

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 23, 2026

The Honorable Edward C. Forst
Administrator
U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street NW
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Administrator Forst:

Thank you for your July 2, 2026, response to our April 27, 2026, letter regarding the Everett McKinley Dirksen U.S. Courthouse and the Stanley J. Roszkowski U.S. Courthouse. We appreciate GSA's recent progress in beginning to address several longstanding maintenance issues in both facilities. However, significant deferred maintenance remains and many of the most critical projects, including fire and life safety upgrades, elevator modernization, courthouse lobby hardening, and other security improvements, remain years from completion. While we recognize GSA's recent investments, we urge the agency to maintain this momentum and complete these projects without further unnecessary delay to ensure both courthouses are safe and functional.

We are also deeply concerned by the now-public reports that a federal judge serving in the Northern District of Illinois contracted Legionnaires' disease and believes the illness was linked to the water system in the Dirksen Courthouse. Legionella has posed a public health threat within the courthouse water system since at least 2024, and GSA has been aware of that risk throughout that time. Yet, rather than taking decisive and timely action to eliminate the risk, the agency relied on incremental corrective measures while delaying implementation of more comprehensive protections, including the secondary disinfection system now being piloted. It is unacceptable that these stronger safeguards were not pursued until after a serious illness brought renewed attention to the problem. Federal employees and members of the public using the facilities should not have to become ill before GSA acts with urgency to protect their health and safety.

We urge GSA to accelerate completion of the remaining deferred maintenance projects and installation of the secondary water treatment systems, while prioritizing investments that protect the health and safety of everyone who works in and visits the Northern District of Illinois courthouses. The recent events at the Dirksen Courthouse underscore that deferred maintenance and water quality issues are not merely facility management concerns, but also matters of public health, workplace safety, and the effective administration of justice.

Finally, GSA's recent statement criticizing the courts and downplaying its own failure to ensure water quality and workplace safety in the Northern District of Illinois indicates GSA still does not intend to act with the haste these public health concerns necessitate. GSA's denigration of the judiciary and degradation of court facilities is unacceptable.

We expect GSA to fulfill its responsibility to provide safe, functional, and properly maintained courthouses and to act with the urgency the current conditions demand. We look forward to receiving continued updates on the status of these projects.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator