

Durbin, Duckworth help reintroduce paid family & medical leave legislation

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— U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and 32 of their colleagues today in reintroducing the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act. The legislation would establish a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program that will provide 12 weeks of paid leave for workers who need time to care for a newborn or adopted child, a seriously ill family member or their own serious health condition.

“Far too many Americans still face a choice between having a career and taking time off to care for a newborn or tend to an ailing loved one,” Duckworth said. “Every new

parent should be able to take those exhausting, emotional, irreplaceable first few weeks with their baby without having to forgo their paycheck or lose their job, just like I was fortunate enough to do last spring after giving birth to my second daughter. And no one should be fired for taking time off to care for a loved one, like my husband was after he used all of his unpaid leave to be by my hospital bedside after I was wounded in Iraq. I'm proud to join Senator Gillibrand in introducing this legislation to expand paid leave for all Americans and fix the status quo that is currently forcing so many women out of the workforce and families into poverty."

"In Illinois, even unpaid leave under current federal law is inaccessible for 60 percent of working people. This means Illinoisans are continuously faced with tough choices when starting families and dealing with personal and family health issues," Durbin said. "The FAMILY Act means more mothers, fathers, and American workers will have the opportunity to care and provide for themselves and their families while keeping their jobs. It's time to make paid leave more accessible to everyday Americans."

Senator Duckworth has been a strong advocate for women and families during both her service in the House and Senate. Last October, Duckworth's bipartisan Friendly Airports for Mothers (FAM) Act to provide nursing mothers with private, clean and accessible lactation rooms was signed into law after passing both the House and Senate overwhelmingly. In 2018, Duckworth became the first sitting U.S. Senator to give birth, which led to a historic rules change allowing all Senators to bring their infant children onto the Senate floor, if necessary, during votes while their children are under the age of one.

Duckworth also wrote an op-ed last year describing her experience as a working mother and calling on Congress to take action on family-friendly legislation, including the FAMILY Act and her own Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools Reauthorization Act, which would increase access to on-campus child care for student parents.

In addition to Duckworth and Durbin, cosponsors of the bill include Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tom Carper (D-DE), Bob Casey (D-PA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Angus King (I-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ed Markey (D-MA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Patty Murray (D-WA), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Jack Reed (D-RI), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tina Smith (D-MN). Tom Udall (D-NM), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).