



Combat Vet Duckworth, Durbin Issue Statements After Voting for Iran War Powers Resolution

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
February 13 2020 3:14 PM

– Today, combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) issued the following statement after voting for an Iran war powers resolution that would force the President to secure a declaration of war or authorization for use of military force from Congress to legally engage in a war against Iran. Senator Duckworth, who is a member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, cosponsored the measure which now goes to the House of Representatives for a vote.

“Ever since Donald Trump launched the strike that killed Iranian Major General Soleimani, one thing has remained clear: Americans are less safe today than they were before the attack. Weeks later, the Trump administration continues to stonewall, refusing to provide evidence that would justify why they brought our nation to the brink of war and sought to thwart members of Congress from performing their most solemn Constitutional duty: debating matters of war and peace.”

“Truly honoring the sacrifices of our troops requires Congress to do its job as a coequal branch of government—as the only body of our Constitutional government with the power to declare war—and authorize the use of military force. That is one of the reasons why I supported today’s resolution, which would force debate and a vote on whether to engage in acts of war against Iran – as Article I of our Constitution lays out. I hope the House quickly passes this resolution and sends it to the President’s desk.”

In July 2019, during his confirmation hearing in the Senate Armed Services Committee, [Senator Duckworth asked Defense Secretary Mark Esper](#) whether or not existing AUMFs give Donald Trump the authority to go to war with Iran, and under her questioning, Esper agreed that they do not. After Trump launch the attack that killed Soleimani, [Duckworth demanded](#) that Secretary Esper disclose why he believed it was

legal—and, to date, the Department of Defense failed to provide a reasonable explanation. Duckworth is an Iraq War Veteran, Purple Heart recipient and former Assistant Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. She was among the first handful of Army women to fly combat missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom. On November 12, 2004, her helicopter was hit by an RPG and Duckworth lost her legs and partial use of her right arm. Duckworth served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years before retiring from military service in 2014 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

DURBIN STATEMENT ON SENATE PASSAGE OF IRAN WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Vice Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, today released the following statement after the Senate voted to pass a [war powers resolution](#), introduced by Durbin and Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) last month, to prevent a war with Iran without congressional approval. In January, the House passed a similar war powers resolution 224 to 194. It will now go to the President’s desk for his signature or veto.

“Today, the Senate finally found its bipartisan voice and asserted its Constitutional authority to decide whether to declare war. I was proud to join Senator Kaine in introducing this measure and urge the President to sign this resolution without delay.”

The resolution underscores that Congress has the sole power to declare war, as laid out in the Constitution. The resolution requires that any hostilities with Iran must be explicitly authorized by a declaration of war or specific authorization for use of military force, but does not prevent the United States from defending itself from imminent attack. The resolution will force a public debate and vote in Congress as intended by the framers of the Constitution to determine whether United States forces should be engaged in these hostilities.

In June, Durbin voted for a bipartisan [measure](#) to prohibit funds from being used for military operations against Iran without explicit authorization from Congress. He was also a cosponsor of this measure.

In 2015, Durbin led the effort in the Senate that ultimately allowed the Iran nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to proceed, securing enough votes to block an effort to derail it.

Full text of the Kaine-Durbin war powers resolution is available [here](#).