



# Durbin Discusses Health Care Protection During Pandemic With Union Leaders

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SPRINGFIELD – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today joined a call with union leaders from UNITE HERE Local 1 to discuss health care and his efforts to help workers who've lost jobs as a result of the coronavirus pandemic stay on their employers' health care plans. Durbin has urged for the inclusion of federal COBRA funding in the next coronavirus relief package and supports a provision in the House-passed *HEROES Act* that would provide premium assistance to cover 100 percent of COBRA premiums so that laid off workers can remain on their employer plan at no cost. Durbin also discussed his support for an extension of enhanced unemployment benefits of \$600 per week in the next coronavirus relief package.

"It is imperative that Congress do everything within its power to help mitigate the impact of this pandemic, including ensuring continued access to health insurance and enhanced unemployment assistance," Durbin said. "Workers are counting on us to come together on a bipartisan basis to protect their health care insurance and provide financial relief in this time of need."

Since the middle of March, approximately 57 million Americans have filed for unemployment benefits, with an estimated 10-15 million having also lost their employer-sponsored health insurance. Many unemployed Americans would prefer to remain on their employer health plan, known as COBRA, but it is often prohibitively expensive—on average, \$1,700 per month for a family.