



Durbin, Duckworth Join Colleagues to Introduce Sweeping Legislation to Address Harassment in the Workplace

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and U.S. Congresswomen Katherine Clark (D-MA-05) and Ayanna Pressley (D-MA-07) to introduce the *Bringing an End to Harassment by Enhancing Accountability and Rejecting Discrimination (Be HEARD) in the Workplace Act*. The legislation takes critical steps to ensure businesses have more resources to prevent harassment and workers have more support when they seek accountability and justice, and sends a clear message to those who think they can get away with assault or harassment on the job: time is up.

“No matter your age, race, occupation, religion, or sexuality, you should be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace. But for too long and for too many people, this hasn’t been the case,” said Durbin. **“That is why I’m proud to join Senators Murray and Duckworth to introduce this critical legislation, which will put long-overdue protections and accountability into law and remove barriers to justice for those who are assaulted or harassed in the workplace.”**

“No one should ever be subjected to workplace harassment or discrimination, but when it happens we need to make sure survivors have the resources they need to report it and that they receive support. Unfortunately, in many workplaces that is not the case and it won’t get better unless we do something about it,” said Duckworth. **“I’m proud to join Senators Murray and Durbin and Congresswomen Pressley and Clark to introduce this important legislation because every person deserves to be treated with respect and to be heard.”**

The *Be HEARD Act* will:

- Strengthen understanding of workplace harassment and help businesses prevent it: The *Be HEARD Act* invests in research about the economic impact of workplace harassment, requires regular reporting on the prevalence of workplace harassment, and ensures that workers have access to more information and training about what constitutes harassment and their rights if they are harassed.
- Help ensure transparency: The *Be HEARD Act* puts an end to mandatory arbitration and pre-employment non-disclosure agreements, which prevent workers from coming forward and holding perpetrators and businesses accountable.
- Broaden and expand civil rights protections to all workers: The *Be HEARD Act* builds on and strengthens existing civil rights laws by expanding protections for workers, while also safeguarding existing antidiscrimination laws and protections. It strengthens civil rights protections for all workers and makes clear that the Civil Rights Act protects against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the context of workplace discrimination. It also ensures that no matter where you work—and whether you are an independent contractor or an intern—your rights are protected.
- Empower workers who come forward with reports of harassment or retaliation to ensure they get support: The *Be HEARD Act* allows workers more time to report harassment, authorizes grants to support legal assistance for workers who have low incomes, invests in delivering more resources to the state level to help workers ensure their rights are protected, and lifts the cap on damages when workers pursue legal action and win their cases.
- Eliminate the tipped wage: The *Be HEARD Act* eliminates the tipped minimum wage, because tipped workers are disproportionately vulnerable to sexual harassment and discrimination by both clients and supervisors.

Along with Durbin, Duckworth, and Murray, the Senate bill is co-sponsored by: Senators Kamala Harris (D-CA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Bob Casey (D-PA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ed Markey (D-MA), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), and Cory Booker (D-NJ).

The legislation has been endorsed by: Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), National Women's Law Center (NWLC), NAACP, TIME'S UP, Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Bazelon Center for Mental Health, National Domestic Workers Alliance, Women Employed, Working IDEAL, National Partnership for Women & Families, Justice for Migrant Women,

UltraViolet, National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), Futures Without Violence, National Employment Law Project (NELP), People for the American Way, Workplace Fairness, National Employment Lawyers Association (NELA), J Street, 9to5, Women Donors Network, Feminist Majority, Harnish Foundation, RALIANCE, The Employee Rights Advocacy Institute for Law & Policy, Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) United, Equal Rights Advocates, National Organization for Women, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, Center for American Progress, American Association of University Women, Economic Opportunity Institute, Legal Voice, Communications Workers of America, Working Washington, Women's Law Project, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, Oxfam America, National Council for Occupational Safety and Health, National Center for Women's Equity in Apprenticeship and Employment at CWIT, MS Black Women's Roundtable, Make it Work Nevada, Kentucky Equal Justice Center, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF), Compliance USA, Inc., Chicago Women's Trades, Building Pathways, Black Women's Roundtable, A Better Balance, AFL-CIO, CLASP, YWCA-USA, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and National Nurses United.