



# Ahead of Mother's Day, Duckworth Introduces Family-Friendly Legislation to Help Working Parents Get Ahead

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– U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today introduced a package of bills to make workplaces more family-friendly, improve childcare services, make it easier for low-income and middle-class families to obtain diapers for their children and close loopholes that prevent many educational support staff from being able to take medical leave through the Family Medical Leave Act. The package includes four pieces of legislation: the *End Diaper Need Act*, the *ESP Family Leave Act*, the *Honoring Family-Friendly Workplaces Act* and the *Expanding On-Campus Child Care to Help Parents Succeed Act*.

**“I consider myself the luckiest person in the world because I get to wake up on Sunday and spend Mother’s Day being a mom,”**Duckworth said. **“My experiences as a working parent help me understand how making our policies friendlier to working families helps parents stay in the workforce, which makes our nation stronger and more globally-competitive. I’m proud to be introducing these bills to do just that by creating a program to promote family-friendly workplaces, improve childcare services for parents working to get their degree and make sure no child goes without the diapers they desperately need.”**

The following bills were introduced today by Senator Duckworth:

- The **End Diaper Need Act** would create a \$100 million block grant program within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to assist state and local agencies, nonprofit entities and tribal organizations with helping low-income families get the diapers their children need. Those agencies and organizations awarded grants would be required to have local experience in basic need services, child care, child development activities in low-income areas, or parenthood education efforts serving low-income communities. The legislation would also help middle class families by making diapers eligible for purchase through Health

Savings Accounts (HSA's) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA's). U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) is a co-sponsor of the *End Diaper Need Act* and U.S. Representative Barbara Lee (CA-13) introduced the *End Diaper Need Act* in the House of Representatives.

- The **ESP Family Leave Act** would update the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to help more educational support professionals (ESP) at schools – teacher's assistants, custodians and maintenance staff, among others – access its benefits without the risk of losing their job. The bill would build on a provision enacted in 2009 to help more airline flight crews receive FMLA benefits. Because some ESPs work only during the school year or fewer than eight hours a day, many struggle to clear FMLA's 1,250 hours of service threshold. The ESP Family Leave Act would update the FMLA so that all ESPs who work more than 60 percent of the total monthly hours expected for their specific role are able to access benefits. One out of every three public school employees is an ESP, and there are over 2.7 million ESPs across the country working in public schools and colleges. U.S. Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) are co-sponsoring this legislation.
- The **Honoring Family-Friendly Workplaces Act** would create a certification program run by the U.S. Department of Labor to recognize exemplary family friendly businesses. The certification program would evaluate businesses on a number of policies, including paid sick days for workers, child care subsidies, lactation support, reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers, assistance paying for or referring workers to fertility adoption services, paid family leave of at least 12 weeks per year and flexible hours once parents return to work after a birth, adoption, or foster care placement. This program would be similar to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ENERGY STAR program, which makes it easier for consumers to identify products that are energy efficient. U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) is co-sponsoring this legislation.
- The **Expanding On-Campus Child Care to Help Parents Succeed Act** would increase access to on-campus child care for low-income student parents, improve oversight of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program and ensure the department is meeting the needs of our nation's student parent population. The bill funds the CCAMPIS program at \$200 million annually, allowing CCAMPIS grantees to offer childcare subsidies or a sliding fee scale to low-income parents and allowing ED to give performance bonuses to schools that demonstrate success in serving a significant number of student-parents. U.S. Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) are co-sponsoring this legislation.

**“Far too many families are struggling to purchase diapers and I am pleased to work with Senator Duckworth on this legislation, which will expand access to diapers for low income children and families,” said Casey. “Ensuring families have basic necessities will support the emotional and physical well-being of the child and provides access to child care. I am pleased to support this bill and I look forward to the End Diaper Need Act becoming law.”**

**“I appreciate the leadership of my Senate colleague Tammy Duckworth’s leadership in introducing the companion bill to my House bill, the End Diaper Need Act,” Lee said. “Right now, we have no federal assistance for diapers and diapering supplies for the millions of low-income families that have to choose between their basic household needs and buying diapers. We plan to change that, and as we enter Mother’s Day weekend, there is no better time to get it done.”**

**“Diaper need impacts one in three U.S. families who struggles to provide enough diapers to keep their baby clean, dry, and healthy,” said National Diaper Bank Network CEO Joanne Goldblum. “Many families simply do not earn enough to purchase the diapers their child needs to stay clean, dry and healthy. In fact, diapers alone can consume up to 14 percent of a low-income parent’s post-tax earnings. While numerous local diaper banks and committed volunteers across the country tirelessly serve their communities, there is still substantial unmet need. The Duckworth-Casey End Diaper Need Act of 2019 makes a critically-needed investment in ending diaper need across America.”**

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](#) to make the Senate friendlier for working parents by 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 experiences as a working mother and calling on Congress to take action on family-friendly legislation, including the *FAMILY Act*, which would establish a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program to 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.