis, Senator Duckworth brought attention to environmental justice issues and spoke with mayors from around the country about what major cities are doing to address climate change. She also [led a Special Committee hearing](#) on the national security risks of climate change.

As a longtime supporter of helping municipalities like Zion, Illinois, deal with stranded nuclear waste in their communities, Senator Duckworth introduced the [Sensible, Timely Relief for America's Nuclear Districts' Economic Development \(STRANDED\) Act](#) to address the impacts of stranded nuclear waste by providing federal assistance to communities around the country that are burdened with storing this waste. Duckworth also [called on leadership](#) of both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to urge them to prioritize federal assistance to communities who are struggling with nuclear waste.

As the top Democrat on the Senate Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife, Senator Duckworth led several of her fellow Senators in [sending a letter](#) to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler and Assistant Secretary of the Army R.D. James urging them to reverse course on the dangerous Trump Administration Dirty Water Rule proposal to gut the regulations that protected the rivers, streams and wetlands that fed into the drinking water supplies of 1 in 3 Americans. Duckworth also introduced the [Great Lakes Water Protection Act](#) to help end the dumping of untreated sewage waste into Lake Michigan and the entire Great Lakes Basin, as well as help improve water quality throughout the Great Lakes region—and she secured two major provisions in the [America's Conservation Enhancement Act](#) to help support and protect the Great Lakes.



Senator Duckworth helped introduce the bipartisan [\*Great American Outdoors Act\*](#) with Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO), landmark legislation to preserve and protect our country's public lands. It provides permanent and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and addresses the nearly \$12 billion maintenance backlog in our national parks and other land management agencies. Duckworth also co-sponsored the [\*America's Natural Treasures of Immeasurable Quality Unite, Inspire, and Together Improve the Economies of States \(ANTIQUITIES\) Act of 2019\*](#) to protect America's national monuments against the Trump administration's relentless attacks on public lands.

After the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee favorably reported *America's Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2020* and the *Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020* out of the committee, Senator Duckworth [highlighted](#) how these bipartisan bills will help ensure that the benefits of water infrastructure improvements are felt equitably across the country as well as the [Illinois priorities](#) included in the bill. Duckworth also [highlighted the need](#) to improve federal cost sharing for major inland waterways projects with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in an effort to help local economies, in areas such as the Quad Cities, by modernizing locks and dams to expand capacity and efficiency.

To bring our water infrastructure into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by investing in critical research to make our water infrastructure systems safer, more reliable and more efficient, Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*National Institute of Standards and Technology \(NIST\) Plumbing Research Act\*](#).

Senator Duckworth's [legislation to reauthorize](#) the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials and Safety Administration unanimously passed the Senate. Pipelines carry much of the energy that powers our nation, and helping ensure the safe transportation of that energy is critical for homeowners and businesses across Illinois and our nation.

Senator Duckworth [called on](#) the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to implement changes to improve drinking water safety at childcare facilities after a Government Accountability Office investigation revealed that among Head Start centers, only 26 percent reported testing facility drinking water for lead contamination, while an estimated 43 percent never tested facility drinking water for lead contamination and 31 percent did not know whether facility drinking water had ever been tested.

Following record flooding across the Midwest, [Senator Duckworth asked for a federal report](#) examining the effect of climate change on flood risk management.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce [\*The Clean Economy Act\*](#) with Senator Tom Carper (D-DE) to put the United States on a path to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by no later than 2050.



## CONNECTING WITH ILLINOISANS

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, Senator Duckworth hosted multiple town halls to hear concerns from her constituents and answer questions, one with Congresswoman Lauren Underwood in [Gurnee](#), Illinois, another in [Carbondale](#), Illinois.

As a co-founder of the Senate's first-ever Environmental Justice Caucus, Senator Duckworth [met with residents](#) and local leaders in the Centreville area about ongoing environmental justice issues the community faces with flooding and sewage and [called on](#) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conduct oversight and testing for the problems in the area.

Senator Duckworth [met with local advocates](#) and officials to discuss ongoing accessibility issues at the Alton National Cemetery, including the construction of an accessible ramp.

Senator Duckworth [participated in a virtual fireside chat](#) hosted by Chicago Community Trust President to discuss her efforts to close the wealth gap that exists between Americans of color and white Americans, racial justice and gender equality and the 30th Anniversary of the *American's with Disabilities Act*.



## FIGHTING FOR TROOPS AND VETERANS

### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

After reports that Donald Trump knew for months Russia secretly offered bounties to militants for the killing of American troops, but did nothing to protect these troops, Senator Duckworth [frequently called attention to Trump's continued silence](#) and [condemned](#) Trump's actions in a [speech on the Senate floor](#). Duckworth also [called](#) for a U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the reports, [demanded an opportunity](#) to review any relevant daily briefings related to the reports and helped introduce the [Russia Bounty Response Act of 2020](#) with Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) to impose sanctions on anyone involved in the program.

Senator Duckworth successfully secured a number of her priorities in the [Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act](#) (NDAA) and 2021 NDAA. Key Duckworth provisions included in the FY2020 NDAA help protect servicemembers from lead poisoning and ensure the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) is complying with federal standards in military housing, encourage DoD to help noncitizen servicemembers and Veterans become citizens, extend the Rock Island Arsenal's lease and provide \$75 million for the Arsenal's Defense Community Infrastructure Program as well as prepare the next generation of American workers to work at our National Laboratories and the National Nuclear Security Administration. In the [FY2021 NDAA](#), key Duckworth provisions included bolstering transportation infrastructure and logistics systems, accelerating rotary wing modernization efforts, investing more DoD resources into emerging regions like Southeast Asia and making sure our female servicemembers are properly equipped for combat.

Senator Duckworth's bipartisan [Citizenship for Children of Military Members & Civil Servants Act](#), which will grant automatic citizenship to children of military families born while stationed abroad, was [signed into law](#). Duckworth's bipartisan law honors the service of our military and the dedication of our civil servants by making sure that their children born while stationed abroad, as well as stepchildren and adopted children, automatically acquire U.S. citizenship.

### NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

In a major address on the eve of the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, Senator Duckworth put forth her [vision for how to keep America's military the strongest in the world](#). During [the speech](#), she argued that the country can no longer only focus on the size of the military budget at the expense of domestic policies—rather, Duckworth stated that the U.S. can and must bolster its national strength and better serve the military by investing in progressive priorities like healthcare, education and green energy.



Returning to Iraq for the first time since she was shot down in 2004 while flying a Blackhawk helicopter during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Senator Duckworth [led a tripartisan congressional delegation on an official trip to the Middle East](#). The delegation traveled to Baghdad, Taji and Erbil, where they met with Iraq's top leaders and received operational and intelligence updates from American diplomats and military commanders in the region. Duckworth [reflected on her visit in an op-ed](#) published in the Chicago Tribune.

After Lt. Col. Vindman, a top Ukraine expert at the National Security Council who testified during the U.S. House impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump, was [fired](#) from his White House position and later [retired from the military](#) due to the Donald Trump's campaign of bullying, intimidation and retaliation against him, Senator Duckworth announced her [intention to block](#) Senate confirmation of more than 1,000 senior U.S. Armed Forces promotions until the U.S. Department of Defense [confirmed](#) it did not block Vindman's expected and deserved promotion.

As a Combat Veteran and member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, Duckworth [harshly criticized](#) the U.S. airstrike that killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad, which Donald Trump was [not authorized to order](#) without prior Congressional approval. The Senator also [called](#) on the U.S. Department of State to issue a document preservation order to ensure all documents surrounding the airstrike were preserved and could be properly reviewed by Congress.

When the Trump Administration escalated tensions between the U.S. and Iran in May 2019, Senator Duckworth was a vocal opponent, [raising questions about why](#) the Administration failed to share intelligence with the Senate and [demanding a briefing on the Administration's threats](#). In June 2019, Duckworth [delivered powerful remarks](#) on the Senate floor criticizing Donald Trump and his Administration's reckless, erratic strategy on Iran while warning of the severe consequences of blundering into war. Senator Duckworth also helped introduce the [Iran Diplomacy Act](#) with Senator Ed Markey (D-MA), which calls upon the United States and Iran to return to no less than their commitments under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran nuclear deal. Senator Duckworth [voted](#) in favor of an Iran war powers resolution that would force the President to secure a declaration of war or authorization for use of military force from Congress to legally engage in a war against Iran. Duckworth also [helped introduce](#) a Senate resolution condemning Donald Trump's desire to attack cultural sites in Iran after repeated threats by the President.

After Donald Trump's newly appointed but unconfirmed Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller announced the Pentagon's plan to reduce the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq in November 2020, Senator Duckworth [expressed opposition and concern](#) about the risks this drawdown could pose. These risks include extinguishing a chance for the safe return of [hostages](#) held in Afghanistan, like Illinoisan Mark Frerichs, a Veteran of the U.S. Navy who was abducted in Kabul in 2020. Duckworth [urged](#) Donald Trump, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Acting Secretary of Defense Miller to take immediate action to secure Frerichs' safe return and [called](#) for a U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee hearing to investigate how to drawdown could challenge the safe return of hostages.



As part of a tripartisan congressional delegation Senator Duckworth [traveled to Singapore and Japan to help strengthen relations with Asian partners](#). During the delegation's visit, Duckworth met with top government and military leaders, diplomats and officials in the region, including the Prime Ministers of both nations as well as their Defense and Foreign Affairs Ministers. The Senators also attended the International Institute of Strategic Studies' 2019 Shangri-La Dialogue, a leading defense and security summit in Asia.

As part of a U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee delegation, [Senator Duckworth traveled to Vietnam and Thailand](#) to meet with top government officials, [deliver an address on the importance of serving one's nation to a group of Thai military cadets](#) as well as [receive an audience](#) with the Princess of Thailand, Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, to discuss bilateral relations between our two nations.

Ahead of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Resolution 1325 reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, Senator Duckworth [called on Donald Trump](#) to make women's inclusion in Afghan peace negotiations a foreign policy priority, underscoring its critical importance.

Senator Duckworth [delivered a keynote address to the City Club of Chicago](#), detailing her vision for how we can achieve true, enduring American strength through investing in infrastructure and establishing a national security platform—rejecting the false choice between investing in our defense and investing in domestic priorities like healthcare and education.

On the 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, Senator Duckworth [spoke at the 2019 Reagan National Defense Forum about multiple components](#) of America's leadership on the global stage, highlighting the need for strategic diplomacy and economic engagement in addition to a strong military, as part of a panel discussion moderated by ABC News' Jonathan Karl.

Senator Duckworth joined Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer and Senate Democrats in [writing to FBI Director](#) Christopher Wray and Principal Deputy General Counsel at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Joseph Maher to request an assessment on the threat posed by QAnon in the United States and abroad.

Eighteen years after Congress approved the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), which authorized our military actions in response to the attacks on 9/11, Senator Duckworth [called for](#) Congress to finally consider and debate a new AUMF in [a column published in the Wall Street Journal](#). Duckworth [also called](#) for the repeal of the 2002 AUMF, which authorized the use of military force in Iraq.

Senator Duckworth voted to [end the U.S. military's unauthorized support](#) of Saudi Arabia's brutal military campaign in Yemen.



When Donald Trump announced plans to unilaterally withdraw U.S. military forces from Syria, Senator Duckworth warned Trump about the dangers Kurdish forces who fought alongside the U.S. against ISIS – would face and [pressed Donald Trump](#), along with Republican Senator Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, to develop a comprehensive plan to protect Kurdish partners serving in the Syrian Democratic Forces and prevent armed conflict between Kurdish forces and the Republic of Turkey.

At a U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing, Senator Duckworth pressed then-Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson and other military leaders [on past space acquisition challenges and their plans to address these challenges in future reorganization efforts](#).

## SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

After Donald Trump’s disgraceful denigration of military service, reportedly calling injured and fallen soldiers “losers” and “suckers,” Senator Duckworth [led Senate Democrats](#) in introducing a resolution honoring our troops and condemning Trump’s comments. Duckworth spoke on the Senate floor as Senate Republicans objected to passing her resolution to honor our troops, Veterans and Gold Star families. Duckworth also [responded](#) to Trump’s comments in an op-ed in *The Atlantic*.

On the heels of the murder of Private First Class Vanessa Guillen, whose family alleges that she never reported incidents of sexual harassment because she had no confidence in the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program at Fort Hood, Senator Duckworth [called for an immediate review](#) of the Army’s implementation of its SHARP program and an [investigation](#) in Army regulations, policies and procedures governing the initial response. The Government Accountability Office [accepted](#) Duckworth’s request for an independent review. The Army [included](#) many of Duckworth’s priorities she pushed for when asking for an investigation.

Following reports of an increase in sexual assault and harassment claims at the United States Coast Guard Academy and a lack of leadership in regards to the Coast Guard’s handling of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation, Senators Duckworth [introduced a bipartisan bill](#) aimed at preventing sexual assault and retaliation in the Coast Guard. Duckworth also [called on](#) the U.S. Army to review reported mishandling of multiple sexual assault claims by leaders of the Illinois-based Army Reserve unit, the 416th Theater Engineer Command. The commander was suspended and removed. Senator Duckworth also [participated in a virtual roundtable discussion](#) with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs about military sexual trauma and the work she’s doing to prevent sexual assault and harassment in the military. The Senator Duckworth also helped offer the [Military Justice Improvement Act](#) as an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2021 *National Defense Authorization Act* to professionalize how the military prosecutes serious crimes, like sexual assault, by moving the decision over whether to prosecute them to independent, trained, professional military prosecutors.



Senator Duckworth introduced the [Get the Lead out of Military Housing Act](#) to protect military families from the threat of lead poisoning in their homes and schools. Duckworth also [questioned military leaders during a U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee hearing](#) on their inadequate response to unsafe military housing conditions.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce legislation with Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) to [remove](#) all names, symbols, displays, monuments and paraphernalia that honor or commemorate the Confederate States of America and anyone who voluntarily served it from all military bases and other assets of the U.S. Department of Defense. In an op-ed, Duckworth [highlighted the need](#) to stop honoring traitors to our country and the important role that renaming these bases and military assets could play in promoting unit cohesion. Duckworth also [called on the leaders](#) of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard and National Guard Bureau to prohibit the display of the Confederate Battle Flag, and [commended](#) the U.S. Marine Corps for its leadership on prohibiting it. Duckworth also [helped introduce](#) a bill with Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) to remove Confederate statues from the U.S. Capitol. Duckworth [criticized](#) Donald Trump after he threatened to veto the 2021 NDAA—which included a [proposal](#) to rename all military bases and other military assets named for the Confederacy—and stop pay increases for our troops.

Following reports that the Trump Administration planned to end a program that protects against the deportation of military families whose loved ones are deployed by the United States Armed Forces, [Senator Duckworth led 21 Senate Democrats](#) in demanding the Administration reverse course immediately. Duckworth also [introduced legislation](#) to safeguard the program, and elements of her legislation were included in the FY2020 NDAA.

Senator Duckworth's bipartisan [WWII Army Ranger Congressional Gold Medal Act](#) passed the Senate unanimously.

Senator Duckworth, along with a nomination committee, selected from hundreds of Illinois high school applicants a group of outstanding students to receive Congressional nominations to attend United States Military Service Academies, with [14 of Duckworth's recommended students](#) attending West Point, the Air Force Academy, the Naval Academy or the Merchant Marine Academy for the Class of 2024.

After the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) mailed a form that had not been updated since 1977 and contained the word “Negroid” to family of a deceased servicemember, [Senator Duckworth introduced legislation](#) requiring the DoD to review and update all currently in-use forms containing racially or ethnically insensitive terminology.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the bipartisan [Military Voter Protection \(MVP\) Act](#) with Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) to ensure that servicemembers are provided with the ballots and registration cards they need to vote while deployed overseas, along with instruction from trained personnel on how to cast their vote in whichever state they are registered in.



Senator Duckworth [introduced legislation](#) to help servicemembers navigate the childcare accessibility crisis by expanding J-1 visa exemptions to au pairs providing childcare services to military families.

Senator Duckworth [urged](#) the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees for the authorization for the United States Army to launch a pilot program to help authorized users to find productive uses for unoccupied military land and buildings that would otherwise go unnoticed and unused. If implemented, the pilot program could enable private-sector or academic organizations to research alongside bright individuals in the Army and result in additional benefits for both parties without expending additional resources.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [Military Widow's Tax Elimination Act of 2019](#) to help more than 65,000 military widows across the country access the full survivor benefits earned by their fallen loved ones. Currently, these widows are prevented from receiving full benefits from both the Department of Defense's Survivors Benefits Plan and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, even if their spouses had paid into both programs.

Because reserve duty servicemembers who qualify for hazardous duty are currently only paid a fraction of what their active duty counterparts are paid, Senator Duckworth [introduced](#) a bipartisan bill to give National Guard and Reserve members equal hazard duty incentive pay.

After research showed that poorly-fitting personal protective equipment (PPE) is a leading cause of injury for all servicemembers, Senator Duckworth helped [introduce bipartisan legislation](#) with Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA) to address issues of inadequate and ill-fitting body armor and PPE in the military.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [Equality in Leadership and Inclusion in Top Elements \(ELITE\) Act of 2020](#) to evaluate the barriers facing minorities looking to serve in elite units of Armed Forces. The legislation would require the U.S. Department of Defense to conduct a study on these barriers. This legislation was eventually included in the FY2021 *National Defense Authorization Act*.



## PROTECTING AND DEFENDING OUR VETERANS

One year after the Trump Administration's needless and cruel deportation of Operation Enduring Freedom Veteran Miguel Perez, Jr., Senator Duckworth reintroduced her [Veterans Visa and Protection Act](#), the [Healthcare Opportunities for Patriots in Exile \(HOPE\) Act](#) and the [Immigrant Veterans Eligibility Tracking System \(I-VETS\) Act](#) to protect and support Veterans and servicemembers. These proposed bills would prohibit the deportation of Veterans who are not violent offenders, give legal permanent residents a path to citizenship through military service and strengthen U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare services for Veterans. Duckworth also led a bipartisan request to the U.S. Government Accountability Office to [review the military naturalization process](#). Duckworth was able to finally [meet Perez](#) when he was allowed back into the United States after a pardon by Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker, which led to Perez being [granted U.S. citizenship](#). On Veterans Day in 2019, Duckworth [joined](#) Perez in Tijuana, Mexico, to meet with other deported Veterans, honoring the service of these Veterans and offering supportive services to them in their efforts to access the VA healthcare benefits they've earned and other casework issues. Duckworth also [advocated](#) for U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Roman Sabal, who was denied entry into the country to attend his own citizenship hearing, but was [finally granted citizenship](#) in October 2020.

Ahead of Veterans Day 2019, Senator Duckworth [introduced a suite of bills](#) to improve U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs services by addressing Veteran suicide, homelessness and access to healthcare. Duckworth's proposals—the *Veteran Employment and Childcare Access Act*, *Access to Contraception Expansion for Veterans (ACE Veterans) Act* and *Post 9/11 Veteran Suicide Prevention Counseling Act*—would increase access to childcare services and help reduce Veteran suicide.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [Energy Jobs for our Heroes Act](#) to help Veterans gain the training and credentials necessary to secure job opportunities in the clean energy sector. Her bipartisan legislation would help ease the transition back to civilian life for servicemembers and strengthen the economy by connecting employers in the fast-growing solar, wind, nuclear and cyber energy industries with talented, highly-skilled Veterans who possess the needed training and credentials to succeed. Duckworth's legislation [passed](#) the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee unanimously.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the bipartisan [Expanding Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses Act](#) with Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA) to eliminate a discrepancy that put women and Veterans with a service-connected disability who own small businesses at a disadvantage when competing for federal government contracts.



Senator Duckworth reintroduced the [\*Veterans Preventive Health Coverage Fairness Act\*](#) to make healthcare more affordable for Veterans by changing the status quo that currently forces them to pay out-of-pocket costs for essential preventive health medications and prescription drugs. The Senator's bipartisan legislation would also add preventive medications and services to the list of no-fee treatments that U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs covers. Under current law, Veterans are forced to pay co-pays for preventive healthcare services that military retirees and civilians with private insurance plans receive for free. Unfortunately, Senate Republicans [blocked](#) her bill from moving forward.

After the Trump Administration recommended restricting eligibility for burial at Arlington National Cemetery to fewer Veterans and servicemembers while expanding eligibility to all Presidents and Vice Presidents regardless of their service records, Senator Duckworth [introduced legislation](#) to prohibit any President or Vice President who never served in the U.S. Armed Forces from being buried at the hallowed grounds.

After the Trump Administration and its political appointees began blocking U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s Center for Minority Veterans employees from including LGBT Veterans in their advocacy and outreach, Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*LGBT VA Advocacy Inclusion Act\*](#) to amend the VA's definition of "minority group member" to explicitly include lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Veterans and prevent the Trump Administration's efforts to discriminate against them.

Senator Duckworth introduced the bipartisan [\*Veterans Expedited TSA Screening \(VETS\) Safe Travel Act\*](#) to make air travel easier for Veterans with disabilities by providing them with TSA PreCheck at no cost.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Creig Sharp Funeral Honors for Veterans Act\*](#) to ensure that all Veterans have access to full military funeral honors, legislation that requires military installations to develop a plan to utilize both on-base and off-base resources for funeral ceremonies for Veterans, even when government resources may not be available.

Senator Duckworth helped introduced the [\*Deborah Sampson Act\*](#) with Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) to help improve the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services and access for women Veterans. Women are the fastest growing group of Veterans, but many VA facilities don't have the ability to provide equitable care or services to women Veterans. This Duckworth-supported bipartisan legislation would eliminate the barriers to care and services faced by many female Veterans, who are more likely than male Veterans to face homelessness, unemployment and go without needed healthcare.

After more than [21,500 suspicious public comments were submitted regarding a proposed rule change at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#) that could impact how and where Veterans are able to receive their healthcare, Senator Duckworth pressed the VA Office of Inspector General to investigate the apparent manipulation and ensure the integrity of the rulemaking process.



Senator Duckworth introduced the bipartisan [\*Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Act\*](#) to make sure the spouses of deceased Veterans who owned small businesses don't lose their late spouse's contract preference, which could result in the spouse losing the ability to continue running those small businesses.

Following a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) report that the Trump Administration stonewalled critical benefits to Veterans suffering from health conditions associated with their exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War, Duckworth [called on](#) the Administration to stop denying scientific evidence and end the years-long delay of adding bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, parkinsonism and hypertension to VA's list of service-connected presumptive conditions.



## PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS

### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

After unrest and protests across the country following the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer, Senator Duckworth called on all Americans to fight for justice, [speaking on the Senate floor](#) to urge immediate action and call for the Senate to pass her [Police Training and Independent Review Act](#). Her legislation, which was included in Senate Democrats' comprehensive [Justice in Policing Act of 2020](#) reform proposal, would strengthen accountability and transparency by encouraging states to enact laws requiring independent reviews of law enforcement's use of lethal force. The NAACP included Senator Duckworth's criminal justice reform legislation among its legislative priorities in the [115<sup>th</sup>](#) and [116<sup>th</sup> Congresses](#). She also [called for a U.S. Department of Justice \(DOJ\) investigation](#) into the racially discriminatory and violent policing in the Minneapolis Police Department and [hosted a virtual roundtable](#) with local Chicago leaders to discuss legislative solutions to help make systemic changes to policing and better support the Black community, including the *Justice in Policing Act*.

Senator Duckworth was [vocal in her opposition](#) to the Trump Administration's [attacks](#) on peaceful protestors, including the blatant [misuse](#) of the United States Armed Forces to divide America and deprive Americans of their constitutional right to seek redress of their grievances. After multiple reports of low-flying military aircraft intimidating large groups of Americans in Washington, D.C., following Donald Trump's threats of military action against protestors, Duckworth [demanded investigations](#) by and information from both the U.S. Department of Defense and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and she pushed the FAA Administrator about the [dangers of low-flying military helicopters](#) over peaceful civilian protests. Senator Duckworth also [led a coalition](#) of Senators in requesting that the GAO conduct an independent review of how federal agencies assess the safety, appropriateness and effectiveness of so-called "less-lethal" weapons intended for crowd control purposes. GAO agreed to conduct the review at Senator Duckworth's request. She also demanded [answers](#) on the involvement of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection in quelling protests.

Senator Duckworth, along with Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Tom Carper (D-DE), founded the Senate's first-ever [Environmental Justice Caucus](#) to call attention to the many environmental justice issues affecting our nation and its people. Since its creation, the Caucus has worked to raise awareness of the many environmental and pollution issues that create public health challenges that disproportionately impact low income communities and communities of color. In addition, the Caucus aims to help those communities advocate for themselves with the Federal Government by providing expertise and assistance, generating legislation and organizing Congressional hearings and other events.



Senator Duckworth continued her years-long effort to protect all Illinoisans from cancer-causing ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions, leading the introduction of the [Expanding Transparency of Information and Safeguarding Toxics \(EtO is Toxic\) Act of 2019](#) to hold the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) accountable for its poor oversight of the carcinogen's emissions. She repeatedly called on the [EPA to begin ambient air quality monitoring](#) in Lake County, [investigate](#) allegations made by former Sterigenics employees that the company intentionally violated the law and put their own employees in Willowbrook at risk, and [launch an independent investigation](#) into whether the Trump Administration failed to protect the American public from EtO. Senator Duckworth also personally met with community members affected by EtO in [Waukegan](#) and [Willowbrook](#). Duckworth also introduced the [Public Health Air Quality Act](#) to require the EPA to implement immediate fence-line monitoring for toxic air pollutants at facilities contributing to high local cancer rates and other health threats from dangerous pollutants.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

After research discovered that children on the Southeast Side of Chicago have high levels of manganese exposure, a known neurotoxin which can negatively affect brain development, lead to permanent neurological disorders as well as decrease children's learning and memory capacities, Senator Duckworth [requested](#) the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) take immediate action to stop a company in the area from releasing unsafe levels of manganese into the air. Duckworth also [called for EPA](#) to remediate soil contaminated with manganese in the area.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [National Opportunity for Lead Exposure Accountability and Deterrence \(NO LEAD\) Act](#) to help ensure drinking water across our nation is safe from lead and copper contamination. Senator Duckworth also introduced the bipartisan [Get the Lead out of Assisted Housing Act of 2019](#) to protect families living in assisted housing from lead found in drinking water.

Duckworth helped introduce the [Environmental Justice for All Act](#) with then-Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) to achieve health equity and climate justice for all, particularly underserved communities and communities of color, and highlighted the importance of environmental justice by [inviting](#) Illinois-based environmental justice advocate Celeste Flores as her guest to the 2020 State of the Union address.

Senator Duckworth released a statement to [honor National Native American Heritage Month](#) and underscore the work needed to achieve equity and improve environmental quality and infrastructure investment in our Native American communities.

Senator Duckworth [demanded answers](#) about the cancellation of EPA's environmental justice trainings, a decision that could have severe repercussions on low-income communities, communities of color and Tribal and indigenous communities that often bear the disproportionate burden of pollution that contributes to systemic disparities in access to clean air and water. This decision came after a Trump Executive Order limited federal agencies from addressing systemic racism through programs and trainings.



Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Voluntary Water Partnerships for Distressed Communities Act\*](#), legislation to help improve the quality of drinking water for millions of Americans living in distressed communities.

As part of her efforts to raise awareness of environmental justice issues, Senator Duckworth [chaired a hearing](#) of the Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis focused on the unique climate change impacts faced by low-income communities and communities of color.

## CIVIL RIGHTS

Senator Duckworth helped introduce legislation with Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) to block the Trump Administration from deploying federal forces against peaceful Americans. The [\*Preventing Authoritarian Policing Tactics on America's Streets Act\*](#) came after heavily-armed federal forces in unmarked vehicles were filmed grabbing protesters off the street in Portland, Oregon. Duckworth also called on President Trump to refrain from inflaming tensions in Chicago and [demanded clarity](#) on Operation LeGend, helping ensure the Trump U.S. Department of Justice officials did not engage in harmful missions that would inflame tensions or divert law enforcement resources away from investigating violent criminal felony activity.

Senator Duckworth [honored the legacy](#) of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in a speech on the Senate floor, discussing the ways that Ginsburg's landmark decisions impacted her own military career and family life, as well as the rights of countless Americans.

While online companies often hold personal and sensitive information about the people they serve, they are currently not required to protect consumers' data, leaving users vulnerable to having their data used in ways they did not expect or want. To address this problem, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [\*Data Care Act\*](#) with Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), which would require websites, apps and other online providers to take responsible steps to safeguard personal information and stop the misuse of users' data.

Senator Duckworth helped introduced the [\*Equality Act of 2019\*](#) with Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), a comprehensive bipartisan bill to ban discrimination against LGBTQ Americans by amending existing federal civil rights laws to explicitly include protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, which helped spark the modern LGBTQ movement for equal rights across the nation, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the first ever bipartisan Senate resolution to [recognize and honor Stonewall's significance](#).

Senator Duckworth [received](#) the Rockford University's Jane Addams Medal for Distinguished Service in recognition of her dedication to public service and advocacy for vulnerable and underrepresented communities.



## RACIAL JUSTICE

After generations of our nation underfunding critical priorities like public health, childcare infrastructure and job creation in Black communities and communities of color, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Economic Justice Act](#) with Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) to make a historic federal commitment of \$350 billion in immediate and long-term investments in these communities.

Senator Duckworth [joined a faith-led peaceful demonstration](#) in Chicago to commemorate Juneteenth as well as to call for racial equity for Black Americans, and she [introduced legislation](#) to make Juneteenth a federal holiday.

Though it was used as an instrument of terror and intimidation against thousands of victims throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, lynching was not considered a federal crime under existing civil rights statutes. Senator Duckworth co-sponsored the [Justice for Victims of Lynching Act](#) to amend federal statutes to finally make lynching a federal crime. The Senate passed the legislation unanimously.

After cannabis was legalized for recreational use in Illinois, Duckworth met with local leaders in Chicago to [discuss the importance](#) of ensuring equity and justice for communities who have historically been disproportionately affected by marijuana-related penalties, as well as her efforts to adjust federal regulatory rules to allow marijuana companies access to the banking system.

Senator Duckworth's [Springfield Race Riot National Monument Act](#) to designate the 1908 Race Riot Sites in Springfield, Illinois, as a national monument to be managed by the National Park Service [passed](#) the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee. Duckworth also [toured](#) the excavation site in Springfield.

Senator Duckworth introduced a bill that would create a National Park Service National Heritage Area in the greater Bronzeville community of Chicago. The [Bronzeville-Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Act](#) would create a National Heritage Area to help tell the story of the Great Migration and how it created a city within a city—known as the Black Metropolis.

Because people of color still face discrimination in the housing market and are more likely to be steered towards predatory products and more expensive loans, Senator Duckworth worked to re-introduce the [Home Loan Quality Transparency Act](#) to hold discriminatory lenders accountable by ensuring loan quality criteria is made publicly available by any lender issuing a significant number of mortgages and home equity lines of credit each year.



To establish a clear legal prohibition against policies that seek to imprison American citizens on the basis of race, religion, nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability, Senator Duckworth introduced the [Korematsu-Takai Civil Liberties Protection Act of 2019](#). The legislation was named in honor of Fred Korematsu, who during World War II bravely challenged the Executive Order that directed all people of Japanese ancestry be removed from designated areas on the West Coast and relocated to internment camps. The Supreme Court wrongly ruled against Korematsu in a decision that has been widely repudiated, including by the Supreme Court itself in 2018.

## VOTING RIGHTS

To help preserve and honor the legacy of John Lewis—one of America’s greatest civil rights heroes—Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) with Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) to restore the full protections of the landmark *Voting Rights Act* and end the scourge of minority voter suppression.

Senator Duckworth, along with every member of the Senate Democratic Caucus, introduced the [For the People Act](#) to restore the promise of American democracy by making it easier, rather than harder, to vote and end the dominance of big money in politics, helping ensure that public officials work for public interest, not for special interests.

In an effort to expand voter registration efforts nationwide, Senator Duckworth re-introduced the [Pre-Registration of Voters Everywhere \(PROVE\) Act](#), allowing citizens who are 16 and 17 years old to pre-register to vote so they can be added to voter rolls automatically when they turn 18.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Protecting American Votes and Elections \(PAVE\) Act](#) with Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), expanded legislation to protect American elections from foreign interference by mandating hand-marked paper ballots and setting new cybersecurity standards for all federal elections.

One hundred years to the day after Congress passed the 19th Amendment, [Senator Duckworth spoke on the Senate floor](#) to honor the suffragists who fought so tirelessly for women’s right to vote, reminding Americans that the fight is not over and today’s generation must work to expand voting rights to the many Americans who still don’t have full access to the ballot box. She also [commemorated the 100th anniversary of Illinois ratifying the 19th Amendment](#) at a rally in Chicago with women leaders from across the state.



## CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

To help restore trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve by helping prevent police-involved deaths and encourage independent, impartial investigations into law enforcement officials' use of deadly force, Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Police Training and Independent Review Act\*](#). This would create a financial incentive for states to require training for law enforcement officials on fair and impartial policing as well as best practices for working with members of the community who are disabled and mentally ill. Duckworth's legislation is included as a main pillar of Senate Democrats' police reform proposal, the *Justice in Policing Act*, which she was a lead sponsor of.

When families keep in touch with their incarcerated family members, studies have shown recidivism rates are reduced, but phone call and videoconferencing pricing to prisons is often prohibitively expensive and predatory for these family members. To address these long-standing concerns, Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Martha Wright-Reed Just and Reasonable Communications Act\*](#), which would affirm the Federal Communications Commission's authority to address a market failure and protect family, clergy and counsel who communicate with prisoners, inmates and detainees. Duckworth [received support from the Federal Communications Commission](#) for clarifying the agency's legal authority to end this predatory practice and [hosted a roundtable](#) in Chicago with criminal justice reform advocates to discuss this legislation as well.

To help provide state and local law enforcement with high-tech devices to detect and identify dangerous drugs like fentanyl, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [\*Providing Officers with Electronic Resources \(POWER\) Act\*](#) with Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) to establish a new grant program through the U.S. Department of Justice to help state and local law enforcement organizations secure portable screening devices.

Following reports of health and safety violations within the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and state prisons during major disasters including Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma, Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Correctional Facility Disaster Preparedness Act\*](#) to ensure prison disaster response and recovery plans protect the health, safety and civil rights of incarcerated individuals during presidential disaster declarations. Duckworth also [urged the Government Accountability Office to investigate BOP's emergency preparedness efforts](#) after 1,200 inmates at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, New York, were without heat and electricity after an electrical fire at the prison.

Senator Duckworth [helped introduce legislation](#) with Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) to prohibit federal law enforcement officers from wearing camouflage patterns in the United States in most cases, since they can easily be confused for military personnel when doing so.

In response to the increase in auto-related first-responder deaths in 2019, Senator Duckworth [introduced legislation](#) to establish a national safety priority within an existing federal grant program to increase public awareness of "Move Over" laws and encourage implementation of life-saving vehicle technology.



Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*First Responders Survivors Support Act\*](#) to increase Public Safety Officers' death and disability benefit (PSOB) to \$500,000, fix bureaucratic problems with the benefits system, increase the education benefit to \$2,000 per month and identify ways to strengthen, streamline and increase access to the PSOB education benefit.

## GUN SAFETY

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [\*Background Check Expansion Act\*](#) with Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) to ensure federal background checks to all gun sales, as well as the [\*Assault Weapons Ban of 2019\*](#), which would ban the sale, transfer, manufacture and importation of military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines. The Senator also called on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to act on the [\*Keep Americans Safe Act\*](#) to prohibit the transfer, importation, or possession of magazines able to hold more than ten rounds of ammunition.

To prohibit unlicensed firearm ownership and the transfer of firearms without a valid license, Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Blair Holt Firearm Licensing and Record of Sale Act\*](#). The legislation is named after Blair Holt, a Chicago Julian High School honor student who was gunned down protecting his friend when a gunman opened fire during their ride home from school on a crowded public transit bus.

As gun sales spiked and reports of domestic violence increased across the country amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [\*Lori Jackson Domestic Violence Survivor Protection Act\*](#) with Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) to protect domestic violence survivors from gun violence by closing dangerous loopholes in federal law that allow domestic abusers to legally obtain weapons.

Nearly five years after the funeral service for the victims of the mass shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, Senator Duckworth [helped introduce legislation](#) with Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) to close a current loophole that allows gun sales to proceed if a background check is not completed after 72 hours, even if the gun buyer is not legally allowed to purchase a gun.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [\*Safe Gun Storage Act\*](#) with Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), which would direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to establish safety standards for firearm locks and firearm safes.

## IMMIGRATION REFORM

In response to the Trump Administration's cruel and mean-spirited "public charge" rule that allowed government officials to deny immigrants green cards based on their income or the wholly legal action of using of public benefits like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Medicaid, Senator Duckworth [spoke out in opposition](#) to the rule, met with [local families in Chicago](#) who would be affected by it and [helped introduce legislation](#) with Senator Maize Hirono (D-HI) to stop it.



Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [National Origin-Based Antidiscrimination for Nonimmigrants \(NO BAN\) Act](#) with Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) to repeal Donald Trump's existing executive order blocking travel from majority-Muslim countries and prevent another baseless, discriminatory travel bans from happening again. Duckworth also [helped introduce](#) a resolution that calls on Congress to reaffirm the United States' commitment to providing a safe haven for refugees fleeing oppression. And in recognition of World Refugee Day 2020, the Senator [condemned](#) the Trump Administration's policies that have dismantled the United States' asylum system and demanded it reverse its harmful measures.

In July 2020, Senator Duckworth, alongside Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), [urged Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to withdraw new guidance](#), issued under the guise of public health concerns, that would force out or deport international students who would be studying online at U.S. institutions in the 2020-21 academic year.

After a whistleblower complaint alleged forced hysterectomies at the Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Georgia, emerged, Duckworth [called for an investigation](#) by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security of the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement facility.

## DISABILITY RIGHTS

After leading the successful charge to block attempts by Senate Republicans to gut enforcement of the landmark *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) and reward businesses that have failed to make their facilities accessible to people with disabilities, Senator Duckworth introduced the [Disabled Access Credit Expansion Act](#) to incentivize small businesses to become accessible and help those businesses comply with the ADA.

As a result of a [law](#) authored by Senator Duckworth to ensure American travelers with disabilities are able to make informed decisions about which airlines to fly on, the U.S. Department of Transportation released data for the first time [revealing just how many wheelchairs and motorized scooters passenger airlines damage each month](#). Wheelchair and scooter users often on these devices to get through their daily lives, and when they are damaged by airlines, it can mean a complete loss of mobility and independence. Duckworth's own wheelchair has been damaged several times during air travel. The Senator also introduced the [Air Carrier Access Amendments Act](#) to reduce the unnecessary challenges many Americans with disabilities face during air travel.

After Amtrak attempted to charge a group of passengers with disabilities \$25,000 for a single trip, Senator Duckworth [condemned the decision](#) and urged Amtrak to review and improve its disability and accessibility policies. She [met with the CEO](#) and secured his commitment to reviewing Amtrak's disability policies nationwide, working with Members of Congress to bring disability voices to its Board of Directors and ensuring more focused attention to accessibility issues through a direct report to the CEO.



Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [\*Disability Employment Incentive Act\*](#) with Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) to expand job opportunities for people with disabilities and make it easier for employers to make workplaces more accessible as well as hire and retain individuals with disabilities.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Exercise and Fitness for All Act\*](#) to establish new federal guidelines to help ensure people with disabilities have the same opportunity to use fitness facilities as their able-bodied peers.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Access to Assistive Technology and Devices for Americans Study Act\*](#) to ensure the Government Accountability Office conducts a study on access to prosthetics after the amputation of a limb and find ways to improve patient access to the most effective assistive technologies to enhance quality of life.

Senator Tammy Duckworth [urged](#) then-President-elect Joe Biden and then-Vice President-elect Kamala Harris to hire and appoint people with disabilities across all agencies and departments and select appointees who will prioritize the rights of people with disabilities from Day One of the incoming administration.

Senator Duckworth [received](#) the 2020 American Association of People with Disabilities' ADA Legacy Award in recognition her work advocating for disability rights. She also received the [\*2019 Gordon H. Mansfield Congressional Leadership Award\*](#) for her tireless advocacy for the civil rights of Veterans and all individuals with disabilities.

Senator Duckworth's [resolution](#) honoring the life of disability rights advocate Marca Bristo passed the Senate unanimously.



## HELPING PEOPLE GET AHEAD

### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Building on the success of Senator Duckworth's [FAM Act](#) which became law in 2018, Duckworth's [Friendly Airports for Mothers \(FAM\) Improvement Act](#) was signed into law as well. The *FAM Improvement Act* will ensure that small airports across the country support nursing mothers and promote breastfeeding-friendly environments by providing accessible, clean and convenient lactation rooms for travelers. The Senate also unanimously passed Senator Duckworth's bipartisan [Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act](#) to help ensure new parents have access to clean and private lactation rooms when visiting federal buildings around the nation.

For centuries, our nation has relied on the sacrifices made by coal country—and coal workers—to industrialize and power our nation with affordable energy, but changes in our economy have led to economic downturns in many coal communities. To address this growing problem, Senator Duckworth introduced the comprehensive [Marshall Plan for Coal Country Act](#) to help ensure that coal workers and coal communities have the resources they need to transition local economies to 21st Century alternatives. Duckworth's legislation would tackle these communities' challenges by making significant investments in their overall health and economic security. Senator Duckworth also helped introduce the [Revitalizing the Economy of Coal Communities by Leveraging Local Activities and Investing More \(RECLAIM\) Act of 2019](#) with Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) to invest in coal communities by putting people back to work to clean up contaminated, abandoned mines and provide economic development opportunities to areas that need them.

[Senator Duckworth introduced a package of bills that would help](#) make workplaces more family-friendly, improve childcare services, make it easier for low-income and middle-class families to obtain diapers for their children and close loopholes that prevent many educational support staff from being able to take medical leave through the *Family Medical Leave Act*. She was joined by women's advocates and worker's advocates in Chicago to [highlight the importance of these bills](#) for working families.

### WORKING FAMILIES AND CHILDCARE

With far too many Americans still facing a choice between having a career and taking time off to care for a newborn or tend to an ailing loved one, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Family and Medical Insurance Leave \(FAMILY\) Act](#) with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) to establish a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program that would provide 12 weeks of paid leave for workers across the country.



With stagnant wages and the cost of childcare increasing for Americans, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Working Families Tax Relief Act](#) with Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) to cut taxes for workers and families by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, giving them a much-needed financial boost. She also helped introduce the [American Family Act of 2019](#) with Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) to overhaul the existing Child Tax Credit and make it more effective for supporting middle-class families with kids as well as reducing child poverty.

To help ensure low- and middle-income families have access to affordable and high-quality childcare, Senator Duckworth helped reintroduce the [Childcare for Working Families Act](#) with Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), which would ensure that no family earning under 150 percent of their state's median income pays more than seven percent of their income on childcare.

Senator Duckworth joined her colleagues in reintroducing the [Healthy Families Act](#) to help ensure workers are able to earn paid sick leave so they can stay home when they are ill, care for a sick family member, obtain preventive medical care or seek assistance related to domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault.

To protect infants from deadly crib bumpers that have killed dozens of children, Senator Duckworth introduced the [Safe Cribs Act](#), making it unlawful to manufacture and import them in the U.S.

As part of her continuing efforts to prevent future housing crises like the one that happened in Cairo, Illinois, Senator Duckworth introduced the [Averting Crises in Housing Assistance Act](#) to improve public housing oversight and transparency by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Because no family should find themselves living in public housing units that are crumbling or unsafe, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Housing is Infrastructure Act](#) with then-Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA), which would help address the nation's affordable housing crisis, including public housing and low- and mixed-income housing through infrastructure investments.

After a new Trump Administration rule allowed debt collectors to inundate consumers with unlimited intrusive calls, emails and text messages, [Senator Duckworth called on Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) to reverse the rule.

After a report found 95 percent of baby food tested had toxic heavy metals, Senator Duckworth [called on the Food and Drug Administration](#) to take immediate action and ensure the safety of the nation's baby and toddler food.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the bipartisan [Providing Urgent Maternal Protections \(PUMP\) for Nursing Mothers Act](#) with Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) to provide salaried employees in traditional office environments—a group of approximately 13.5 million executive, administrative and professional women—with reasonable break time and a private place to pump breastmilk.



## HEALTHCARE

Because all Americans deserve high-quality health coverage, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Choose Medicare Act](#) with Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) in order to give every individual who is not already eligible for Medicaid or Medicare the opportunity to enroll in Medicare.

To ensure more Americans understand that vaccines are safe, effective and vital to our nation's public health, Senator Duckworth introduced the bipartisan [VACCINES Act](#), which [passed the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions](#) as part of a larger healthcare package.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the bicameral [Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness \(MOMMA\) Act](#) with Congresswoman Robin Kelly (D-IL-02) to reduce America's rising maternal and infant mortality rate, especially for moms and babies of color who are significantly more likely to die during or shortly after pregnancy. Duckworth [hosted a panel](#) on the topic with Medela and March of Dimes in Chicago.

A strong advocate for first responders, Senator Duckworth joined 34 of her Senate colleagues from both sides of the aisle in requesting \$2.5 million to fully fund the [Firefighter Cancer Registry](#), which collects and monitors the prevalence, incidence and types of cancers among firefighters. A 2015 study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health found that firefighters are at a higher risk of cancer diagnoses and cancer-related deaths for certain types of cancer when compared to the general U.S. population due to occupational exposure, especially digestive, oral, respiratory and urinary cancers and malignant mesothelioma.

To better support breast cancer survivors and ensure they have an opportunity to achieve the best quality of life, Senator Duckworth introduced the bipartisan [Breast Cancer Patient Equity Act](#) to provide those who have experienced a mastectomy with access to custom breast prosthetics under Medicare. Currently, this is the only human body part prosthetic not currently covered under Medicare.

With the Trump Administration continuing its never-ending attacks on the ACA, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [No Junk Plans Act](#) with Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) to overturn the Trump Administration's expansion of junk health insurance plans that don't have to cover critical healthcare services or provide healthcare coverage for people with pre-existing conditions.

To help raise awareness of the nationwide runaway and homeless youth crisis, Senator Duckworth [introduced a bipartisan resolution](#) to recognize November as National Runaway Prevention Month. In 2019, she [met with staff](#) and volunteers at the National Runaway Safeline, the Chicago-based federally-designated national hotline and online service for runaway and homeless youth.



Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance \(EACH\) Woman Act](#) with Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) so every woman in this country has equal access to her constitutionally-protected rights, no matter her income, race or zip code.

To help make sure the federal government is properly investing in studying liver cancer, finding a cure and increasing access to preventive and primary cancer services, Senator Duckworth introduced the [Liver Illness Visibility, Education and Research \(LIVER\) Act](#).

## EDUCATION, ECONOMY, JOBS AND SMALL BUSINESS

Senator Duckworth helped introduced the [Tax Filing Simplification Act](#) with Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) to help make the costly and time-consuming tax-filing process easier and more affordable for millions of American taxpayers. Duckworth also sent a [letter to the IRS after an alarming report from the Government Accountability Office](#) showed that low-income and minority taxpayers are more likely to purchase costly tax-time financial products and called on the agency to improve data quality.

To address the multi-employer pension crisis threatening the retirement of more than 1.3 million workers and retirees nationwide, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Butch Lewis Act](#) with Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), which would protect the pensions these workers earned by creating a loan program to allow failing multi-employer pension plans to borrow the money necessary to ensure they can meet their commitments to retirees and workers for decades to come.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [Microloan Program Expansion Act of 2019](#) to help small business owners secure the financing they need to grow their businesses and created good-paying jobs in their communities. Duckworth also [hosted](#) a roundtable about the needs of minority-owned small businesses and her efforts to increase small business access to capital with the Chatham Business Association.

After allegations of workplace harassment, abuse and retaliation suffered by McDonald's workers, Senator Duckworth [called on the company's CEO](#) to update the company's policies to require all franchisees to enforce protections against sexual harassment. Duckworth also [met with McDonald's workers](#) to hear directly from them about harassment and retaliation they have experienced.

After the Trump Tax Scam of 2017 led to millions of middle-class Americans including Illinoisans being double-taxed, Senator Duckworth helped introduce [legislation to fully restore the state and local tax \(SALT\) deduction](#) with Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ). Duckworth also [voted to eliminate](#) the Trump Administration's burdensome regulations that harm middle-class families and give huge amounts of tax breaks to large corporations and the ultra-wealthy.

As a member of the U.S. Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, Senator Duckworth convened a [Committee Field Hearing in Chicago](#) to highlight the barriers faced by small business owners of color and women entrepreneurs.



Knowing that diversity makes our nation stronger, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [\*Diversity in Corporate Leadership Act of 2020\*](#) with Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) to encourage corporate leaders to make sure their boardrooms reflect our nation's diversity.

To help make sure America remains at the forefront of technological innovation, Senator Duckworth introduced the bipartisan [\*DOE National Labs Jobs ACCESS \(Apprenticeships for Complete and Committed Employment for Specialized Skills\) Act\*](#) to support American workers at our National Laboratories and the National Nuclear Security Administration by ensuring they have access to the training and skills they need to succeed. Her legislation later passed the Senate.

After the Trump Administration's failure to properly implement the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program intended to encourage careers in public service, Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*What You Can Do for Your Country Act of 2019\*](#) to fix the flawed program and make sure that millions of hard-working Americans who chose to dedicate their careers to public service are not denied the student loan debt relief they deserve.

Senator Duckworth introduced the [\*Mentoring to Succeed Act\*](#) to help our nation's children reach their full potential by increasing support for school-based mentoring programs in order to help at-risk youth thrive in their schools, careers, and life.



## HOLDING WASHINGTON ACCOUNTABLE

### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

When the Republicans jammed through a Supreme Court nominee just days before the presidential election and after millions of Americans already voted, Duckworth opposed the confirmation of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the highest court, calling the process “infuriating, awful and illegitimate.” Following [reports](#) that Amy Coney Barrett supported a radical organization that believes steps in the in-vitro fertilization (IVF) process should be criminalized, Duckworth [sent an emotional and personal letter](#) to her Senate colleagues urging them to consider what a vote for this nominee would say to the millions of Americans hoping to start a family using IVF therapy like she did. Duckworth also [published an op-ed](#) outlining her concerns over Barrett’s views on IVF, fearing Barrett could outlaw families like her.

When Trump-appointed United States Postal Service (USPS) Postmaster General Louis DeJoy began tampering with mail delivery, causing delays for millions of Americans, Senator Duckworth took a number of actions to protect the USPS and ensure mail was delivered on time including [discussing the impact](#) of these changes with Illinois postal workers. She called on DeJoy to [fix the delays](#) and avoid cost increases for [election mail](#) and [prioritize election mail](#) ahead of the November presidential election. Duckworth also [demanded immediate action](#) to stop the delay of prescription drug delivery for Veterans and [criticized](#) the operational changes and their disproportionate harm on deployed servicemembers.

Despite efforts by the Trump administration to [interfere with a fair and accurate](#) count for the 2020 Census, Senator Duckworth [helped lead](#) efforts to [highlight the importance](#) of the Census. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and in an additional effort to ensure an accurate count as constitutionally required, Duckworth also [called for an extension](#) of the statutory deadlines for the delivery of apportionment data and redistricting files following the 2020 Census.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [EPA Special Hiring Authority Transparency Act](#) with Senator Tom Carper (D-DE) to increase transparency associated with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hiring and prevent any future EPA Administrator from being able to give their favorite aides large salary increases without disclosing it to the American people.



Drawing on her background as a general aviation pilot and combat Veteran who flew Blackhawk helicopters in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Senator Duckworth was a [harsh critic](#) regarding the [lack of oversight](#) that led to the federal approval of the Boeing 737 MAX series aircraft, several of which crashed in 2018 and 2019, killing 346 people. In response, Duckworth [repeatedly called](#) for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to publish a set of standardized best practices for how to ensure airlines and flight crews are complying with all federal safety standards and regulations. [Senator Duckworth also pressed FAA Nominee Stephen Dickson](#) to commit to upholding critical airline safety standards she has strongly advocated for, such as Pilot Certification and Qualification Requirements that ensure pilots receive necessary training before piloting commercial aircraft, as well as Flight Crew Duty and Rest Requirements that address pilot fatigue.

Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Supreme Court Ethics Act](#) with Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) to require the U.S. Supreme court to adopt a code of ethics for Supreme Court justices. Currently, Supreme Court justices are exempt from the Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, which all other federal judges are required to follow.

Senator Duckworth [voted to terminate Donald Trump's national emergency declaration](#), which Trump intended to use to raid military construction funds to build an ineffective border wall that he promised Mexico would pay for. Duckworth said the declaration “hurt military readiness and undermine[d] our ability to respond to real national security threats by stealing funding that Congress appropriated for critical national defense projects, military bases, barracks and training facilities.”

After secret U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) opinions were used to in the past to justify torture, Senator Duckworth introduced the [DOJ OLC Transparency Act](#) to improve oversight over the Executive Branch and increase government transparency by requiring public disclosure all past legal opinions, as well as any it produces moving forward. The Trump Administration had treated the OLC's legal opinions as binding despite the facts that neither Congress nor the American public were provided access to all of these legal interpretations and there is no Congressional or judicial oversight of these opinions. .

After several Trump Administration officials resigned after they spent exorbitant amounts of taxpayer dollars on travel, Senator Duckworth helped introduce the [Federal Travel Transparency Act](#) with Senator Gary Peters (D-MI). This legislation would help ensure the Trump Administration spent taxpayer dollars more responsibly, by increasing transparency and oversight, making the air travel activities of cabinet secretaries and agency leaders available to the public.

After the clear and conclusive case showing Donald Trump's guilt, Senator Duckworth [voted to convict](#) and remove him from office. During the impeachment trial, Duckworth [pushed for evidence](#) of Trump being briefed by the U.S. National Security Council, U.S. Department of Defense or U.S. Department of State on Ukraine corruption and European cost-sharing and evidence of whether or not he had requested information on anti-corruption reform measures in Ukraine to be considered, and [criticized](#) Republican leaders for blocking [witnesses and documents](#).

