

Duckworth, Durbin Join Peters in Calling on GSA Administrator to End Unprecedented Delay & Provide Critical Transition Resources to President-Elect Bi

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WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined U.S. Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), Ranking Member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and 35 of their colleagues in calling on General Services Administration (GSA) Administrator Emily Murphy to end her unprecedented delay, immediately ascertain Vice President Joe Biden as President-elect and Senator Kamala Harris as Vice President-elect, and make available the transition

resources that are provided by law. This delay from the GSA creates unacceptable risks to national security and Coronavirus pandemic response efforts as the United States passed more than 250,000 deaths.

“The United States is in the midst of a pandemic that has now claimed over 250,000 lives, with the number of new cases rising daily. Our country also faces a number of ongoing threats, including physical and cyber attacks from foreign actors, violence from domestic extremists, and natural disasters such as wildfires and hurricanes,” wrote the Senators.

“The GSA Administrator’s ascertainment of a President-elect is also critical for agencies’ willingness to share information with the transition team, including classified information, as well as for the expeditious processing of security clearances for candidates for high-level national security positions. Your delay in acknowledging Vice President Biden’s status as President-elect could undermine efforts by the incoming Administration to meet the needs of the American people in a time of national emergency,” continued the Senators.

Under the *Presidential Transition Act*, GSA is charged with providing resources and support to the President-elect and Vice President-elect so they can be ready to govern from Day One. Administrator Murphy must complete the ascertainment process to allow the President-elect’s transition team to receive needed information from agency officials at public health and national security agencies, ensure incoming national security officials can receive background checks and access to classified information and provide federal funding and resources to support the transition process.

A smooth and efficient transition is one of the hallmarks of American democracy. With the exception of the Presidential election in 2000 and the resulting recount, ascertainment by GSA normally happens within a day after a winner is declared, including in 2008 and 2016. The bipartisan 9/11 Commission found that the shortened transition following the 2000 recount created serious vulnerabilities, including delays related to key national security appointments.

Joining Duckworth, Durbin and Peters in sending the letter were U.S. Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Tom Carper (D-DE), Jack Reed (D-RI), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Chris Coons (D-DE), Ed Markey (D-MA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Tina Smith (D-MN), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Tom Udall (D-NM), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Sherrod

Brown (D-OH), Bob Casey (D-PA), Patty Murray (D-WA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Mark Warner (D-VA), Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA).