



Duckworth Joins Baldwin to Introduce New Legislation to Scale Up Medical Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment Manufacturing

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WASHINGTON, DC] – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and 17 of their colleagues to announce new legislation to expedite the procurement of medical equipment under the *Defense Production Act (DPA)* to combat the spread of coronavirus. Despite multiple announcements, President Donald Trump has not utilized the federal government’s entire authority under DPA, so this legislation would require the President to do so in order to quickly produce and ensure access to supplies, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), for health care workers on the frontlines of this pandemic.

“Lives are on the line across Illinois and our country because of COVID-19 and, unfortunately, Donald Trump’s empty words and stubborn refusal to use the *Defense Production Act* to ramp up production of PPE and ventilators is a dereliction of duty,” said Duckworth. “This legislation would enact the full weight of the DPA so our nation can scale up production of the medical supplies our health care workers and first responders so desperately need to save lives and protect Americans from this public health crisis.”

Specifically, this legislation will:

- Immediately require a major purchase order for 300 million N95 masks, which will allow industry to begin scaling up production of masks and other PPE materials.
- Require the National Response Coordination Center to conduct a national assessment on current medical supply needs and a follow up major purchase order to fulfill the needs identified in the assessment.

- Waive restrictions on dollar limitations for orders executed under DPA and a 30 day waiting period for orders that exceed \$50 million.
- Authorize increased funding for DPA accounts that are being considered for supplemental COVID-19 spending packages.

The full bill text is available [here](#).

Along with Duckworth and Baldwin, this legislation was cosponsored by Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Tom Carper (D-DE), Bob Casey (D-PA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Jon Tester (D-MT) Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).

Last week, Senator Duckworth [called on Donald Trump](#) to take immediate, concrete and decisive action under the *Defense Production Act* (DPA) to boost production of critical life-saving ventilators and [to utilize the DPA to do more to bring back Illinoisans](#) as well as any other Americans who are currently stranded abroad as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. She [also called](#) on U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to work together to ensure civilian healthcare workers are well-trained to use military-issued respirator masks and other personal protective equipment that DOD has made available to civilian healthcare providers during COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the COVID-19 public health crisis began, Senator Duckworth has led with a wide range of actions designed to encourage the Federal Government to better support Americans and help our nation respond to the pandemic, [including supporting the Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) that the President signed into law to push the Trump Administration to refocus its efforts on testing and access to tests. Early on, she was one of the first Senators to [urge](#) the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to immediately establish clear diagnostic testing procedures, capabilities and production capacity to better mitigate the spread of COVID-19. [She introduced](#) the *COVID-19 Health Care Worker Protection Act* to help keep frontline healthcare workers safe, cosponsored the *Free COVID-19 Testing Act*, which would expand free tests to confirm coronavirus infections, and [helped introduce](#) the comprehensive *COVID-19 RELIEF for Small Businesses Act of 2020* to help support small businesses across the country and give them the resources they need to weather this crisis and [she helped introduce legislation that passed both the House and the Senate](#) and [was signed into law](#) to make sure student Veterans and their loved ones receiving benefits through the GI Bill continue receiving full benefits as universities move online. Duckworth also [joined her colleagues](#) on the *PAID Leave Act (Providing Americans Insured Days of Leave Act)* to provide additional support to workers and businesses during the coronavirus outbreak

and future public health emergencies and [helped introduce](#) the *Small Business Debt Relief Act of 2020* to ensure every small business with a Small Business Administration (SBA) loan would be relieved of their SBA loan payments.

In addition, Duckworth [joined U.S. Senator Dick Durbin \(D-IL\) in demanding](#) additional federal resources from the Trump Administration for O'Hare International Airport after hundreds of passengers were forced to wait in close quarters for hours in order to clear medical screenings at customs. Along with Senator Durbin, [she sent a letter](#) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) urging swift approval the State of Illinois' Section 1135 Medicaid waiver, so the state can expand access to health services and have the flexibility to deliver quality care amid this public health crisis. Duckworth [joined a bipartisan group](#) of Senators urging the Trump Administration expand access to telehealth services to rural communities and she [pressed](#) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for information on the potential shortage of enzymes needed for CDC coronavirus test kits. The Senator is [also seeking information](#) from Secretary of Defense Mark Esper about any proactive steps the Department of Defense is taking to ensure the readiness of National Guard and Reserve units to support local civilian authorities as the pandemic spreads.