

Durbin, Duckworth Join Colleagues In Calling For Investigation Into Political Interference With Coronavirus Information

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Gary Peters (D-MI), Patty Murray (D-WA), and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) in leading 24 of their colleagues in sending a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Inspector General calling for an immediate investigation into allegations of political interference with public health information at the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The letter follows alarming reports of widespread and ongoing political interference in the agencies' COVID-19 response, including reports that the White House pressured the CDC into downplaying risks associated with children returning to in-person learning at schools, the White House pressured the FDA to issue an emergency use authorization for convalescent plasma, and HHS political appointees reviewed and may have altered or delayed weekly scientific reports issued by CDC about the pandemic.

“In the midst of a pandemic that has now claimed over 200,000 lives in the United States alone, the American people rely on the expertise of our federal agencies to keep them safe. Our communities, schools, health care providers, businesses, and families turn to agencies like the CDC and FDA for guidance on how to make important decisions: when people should get tested, how to protect children at home or in the classroom and workers on the job, and which treatments to use to save a life,” wrote the Senators.

The Senators continued: “The consistent pattern running through these reports of political interference is the ongoing effort to minimize the seriousness of the virus. This message directly harms millions of Americans and jeopardizes public trust in science and our COVID-19 response. To safeguard the health and well-being of all Americans during this ongoing pandemic, we ask that you immediately open an investigation into political interference with the scientific work done by experts at HHS.”

In addition to Durbin, Duckworth, Schumer, Peters, Murray, and Warren, the letter was signed by Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Tom Udall (D-NM), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Ed Markey (D-MA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Jack Reed (D-RI), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Tom Carper (D-DE), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), and Tina Smith (D-MN).

Full text of the latest letter is below and can also be viewed [here](#).