



# **Duckworth, Durbin, Colleagues Urge Administration to Ensure Support for Immigrant Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**

April 28 2020 3:45 PM

WASHINGTON, D.C.] – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and a group of 12 Senate colleagues in urging the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to ensure that immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and other serious crimes can continue to access programs during the COVID-19 pandemic through which they can obtain legal status independent of abusers and perpetrators. At a time when domestic violence reports are surging and survivors are at increased risk, maintaining access to these protections is critical.

“Isolation, economic uncertainty, and anxiety about the spread of the virus have added new stress for many families, which in turn can increase the risk of domestic violence,” the Senators wrote. “Immigrants—who often face language barriers, are separated from friends and family, or may not be aware of protections available under U.S. law—can be particularly vulnerable to domestic violence. Additionally, during this pandemic they face increased barriers to accessing legal services and advocacy support. These vulnerabilities are compounded when a person’s immigration status is linked to an abusive partner.”

In addition to Duckworth, Durbin, Klobuchar and Hirono, the letter was signed by Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Chris Coons (D-DE), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Ed Markey (D-MA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).