

# **Duckworth, Durbin Help Peters Introduce Bill to Block Trump Order Stripping Federal Employees of Critical Protections**

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WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Dick Durbin (D-IL) and 40 of their colleagues helped U.S. Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), Ranking Member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, introduce legislation that would block the implementation of an October 21 Executive Order by President Trump, which created a new classification for federal employees, Schedule F. This harmful executive order would make it easier for the Administration to fire non-partisan civil servants with policy expertise.

“Federal employees in Illinois and across the nation have been doing critical work throughout this pandemic to safeguard our nation’s public health and national security,”

Duckworth said. “President Trump’s order is yet another misguided, harmful and reckless act from this Administration, and I’m proud to introduce this resolution to fight back against these efforts to undermine our valued civil servants.”

“Continuing with irresponsible behavior, the Trump Administration’s recent order would remove protections granted to non-political federal employees,” Durbin said. “These men and women are civil servants who are trying to do the right thing when it comes to the unprecedented public health and economic crises facing our country. Our bill blocks the President from injecting additional chaos into our federal workforce.”

“This recent executive order will not only strip protections away from hard-working, dedicated civil servants, but it also recklessly creates chaos and dysfunction during the ongoing pandemic and Presidential transition,” said Peters. “Our country is facing a number of serious challenges that must be quickly and effectively tackled, from safeguarding our national security to addressing the Coronavirus pandemic – and non-partisan federal employees carry out this critical work. I am proud to lead this legislation that will prevent the Trump Administration from creating uncertainty for federal employees at a time when their work is incredibly important to protecting American lives.”

“Congress should move quickly to stop Schedule F in its tracks. The executive order raises the risk of large-scale reclassifications and removals of civil servants over the next two months when our government should be focused on addressing the pandemic, aiding economic recovery and ensuring our national security,” said President and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service Max Stier. “In the long term, the order will erode the merit-based, nonpartisan framework of the federal civil service, leading us back to the days of the spoils system and cronyism. Members of both parties should be alarmed.”

“President Trump’s executive order creating a new excepted service hiring authority, Schedule F, is just the latest in a series of actions by the president and his administration to undermine the apolitical civil service and take away fundamental workplace rights and protections from federal employees,” said American Federation of Government Employees National President Everett Kelley. “I commend Senator Peters for his leadership in introducing legislation to undo this disastrous executive order.”

On October 21, President Trump signed an executive order that would allow agency heads to convert certain policy-centric positions to a new classification, Schedule F, where there is greater flexibility to fire those employees. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Acting Director Michael Rigas issued preliminary guidance on October 23 that suggests a broad interpretation of the types of positions that would be eligible for conversion. This has created concern that the Administration could fire civil servants and create uncertainty in federal agencies that are critical to protecting the

nation's national security and addressing the ongoing pandemic. OPM has still not answered basic questions regarding the development, implementation and potential consequences of this hastily issued executive order.

Duckworth, Durbin and Peters were joined in introducing the legislation by U.S. Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Mark Warner (D-VA), Chris Coons (D-DE), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Ed Markey (D-MA), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Patty Murray (D-WA), Tina Smith (D-MN), Tom Carper (D-DE), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Bob Casey (D-PA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Doug Jones (D-AL), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Tom Udall (D-NM), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Jon Tester (D-MT), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Chris Murphy (D-CT) Angus King (I-ME) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)