



Duckworth Tours Mother's Milk Bank Site, Announces New Legislation to Expand Access to Donor Milk Nationwide

December 16 2022 5:34 PM

ELMHURST – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) visited Mother's Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes today to announce her new legislation to increase federal support for and expand access to donated breast milk for parents and their medically-vulnerable infants at nonprofit milk banks nationwide. The *Access to Donor Milk Act* would allow state agencies to use the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) funding to promote the benefits and need for donor milk as well as allows WIC funds to support donor milk activities in states.

Additionally, this legislation requires the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to determine how donor milk should be regulated. A companion bill was introduced in the House by U.S. Representative Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA-06). Photos from today's visit are available [here](#).



“We should be doing all that we can to ensure families have what they need to ensure their babies are fed and healthy,” Duckworth said. “Expanding access to donor milk is just one of the ways to help babies and parents, and I’m proud to announce our *Access to Donor Milk Act*. Seeing the work here today at Mother’s Milk Bank and how families

can get the support they need to feed their babies is critical, and I'll keep doing what I can on the federal level to help expand access to milk banks and help families across the country in need.”

“Last spring, I visited a maternity ward in my district and heard firsthand about donor breast milk. Then, even before the infant formula crisis, I knew we had to get to work in Congress to ensure our families and babies could benefit from its nutrients more effectively and equitably. I introduced the bipartisan *Access to Donor Milk Act* to do just that,” said Houlahan. “As a fellow mom and Veteran, there is no better partner than Senator Duckworth to champion this critically important bill in the Senate, and I look forward to our continued bicameral and bipartisan work to help the lives of so many women, families, and babies. As formula shortages and recalls persist, we have a chance to build a robust feeding infrastructure with this legislation. With the support of over 80 leading maternal and child health organizations, and broad bipartisan support, I know that we have the momentum and coalition to make a lasting impact.”

On today's tour, Duckworth was joined by representatives from Mother's Milk Bank, The Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA), Medela LLC, United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA) and the United States Breastfeeding Committee.

“As Illinois's only non-profit milk bank, we applaud Senator Duckworth's tireless advocacy for families,” said Summer Kelly, Executive Director of Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes. “The *Access to Donor Milk Act* safeguards our nation's supply of lifesaving donor human milk, providing uninterrupted service to premature and medically complex babies during national emergencies, such as the recent formula shortage.”

“The infant nutrition crisis this year has underscored just how important it is that all babies have what they need to thrive,” said Lindsay Groff, HMBANA Executive Director. “Nonprofit milk banks have been providing much-needed donor milk to some of the nation's most vulnerable infants for decades. We applaud Senator Duckworth for introducing the *Access to Donor Milk Act*, which will ensure that donor milk continues to be safe and accessible for years to come.”

The *Access to Donor Milk Act* would:

1. Allow State agencies to use Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) funding to promote the need for, and benefits of donor milk and allow WIC funds to support donor milk activities in States;
2. Provide emergency funding (\$3 million) for nonprofit donor milk banks, in the event there is a rapid increase in demand for donor milk;

3. Establish a donor milk awareness program at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (\$1 million) and a public awareness campaign at HHS educate the public on donor milk and nonprofit milk banks and to publicize the need for donor milk; and
4. Require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to issue guidance clarifying the regulatory status of donor milk.

The Access to Donor Milk Act is supported by 1,000 Days – an initiative of FHI Solutions, African American Breastfeeding Network, American Academy of Family Physicians, Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs, Institute for the Advancement of Breastfeeding & Lactation Education, Human Milk Banking Association of North America, March of Dimes, MomsRising, Medela LLC, National Partnership for Women & Families, National WIC Association, National Women's Health Network, NEC Society, Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere, US Breastfeeding Committee, United States Lactation Consultant Association and Zero to Three.

Duckworth has been a fierce advocate for supporting new moms and their families by expanding access to breast milk and infant formula. In September, Duckworth [introduced](#) the bipartisan *Bottles and Breastfeeding Equipment Screening (BABES) Enhancement Act* with U.S. Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Steve Daines (R-MT) to make it easier for parents to safely travel with breast milk. The Duckworth-sponsored *Access to Baby Formula Act* was [signed into law](#) to address the infant formula shortage for families who rely on WIC and give the USDA the authority they need to be more flexible during a crisis, such as a natural disaster, public health emergency or recall and shortage.