



Duckworth, Murkowski Reintroduce Bipartisan Bill To Tackle Military Hunger

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), who served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years and is a member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), and U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) led more than a dozen of their Senate colleagues today in reintroducing bipartisan legislation to support active duty military families experiencing food insecurity and prevent hunger in these families. Duckworth’s *Military Family Nutrition Access Act* would address this critical issue by excluding Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)—a subset of military compensation intended to cover the costs of off-base housing—from income calculations used to determine Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility. This would ensure SNAP mirrors other federal assistance programs that already exclude BAH to determine eligibility, such as Head Start, the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. “Far too many of our military families are going hungry because of unintended barriers that make them unable to access essential nutrition assistance programs that they should be eligible for,” said Duckworth. “As someone whose family relied on these nutrition programs after my father lost his job, and who served in the uniform for most of my adult life, I’m proud to be reintroducing this bipartisan legislation with Senator Murkowski that builds on the progress we made in the last two defense bills so we can help make sure our servicemembers and their families have enough to eat.”



“Our military members and their families have enough to focus on as they serve and defend our nation—they shouldn’t have the additional anxiety about how they’re going to put food on the table,” said Murkowski. “That’s why I am joining Senator Duckworth in leading this bipartisan measure to address food insecurity which is impacting the

military community. By removing barriers to assistance and improving the ability for service members to afford food, we're supporting our military families and preventing hunger—all of which strengthens our nation's defense efforts.”

Along with Duckworth and Murkowski, this legislation is co-sponsored by U.S. Senators Angus King (I-ME), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Peter Welch (D-VT), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Cory Booker (D-NJ), John Fetterman (D-PA), Jon Tester (D-MT) and Patty Murray (D-WA).

A copy of the bill one-pager can be found [here](#).

Tour after tour, our servicemembers bravely serve our nation. Yet, in July 2022, a study by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) found that at least 24% of active duty military—approximately 286,000 individuals—experience food insecurity. Of this group, junior enlisted are facing the highest risk.

Duckworth has been a fierce advocate in helping curb our military's hunger crisis. Duckworth successfully [secured](#) a provision in the *Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act* that required DoD to create a limited-duration basic needs allowance for servicemembers below 130% of the federal poverty guidelines to assist them with affording basic necessities, particularly food. Then, in [last year's NDAA](#), she went even further and was able to adjust this income from 130% to 150% to help make sure even more military families have enough to eat. The bill Duckworth introduced today is intended to create a flexible, durable solution to military hunger that will last past the expiration of the basic needs allowance and reach more military families struggling to put food on the table.

“The words military and hunger should never be spoken in conjunction with one another. The fact that such a large portion of our armed forces struggles to have healthy, predictable meals is nothing short of appalling,” said Brittany Dymond, Associate Director of VFW National Security & Foreign Affairs. “The VFW commends Senators Duckworth and Murkowski for their bipartisan leadership on this issue by introducing the *Military Family Nutrition Access Act*. This bill would enable broader access to SNAP benefits for military members and families by exempting Basic Allowance for Housing from counting as income when determining eligibility. No service member, spouse, or child should ever go hungry, and this legislation marks a significant step toward eliminating military food insecurity.”

“It is completely unacceptable that 24% of military families are struggling with food insecurity. The Military Family Nutrition Access Act will finally help address the root of this crisis” said Abby J. Leibman, President & CEO of [MAZON: A Jewish Response](#)

[to Hunger](#). “For over a decade, we at MAZON have worked to call attention to and directly address the circumstances that allow hunger to persist among military families, and we are deeply grateful for partners like Senator Tammy Duckworth, who understand that the federal government must take bold action. Active-duty service members and their families should not have to overcome bureaucratic barriers simply to put food on the table. Military hunger represents a threat to readiness, retention, and recruitment for our Armed Forces. In addition to being unconscionable, the costs of allowing this preventable crisis to continue are profound. No American, not the least of all our military families, should go hungry because of outdated, senseless policies. We call on all Members of Congress and the Biden Administration to support this legislation and prioritize its passage in the 2023 Farm Bill.”

This legislation is endorsed by a number of advocacy organizations, including: The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), National Military Family Association, Military Officers Association of America, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, Alliance to End Hunger, MomsRising, Share Our Strength, VoteVets, Bread for the World and Food Research & Action Center (FRAC).