



# **Duckworth Provisions to Protect Servicemembers & Support Illinois Jobs Included in Committee-Passed 2020 Defense Bill**

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WASHINGTON, DC— Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a Purple Heart recipient and one of the first handful of Army women to fly combat missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom, highlighted several key priorities she authored and successfully included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that passed the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) on a bipartisan vote of 25-2 today. The NDAA, which will now be considered by the full U.S. Senate, authorizes funding for the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), sets our nation's defense policy and ensures that our servicemembers have the tools they need to defend our nation. Duckworth's priorities included in the Committee-passed version of the FY2020 NDAA include provisions to protect servicemembers from toxic chemicals, prevent hunger in the military, support Illinois jobs and promote accountability at DOD, among others. The NDAA also includes a well-deserved 3.1% pay raise for our troops.

“The brave men and women in uniform who are deployed across the globe deserve to know that our country stands behind them as they risk their lives to defend our country and our Constitution,” Duckworth said. “While I do not support every provision in the current version of this legislation, I’m proud that several of my provisions were included to support jobs at both the Rock Island Arsenal and Scott Air Force Base, enhance accountability at the Department of Defense and expand Congress’ role in use of force decisions. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue improving the NDAA and ensure Congress sends a message that we have our troops’ backs.”

Duckworth is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and an Iraq War Veteran who served in the Reserved Forces for 23 years before retiring from military service in 2014 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She served on the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) during her four years serving in the U.S. House of Representatives, where she authored numerous provisions aimed at improving servicemember quality of life, reducing government waste and promoting job creation. Last year, Duckworth also authored several amendments that were included in the FY2019 NDAA to prevent low-income servicemembers from going hungry, make it easier for Illinois's small businesses to secure DOD contracts, make the federal contracting process more efficient and further secure the Rock Island Arsenal's future.

Key Duckworth provisions included in this year's NDAA would:

- Help protect servicemembers from lead poisoning and ensure the DOD is complying with federal standards in military housing. With recent reports indicating DOD's compliance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards on lead-based paint may not be consistent, this Duckworth-authored provision in the Committee-passed FY2020 NDAA would establish an annual certification process across all military housing and require the Secretary of Defense report annually to

Congress a comprehensive summary of the data on lead-based paint in military homes, as well as which departments have failed to submit the required certification. An additional Duckworth-led provision in this legislation would enable third-parties to test for lead-based paint on military bases, and another Duckworth-led provision would establish lead testing and reporting procedures for military children while ensuring that any care provided by DOD to a military child be carried out in accordance with U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

- Help prevent sexual assaults in the military by developing a Department-wide policy and Branch-specific programs. This Duckworth-led provision in the Committee-passed FY2020 NDAA would include education and training, helping foster healthy relationships, empowering non-commissioned officers (NCOs) promoting intervention and addressing alcohol abuse as well as other contributing behaviors.

- Increase DOD accountability. A Duckworth-led provision in this legislation would help prevent misuse of taxpayer funds and increase DOD accountability by expand reporting requirements on “emergency & extraordinary” DOD expenses related to special operations combatting terrorism to include detailed descriptions of the purpose, which authority approved the expense and a justification of why other funds could not be used for that particular expense.

- Improve oversight of privatized military housing. This Duckworth-authored provision included in the Committee-passed FY2020 would require performance evaluations of commanders of installations with privatized housing, as well as military officers and enlisted personnel with housing management duties, take into account whether they have exercised effective oversight and leadership in improving housing conditions and addressing the concerns of servicemembers and their families. This provision is intended to address a perceived “hands-off” approach that has been identified in the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) by helping ensure military commanders have more of a personal stake in their oversight duties of MHPI facilities and remain engaged in their proper management.

- Protect servicemembers and military families from exposure to toxic pollution. Duckworth-authored provisions in the Committee-passed FY2020 NDAA would end the military’s use of PFOS and PFOA, two known carcinogens that have polluted drinking water systems and groundwater on and near military facilities in the US and abroad, in firefighting foam by 2022 and require a report from DOD on PFOS and PFOA contamination at military installations. This report would also help fill in important data gaps to better inform future plans to mitigate exposure, from technologies and methods to levels of investments needed. Duckworth also secure \$2 million for PFOS/PFOA modeling and research in this legislation and authored an amendment that was included in the legislation to ensure the Army National Guard and Air National Guard are better

able to access funds already available to active duty forces for PFAS cleanup efforts. The provisions build on Duckworth's Get the Lead out of Military Housing Act.

- Encourage DOD to help noncitizen servicemembers and Veterans become citizens. The Committee-passed FY2020 NDAA included Duckworth's provision requiring DOD to inform noncitizen members of the Armed Forces about the existence of naturalization offices, potential pathways to citizenship, the required lengths of service to obtain citizenship and the application process. Many Veterans who have been deported were eligible for naturalization while they served in the military, but the U.S. government failed to prioritize assisting them with completing the naturalization process. Because of this lack of follow-through, Veterans who thought they had become citizens found out later that they were vulnerable to deportation because their paperwork had never been processed, and some of them were even deported.

- Urge DOD to review the issues of hunger and food insecurity in military families and work to end it. A Duckworth provision in the Committee-passed FY2020 NDAA highlights the continuing crises of hunger and food insecurity among military families and encourages DOD to work with Congress on eliminating those crises.

- Extend the Rock Island Arsenal's Lease and provide \$100 million for the Arsenal's Defense Community Infrastructure Program. A Duckworth-authored provision in the Committee-passed FY2020 NDAA would allocate \$100 million for eligible projects—transportation infrastructure, schools, emergency response, telecommunications, wastewater, utilities and others—near the Rock Island Arsenal that would improve military value and enhance the lives of servicemembers who live in the surrounding communities. The Association of Defense Communities (ADC) estimates a \$100 million authorization and appropriation could result in \$300-400 million total impact nationwide. Duckworth visited the Quad Cities in February to discuss important investments in the region's infrastructure with Moline Mayor Stephanie Acri and Rock Island Mayor Mike Thoms.

“The Rock Island Arsenal plays an important role in our national security and helps create jobs that generate economic development throughout the region,” Duckworth said regarding these provisions. “I’m proud my provision to help ensure the long-term success of the Arsenal and invest in the Quad Cities infrastructure that Arsenal employees rely on was included in this year’s defense authorization bill.”

- Provide \$10 million for a new Joint Operations Center at Scott Air Force Base to assist the joint force commander's planning, monitoring and guiding the execution of decisions included at Duckworth's request in the Committee-passed FY2020 NDAA.

Duckworth toured the Scott Air Force Base last August and spoke out against Trump's attempt to take funds from a communications facility at Scott Air Force Base in order to help build the border wall.

"Scott Air Force Base is an important driver of economic growth in the Metro East and across our state, and it also serves as a critical support network for our servicemen and women, along with their families," Duckworth said. "Allocating these resources to Scott AFB will help improve its overall infrastructure, create jobs and enhance military readiness."

- Ensure Veterans and servicemembers have equal access to military funeral honors. The Committee-passed FY2020 NDAA includes a Duckworth-authored provision establishing a uniform standard and ensuring military families and loved ones aren't left in lurch by our nation at one of the hardest times in their lives: after losing a loved one. It would require military installations to develop a plan to use both on-base and off-base resources for funeral ceremonies with earned military honors for all Veterans and servicemembers who request it. Duckworth is also an original cosponsor of standalone bipartisan legislation that would do this.

- Require DOD to issue new report on infertility in the military. Female Veterans and servicemembers suffer from higher rates of infertility than the civilian population, but there is little research into why. This Duckworth provision is intended help the military address the root causes and reduce rates of infertility.

- Invest in key national defense priorities. Provisions authored Senator Duckworth in the Committee-passed FY2020 NDAA would secure: \$75 million for the Future Vertical Lift (FVL) platform, \$8.8 millions for FVL research, \$2 million for 3D printing research at universities, \$3 million for research into the unique challenges facing the female warfighter, \$5 million for robotic construction research, \$2 million for research at minority and historically black colleges. She also secured the procurement of 8 new F-15EXs and 3 new KC-46s.

- Prevent DOD policy from limiting wind farm development. A Duckworth-led amendment to the FY2020 NDAA would prevent the implementation of a policy that could have severely limited wind farm development. If the originally-proposed policy had been in effect years ago, roughly half of all wind turbines that exist today would have never been built, at a significant loss of economic impact, mostly in rural Midwestern states.