

# **Durbin, Duckworth, Senate Democrats lay out key principles for tax reform in letter to President Trump & Senate GOP leaders**

August 1 2017 12:37 PM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), along with 43 of their Democratic Senate colleagues, today wrote to President Donald Trump, Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), and Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, urging Republicans to come to the table and work with Democrats in a bipartisan way on the Senate's next critical legislative item – tax reform. Durbin, Duckworth, and their colleagues laid out their three main tenants ahead of any negotiations and said they hope to work with the GOP to craft legislation that prioritizes working families over the wealthiest few and special interests.

**“We are confident that, by working together, we could modernize our tax system to increase working families’ wages, improve middle-class job growth, promote domestic investment, modernize our outdated business and international tax systems, and put in place sound fiscal policy that raises the revenue needed to meet the needs of our country,” the members wrote. “We look forward to working together to write tax reform legislation that provides real relief for America’s working families.”**

Along with Durbin and Duckworth, the letter was signed by U.S. Senators Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Patty Murray (D-WA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Thomas R. Carper (D-DE), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D-PA), Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Jon Tester (D-MT), Tom Udall (D-NM), Jeanne Shaheen (D-MN), Mark R. Warner (D-VA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Michael F. Bennet (D-CO), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Al Franken (D-MN), Christopher A. Coons (D-DE), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Christopher Murphy (D-CT), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Angus S. King, Jr. (D-ME), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Cory A. Booker (D-NJ), Gary C. Peters (D-MI), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Kamala D. Harris (D-CA), and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV).

Full text of their letter is available [here](#) and below:

Dear President Trump, Leader McConnell, and Chairman Hatch:

We are writing to express our interest in working with you on bipartisan tax reform. We are confident that, by working together, we could modernize our tax system to increase working families’ wages, improve middle-class job growth, promote domestic investment, modernize our outdated business and international tax systems and put in place sound fiscal policy that raises the revenue needed to meet the needs of our country.

This letter highlights three key principles that we believe are prerequisites to any bipartisan tax reform effort.

First, we believe that tax reform should not increase the tax burden on the middle class. In addition, any reform effort should not benefit the wealthiest individuals, who have already seen outsized benefits from recent economic gains while working-class wages have remained stagnant. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin expressed support for this principle when he stated before the Finance Committee that there would be “no absolute tax cut for the upper class.” We hope you agree. Tax reform cannot be a cover story for

delivering tax cuts to the wealthiest. We will not support any tax reform plan that includes tax cuts for the top one percent.

Second, we believe it is crucial that tax reform legislation go through regular order and not reconciliation. Using a fast-track process like reconciliation would undoubtedly result in outsized political influence on the process and significantly hinder lawmakers' ability to close loopholes and end special interest favoritism that plagues our current tax system. As such, reconciliation is just a tool to jam through partisan short-term tax cuts that would result in economic uncertainty and instability and significantly increase our budget deficit. This stands in stark contrast to the regular order, transparent, and fiscally responsible process that allowed the 1986 tax reform to succeed and endure. Only regular order allows for a bipartisan effort and successful, lasting reform.

Third, tax reform should be focused on providing a revenue base that meets the needs of our country. Deep cuts to our corporate, individual, and other tax rates are very costly. We will not support any effort to pass deficit-financed tax cuts, which would endanger critical programs like Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other public investments in the future.

We look forward to working together to write tax reform legislation that provides real relief for America's working families.