

Duckworth visits UI Labs, highlights importance of Illinois's advanced manufacturing capacity

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CHICAGO — Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) visited UI Labs and the Digital Manufacturing and Design Innovation Institute (DMDII) with Million Women Mentors Illinois State Chair Jenny Kopach to discuss DMDII's critical work to support advanced manufacturing in Illinois. Duckworth also discussed her efforts to expand

Illinois's manufacturing sector and strengthen a skilled workforce prepared for 21st Century manufacturing jobs, highlighting a bill she recently helped introduce in the Senate, the [*Community College to Career Fund Act*](#) (CC2C). This bill would help close the “skills gap,” by creating a grant program to fund workforce training partnership programs between colleges and employers to help prepare Illinois students for jobs in high-demand industries, such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, clean energy and information technology.

“We all knew DMDII was a promising project when President Obama announced it in 2014, and the institute has only proven to be even more impactful than we could have predicted,” said Senator Duckworth. **“The institute’s work to expand manufacturing helps keep our state on the cutting edge of new manufacturing technologies, and I’m glad to continue to support facilities like DMDII that help create more 21st Century manufacturing jobs.”**

DDMI supports innovative work to transform American manufacturing through collaboration between businesses, non-profit organizations and schools. Since it first opened in 2015, DMDII has helped support more than 500 organizations and companies with more than \$50 million in applied research projects – all geared towards keeping Illinois at the forefront of innovative manufacturing technologies. Million Women Mentors is an organization dedicated to increasing the number of women represented in STEM programs and careers, reaching over 30 million girls and women across the United States. Duckworth is also the Honorary Co-Chair of Million Women Mentors for Illinois.