

Durbin, Duckworth Help Introduce Health Care Bill of Rights

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today joined Senator Jeff Merkley and 14 of their Senate Democratic colleagues to introduce a new resolution supporting a “health care bill of rights” for all Americans.

Durbin and Duckworth introduced the health care bill of rights on the first day of oral arguments in *Texas v. United States*—a lawsuit brought by 18 Republican states Attorneys General, and endorsed by President Trump’s Administration, that seeks to eliminate the entire Affordable Care Act, including important protections for people with pre-existing conditions. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 20 million Americans gained health insurance – including more than one million in Illinois. If the law were eliminated, more than 600,000 Illinoisans would lose their health coverage and insurers would once again be able to deny care, or charge higher premiums, to people with pre-existing conditions.

“If President Trump and Republicans have their way in court, insurers will once again be able to discriminate against patients with pre-existing conditions and impose arbitrary caps on benefits, millions – including more than 600,000 Illinoisans – will be thrown off their health insurance, and families nationwide will pay more,” said Durbin. “We cannot go back to these dark days. I’m proud to introduce the health care bill of rights with Senator Duckworth.”

“We can’t afford to let the Trump Administration eliminate protections for the tens of millions of Americans living with pre-existing conditions or allow health insurers to once again discriminate against people who are sick and impose lifetime limits on their care. It would be catastrophic for families, for the economy and for communities across Illinois,” said Duckworth. “Now as much as ever, we have to protect our care which is why I joined with Senator Durbin to introduce this health care bill of rights.”

Among other rights, the health care bill of rights supports Americans’:

Right to coverage of essential health benefits with no annual or lifetime limits;
Right to stay on a parent’s health care plan through age 26;
Right to keep coverage after getting sick;
Right to health insurance coverage regardless of preexisting conditions or health status;
Right to free preventive services, such as cancer screenings and annual wellness exams;
Right to mental health and substance abuse coverage; and
Right to obtain health care and insurance coverage free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), age, disability, or documentation status.

Along with Durbin, Duckworth, and Merkley, the health care bill of rights was also introduced by Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Ed Markey (D-MA).