

# **Duckworth Introduces Bill to Strengthen Military Readiness by Making Childcare More Accessible to Military Families that Host Au Pairs**

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WASHINGTON, DC – Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) who served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years, introduced legislation today that would help confront the childcare accessibility crisis by expanding J-1 visa exemptions to au pairs providing childcare services to military families. While a report released shortly before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic showed that the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) was only able to accommodate 78 percent of the demand for DoD Childcare Development Centers (CDC) services, President Trump signed a presidential

proclamation on June 22, 2020 exacerbating the problem by preventing the entry of au pair cultural exchange visitors through the end of this year. Roughly 10 percent of au pairs are currently serving military families.

“For most military families, accessible childcare isn’t a luxury – it’s a necessity,” said Duckworth. “I’m introducing this legislation today to help increase childcare accessibility because childcare decisions should not harm our nation’s military readiness.”

“Since the J-1 visa ban went into effect, the National Military Family Association (NMFA) has heard from military families all over the country worried about how their families can serve without the flexible, in-home child care they need,” said the National Military Family Association. “NMFA is grateful to Senator Duckworth for her support for our military families and we hope for a quick resolution so that our military can stay focused on their mission knowing their children are in good hands.”

This legislation would:

- Prohibit the suspension of J-1 visas under Presidential Proclamation 10052 for au pairs entering the United States to provide childcare services to members of the Armed Forces.
- Eliminate the effect or force of Presidential Proclamation 10052 as it pertains to the au pairs serving military families even if the proclamation is extended.
- Provide a backstop for national security concerns by authorizing the Secretary of Homeland Security to deny admission of J-1 visas to au pairs serving military families on a case-by-case basis with the concurrence of the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State.
- Create an oversight function for denials by requiring the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide written justification for the denial to Congress through a monthly report.

In May of last year, Duckworth [introduced](#) a bill package to make workplaces more family-friendly, improve childcare services and make it easier for low-income and middle-class families to obtain diapers for their children. She also helped [re-introduce](#) a bill expanding access to affordable, quality child care options in March of last year.

Duckworth’s legislation has been endorsed by the National Military Family Association (NMFA), Blue Star Families, Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), the Armed Services YMCA and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).