



Duckworth Provisions to Support Servicemembers and Enhance Military Modernization Efforts Included in Committee-Passed 2021 Defense Bill

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WASHINGTON, DC – Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a Purple Heart recipient and one of the first handful of Army women to fly combat missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom, highlighted several key priorities she authored and successfully included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that passed the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) on a bipartisan vote of 25-2 this week. The NDAA, which is now set to be considered by the full U.S. Senate, authorizes funding for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), sets our nation's defense policy and ensures that our servicemembers have the tools they need to defend our nation. Duckworth's priorities in the Committee-passed version of the FY2021 NDAA include provisions to bolster transportation infrastructure and logistics systems, accelerate rotary wing modernization efforts, invest more DoD resources into emerging regions like Southeast Asia and make sure our female servicemembers are properly equipped for combat. The Committee-passed NDAA also includes a 3% pay raise for our troops.

“The brave men and women in uniform who are deployed across the globe deserve to know that our country stands behind them as they risk their lives to defend our country and our Constitution—especially during volatile times like these when their fellow servicemembers are being so blatantly politicized by their own Commander in Chief,” Duckworth said. “Though several provisions in this compromise are not ones I support, I’m proud that a well-deserved pay raise for our troops and several of my provisions were included in this version to support our servicemembers and military families, enhance our military’s transportation and logistics systems and invest in emerging regions like Southeast Asia. I’m also pleased that the Committee included Senator Warren’s amendment to help our nation heal by removing all Confederate monuments

from DoD assets. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue improving the NDAA and ensure Congress sends a message that we have our troops' backs."

Duckworth is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and an Iraq War Veteran who served in the Reserved Forces for 23 years before retiring from military service in 2014 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She served on the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) during her four years serving in the U.S. House of Representatives, where she authored numerous provisions aimed at improving servicemember quality of life, reducing government waste and promoting job creation. Last year, Duckworth also [authored several amendments](#) that were included in the FY2020 NDAA to help protect servicemembers from toxic chemicals, support IL jobs and shield Veterans from deportation.

Key Duckworth provisions included in this year's NDAA would:

- Better Support Military Personnel, Families and Retirees:
 - A Duckworth-authored provision to make it easier for DoD and the National Guard to begin clean-up of PFAS based on the drinking water standards set in each state, providing states and DoD the flexibility they need to create an action plan.
 - A provision based on an amendment authored by Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and cosponsored by Senator Duckworth to direct the removal of all confederate names, symbols, monuments, displays and paraphernalia from DoD assets, including installations within three years of enactment. Donald Trump's White House later threatened to veto this critical defense legislation if it included provisions such as this, leading Senator Duckworth to issue the following [statement](#).
 - "It would be shameful enough for the current occupant of the Oval Office to refuse to even consider having the U.S. Military stop honoring traitors who took up arms against America to defend their ability to own, sell and kill Black Americans," said Duckworth. "But for the Trump White House to threaten vetoing a pay raise for our troops over this is downright despicable."
 - A provision authored by Senator Ernst and Senator Duckworth to include the Ernst-Duckworth [Female Body Armor Modernization Act](#), which would ensure proper-fitting body armor and protective equipment is available for female Servicemembers.
 - "When I was serving overseas, I experienced firsthand how our military's body armor and protective equipment hasn't always been constructed with the health and comfort of female servicemembers in mind," Duckworth said regarding this provision. "That's one reason why I'm proud my bill

to enhance troop readiness by helping make sure our female servicemembers are properly equipped for combat was included in this committee-passed version, and I'll keep working to make sure it becomes law."

- A Duckworth-authored amendment to include her [*Equality in Leadership and Inclusion in Top Elements \(ELITE\) Act*](#), which would require an independent study identifying barriers to minority participation in the military's accession, assessment and training process. The study will also include recommendations to increase minority participation in special operations units and in the officer corps of our Armed Forces.
- A Duckworth-authored amendment that would enable the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau to have a voice as an advisor to the Joint Requirements Oversight Council and provide the Vice Chief the ability to speak up about matters involving non-federalized National Guard forces.
- Strengthen Transportation Infrastructure and Logistics Systems:
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would require DoD to begin research and development of advanced technologies that support water sustainment with technologies that capture ambient humidity and harvest, recycle and reuse water to help develop water systems that reduce weight and logistics support, including with modular and trailer mounted systems.
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would direct the Army to provide a briefing no later than October 1, 2020, on lessons learned from its Net Zero Initiative Pilot Program and increase focus on improving its water conservation strategy, which is critical to military installation resilience and critical infrastructure security.
 - A Duckworth-authored amendment to require a briefing from TRANSCOM on how the Department of Defense creates and sustains long-term logistics plans to inform the National Defense Strategy and meet the needs of great power competition.
- Focus DOD Attention on Importance of Southeast Asia:
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would invest \$410.7 million in Operation & Maintenance funding (Defense-wide) and \$627.8 million in Operation and Maintenance (Defense-wide, Overseas Contingency Operations) for the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative. Senator Duckworth participated in two CODELs to Southeast Asia in 2019, visiting [Vietnam and Thailand](#) in late August and [Japan and Singapore](#) in early June.
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would the modify U.S. code that provides authority for DOD to provide training and equipment to foreign security forces so that it includes building capacity for air sovereignty operations.

- Boost Military Energy Efficiency Efforts:
 - A Duckworth-authored provision that directs DOD to create a pilot program for Alternative Fueled Vehicles, to be located at least at two installations, that will enable the Department to reduce its fossil fuel consumption by investing in technologies like biofuels, biodiesel and electric vehicles.
 - A Duckworth-authored provision to determine the progress, and any challenges, DOD has encountered implementing a bipartisan provision that passed into law in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. This law requires the head of each federal agency to install least one renewable fuel pump at each federal fleet fueling center in the US.
- Accelerate Rotary Wing Modernization:
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would direct the Army to provide a briefing no later than March 1, 2021, detailing how the Army intends to meet the goal of recapitalizing 48 UH-60 Black Hawks per year and identifying opportunities to accelerate UH-60V Black Hawk Conversions; emphasizes the Committee's support for the Army's plan to field UH-60V Black Hawks across all components in order to maintain fleet and mission parity.
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would increase Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) funding for advanced development of the Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA) by \$5 million.
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would increase RDT&E funding by \$5 million for the development of an attack and utility replacement aircraft (AURA) vehicle, which is the Navy's follow on program to the Army's FLRAA effort.
- Other Duckworth priorities that were included:
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would direct the Army to deliver a briefing no later than March 1, 2021, on the Army's comprehensive cannon modernization strategy and a status update on the mobile howitzer evaluation.
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would direct the Army to deliver a briefing no later than December 31, 2020, on the feasibility of establishing a pilot program at Joint Munitions Command for the sustainment of munitions as part of the overall life-cycle management of munitions programs, including addressing recommendations included in the interagency report to help "diversify away from complete dependency on source of supply" as well as "modernize the organic industrial base."
 - A Duckworth-authored provision would urge the government to clear the backlog in processing Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) for our Afghan allies and emphasizes that additional visas should be made available for those eligible under the *Afghan Allies Protection Act* of 2009.

- A provision authored by Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) to make the authority permanent for DoD participation in Europe Surface Transportation.
- A provision authored by Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) to make the authority permanent for DoD Participation in Europe Air Refueling.

Duckworth also offered a provision that was not included in this year's NDAA to prohibit a President or Vice President who never served in the U.S. Armed Forces from being buried at Arlington National Cemetery. The Senator [offered](#) that provision as a standalone bill as well.