

Duckworth Touts Provisions and Initiatives Included in Bipartisan COVID-19 Relief Deal and Omnibus Agreement

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WASHINGTON, D.C.— U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) released the following statement after voting for the bipartisan COVID-19 relief deal and agreement to fund the United States Government through the end of the fiscal year:

“This bipartisan government funding legislation is far from perfect, but good governance requires compromise and leadership. There are obviously things I wish had been included, like funding for local governments to support first responders and additional assistance for struggling small businesses and restaurant operators. Nonetheless, I’m proud this bill includes new funding I helped secure for early childhood education, small businesses and food assistance programs, as well as provisions that will support working families, our servicemembers and our environment.”

Below is a list of Duckworth-supported initiatives included in the funding bill:

- The *Relief for Working Families Act*: this Duckworth-led [legislative](#) fix will authorize states to waive Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) payments that were improperly provided to residents who acted in good faith and played no role in securing the surplus PUA overpayment.
- Enhancements to U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Microloan Program: Duckworth-led proposals to strengthen the SBA Microloan Program by providing \$57 million for the SBA Microloan Program to help participants with technical assistance and leveraging approximately \$64 million in SBA Microloans to support minority-owned small businesses and other underserved small business interests.
- Fix to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at Senior Living Facilities (SLF): this Duckworth and Durbin-led [provision](#) will block the Trump administration’s harmful effort to eliminate Illinois SLF participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s SNAP, enabling the more than 150 Illinois SLFs to continue serving as SNAP providers of three healthy meals to over 8,000 total Illinoisan residents they serve every day.
- Millions in Funding for U.S. Army Rock Island Arsenal (RIA): helped secure \$120 million for the RIA major Army installation that employs more than 6,000 military, civilian and contractor personnel.
- Funding for Head Start: [helped secure](#) \$250 million in additional funding for Head Start, which urgently needs this support to continue operating safely in providing early childhood education and other vital services to low-income children and family during the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.
- Funds Important Military Equipment Made by Illinoisans—includes a \$1.5 billion increase for 9 P-8A aircraft, a platform used for a variety of critical missions, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance around the world. The bipartisan bill also adds \$86 million above the President’s budget for Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles and an additional \$33.5 million for Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Trucks, two programs that provide workhorse tactical vehicles suited for a range of purposes.

- Promotes Aviation Regulations for Technical Training (PARTT) 147 Act: this [bipartisan legislation](#) will establish performance-based regulations to ensure aviation maintenance education institutions have the flexibility to teach core curriculum reflective of the ongoing technical advances and innovation happening across the aviation and aerospace industry.
- Authorizes a national campaign to increase awareness and knowledge of the safety and effectiveness of vaccines, expands programs to collect vaccination coverage data, and authorizes grants to address vaccine-preventable diseases.
- The *PIPES Act*: bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) pipeline safety program for four years and provide important advances in new safety technology and regulatory reform.
- Additional \$90 million for Army Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA) program, a critical component of the long-term Future Vertical Lift (FVL) initiative.
- \$11.8 million for environmental justice programs, a 24 percent increase compared to prior year.
- \$16.5 million for the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) to assist communities facing the closure of a nuclear power facility, a \$1.5 million increase above fiscal year 2020 amount.
- \$2 million increase for Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) above fiscal year 2020 amount.
- \$70 million increase for Lead Hazard Reduction grants above previous year's amount and \$10 million increase for the Healthy Homes Initiative.
- \$69 billion for COVID-19 healthcare-related expenses, including \$3 billion for the Provider Relief Fund, \$22.4 billion in testing, contact tracing, surveillance, containment and mitigation (which can include HCBS), with a targeted investment of no less than \$2.5 billion for expanding access to testing and contact tracing in high-risk and underserved populations, including for communities of color and rural areas.
- \$5 million increase for women's health research at the NIH to expand NIH-supported research that addresses issues that affect women, promote the inclusion of women in clinical research and develop and expand opportunities for women throughout the biomedical research career pipeline.
- Physician Fee Schedule: provides for a one-time, one-year increase in the Medicare physician fee schedule of 3.75 percent, to support physicians and other professionals in adjusting to changes in the Medicare physician fee schedule during 2021, and to provide relief during the COVID-19 public health emergency.