



Durbin And Duckworth Announce Illinois Wins In Covid-19 Relief Bill

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today released the following statements after the Senate passed President Biden’s American Rescue Plan, which will provide emergency relief to Illinois:

“President Biden’s American Rescue plan will improve Illinois’ public health and jumpstart our economy by investing billions of federal dollars in our state. I was proud to help secure provisions with Senator Duckworth to ramp up vaccine distribution efforts; provide a lifeline to workers, small businesses, and families; avoid devastating cuts in state and local government operations; get our kids back to school safely; and much more. We are close to finally putting this pandemic behind us,” Durbin said.

“Relief is coming to hardworking families all across Illinois because of President Biden’s American Rescue Plan,” Duckworth said. “Working together, Senator Durbin and I helped secure billions in investments that will boost our state’s vaccination efforts and testing availability while also delivering the support our working families, childcare programs, transportation systems, schools and small businesses need to get through this pandemic. These investments meet the moment and will help end this deadly pandemic.”

In the battle against COVID-19, emergency help is on the way:

- Approximately \$275 million in vaccine distribution money for Illinois
- Approximately \$1.5 billion in testing and public health money for Illinois health departments
- Hundreds of millions for Illinois community health centers and health workforce.
- Tens of millions for Illinois hospitals
- More than \$100 million for mental health and substance abuse treatment efforts in Illinois

- Lowers health premiums on the Affordable Care Act for the average Illinois couple by \$1,300
- Nearly 800,000 Illinoisans are claiming unemployment benefits—resulting in many also without health insurance during the pandemic. Many of these individuals and their families will now be able to stay on their employer-sponsored health plans through September, for free via COBRA.

For the hardest hit workers and families:

- Nearly 7.6 million Illinois adults and more than 3 million Illinois children will benefit from another round of relief checks. This is targeted relief that will reach 85 percent of all Illinois adults and 83 percent of all Illinois children.
- Extends federal unemployment programs through September 6, which affects 205,000 Illinoisans claiming Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and 251,000 Illinoisans claiming Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation.
- Up to \$10,200 in unemployment benefits will be exempt from federal income taxes for hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans that have claimed unemployment insurance benefits in 2020.

To open our schools safely:

- Around \$5 billion for Illinois K-12 schools
- Estimated \$1.3 billion for Illinois institutions of higher education
- Estimated \$39 million for Illinois Head Start programs
- Estimated \$1.3 billion to support child care providers in Illinois

To avoid dramatic budget cuts at every level of government:

- Estimated \$13.2 billion in state and local funding for Illinois including \$1.8 billion for Chicago.
- The bill provides an estimated \$7.5 billion for the state and \$5.5 billion for Illinois locals (\$2.3 billion for counties; \$2.4 billion for larger cities; \$681 million for smaller municipalities).

And more:

Transportation:

- Estimated \$1.5 billion in transit funding for the Chicago region as part of the \$30 billion for transit in the bill, which will help fund operating expenses and payroll for frontline workers of the CTA, Metra, and Pace through 2023.

- Estimated \$388 million for Illinois airports as part of the \$8 billion for airports and airport concessions in the bill.
- Protects thousands of airline industry jobs in Illinois by providing \$15 billion to extend the airline worker payroll support program for six months along with an additional \$3 billion for payroll support for aviation manufacturers.
- Protects hundreds of Amtrak jobs in Illinois by restoring furloughs and reversing service cuts as part of the \$1.7 billion included in the bill for Amtrak.

Housing:

- Illinois will receive hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for homeowner assistance to provide homeowners with direct help with mortgage payments.
- Illinois, the City of Chicago, and several eligible counties will receive hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for emergency rental assistance to help renters with unpaid rent, utilities, and other housing related costs.

Multiemployer Pension Relief:

- By prolonging the solvency of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), more than 100,000 Illinoisans will have their hard-earned pension benefits preserved.

Agriculture:

- Extends 15 percent SNAP benefit increase through September 30, 2021, which would help 2 million people in Illinois, and increases the WIC benefit.
- Extends the Pandemic-EBT feeding program through next school year, to support one million children in Illinois who are not able to access consistent meals at school.

Disaster Relief:

- Allocates \$50 billion to replenish FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund, which provides COVID-19 assistance to Illinois at a 100 percent federal cost share.
- Provides \$300 million in firefighter grants, including \$200 million for SAFER grants to increase emergency personnel staffing, and \$100 million for Assistance to Firefighter grants to for fire departments to purchase equipment and resources.
- Provides \$400 million for FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program, which funds nonprofits helping households that are experiencing, or at risk of, food insecurity or homelessness.

Veterans:

- Includes \$250 million in one-time emergency, per-diem funding to state veterans homes based on the census of veterans state home residents. According to census data from the end of 2020, Illinois Veterans Homes would receive \$7.2 million from this account.