



Duckworth, Colleagues Introduce Bill to Protect Military Families from Deportation

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) introduced legislation today to strengthen military readiness by safeguarding the Parole in Place (PIP) program, which allows undocumented family members—parents, children, spouses or widowers—of members of the U.S. Armed Forces and Veterans to lawfully remain in the United States in one-year increments. The *Military Family Parole in Place Act* would require the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security to grant parole to parents, children, spouses or widowers of servicemembers and Veterans who were not dishonorably discharged. The legislation is being co-sponsored by U.S. Senators Ed Markey (D-MA), Catherine Cortez-Masto (D-NV), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Chris Coons (D-DE), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

“Our troops serving overseas should be focused on doing their jobs, not worrying about whether their family members will be deported,” Duckworth said. “Ending these deportation protections would be cruel and inhumane and a direct threat to our military readiness, which is why I’m introducing this legislation that would support our men and women in combat by protecting their families from deportation.”

“Supporting service members means supporting their families as well,” Markey said. “Not only is it morally repugnant to deport the family members of our servicemen and women, but it also hurts our military readiness. Our men and women in uniform serve for love of country. We should honor them, not deport their closest loved ones.”

“The brave men and women in uniform who call Nevada home shouldn’t have to live in fear of their loved ones being deported,” said Cortez Masto. “This legislation upholds

America's tradition of protecting the families of those who put their lives on the line to protect our country. I'll continue to stand up to this Administration to honor the service of *all* of our nation's military families."

"Our troops serving abroad make unimaginable sacrifices every day in defense of our freedoms. Forcing them to carry the burden of the deportation of a family member is cruel and it endangers our national security," said Menendez. "This legislation would protect the families of our military against the Trump Administration's ruthless immigration policies, and show our gratitude for the invaluable service of all our military families."

"Military members serving and sacrificing overseas should be spared worrying that their loved ones at home may be deported," Blumenthal said. "Ending deportation protections for the family members of active-duty troops is a despicable affront to American values – and not to mention, a serious threat our national security and military readiness."

"Brave soldiers who honorably serve in our military should not have to worry that their parents, spouses, or children will be deported from the very country they are fighting for," said Coons. "That is why I am cosponsoring this legislation to continue and strengthen the Parole in Place program to help ensure that close family members of United States military members can remain in the country."

"Our men and women in uniform put everything on the line to serve our country, and we have a moral obligation to support them, as well as their families at home," said Durbin. "I'm proud to join my colleagues in introducing this legislation in order to push back against the Trump Administration's harmful, anti-immigrant policies and help ensure that no service member has to worry about their loved ones being deported."

"To turn our back on military families by cruelly threatening deportation is to turn our back on our brave service members," Wyden said. "At the very least, this country should honor their service by giving them peace of mind that their loved ones are protected from deportation."

"In order to support our troops and their mission, we must support their families too," Kaine said. "This legislation is an effort to ensure that our troops can focus on serving our nation without worrying about the Trump Administration's cruel threat to deport their family members."

The *Military Family Parole in Place Act* permits the Secretary of Homeland Security to maintain discretionary authority to deny parole to family members of servicemembers and Veterans, but such action would require the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Veterans Affairs to also approve the parole denial. The agencies would then be required

to publicly post online all such denials, including a detailed justification for each denial (excluding personally identifiable information).

In July of this year, Duckworth [led her Senate colleagues](#) in demanding that the Trump Administration reverse course on its reported plans to end the PIP program. Earlier this year, Duckworth [re-introduced](#) three bills to protect and support Veterans and servicemembers. Her proposals—the *Veterans Visa and Protection Act*, *HOPE Act* and *I-VETS Act*—would prohibit the deportation of Veterans who are not violent offenders, give legal permanent residents a path to citizenship through military service and strengthen VA healthcare services for Veterans.

This legislation has been endorsed by the Military Officers Association of America, Veterans for American Ideals, UnidosUS and National Immigration Forum.

“Our association believes we should take care of all our service members and their families regardless of their citizenship status,” said Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins (USAF ret.), CEO/President of Military Officers Association of Americans. “Due to current threats to diminish Parole in Place for military families, we are encouraged to see this legislation introduced to include the Department of Defense in the decision process and ensure this policy stays in place as it is vital to military readiness. Reducing military family separations, removing added stress and distraction from servicemembers, and caring for our nation’s veterans and their families are all tenants MOAA supports.”

"When the women and men protecting the homeland put themselves in harm's way to defend our freedoms, the last thing they need to worry about is that our bureaucracy could deport their law-abiding family members," said Veterans for American Ideals. "Protecting the families of our warfighters allows them to complete their mission more effectively, and keep our country safe."

“This bill ensures that America’s military servicemen and women can continue to serve their nation with distinction,” said Carlos A. Guevara, Senior Policy Advisor of UnidosUS. “Our military service members should be able to count on the support of their families while they serve our great nation. The parole authority in our immigration laws was created precisely for cases of significant benefit to the nation, and it is in all our interests to ensure that military families remain united. This bill provides key safeguards in this respect, and greater oversight as to how the Administration has been managing these cases.”