

# **Duckworth & Durbin Sponsor Kaine Amendment To Maintain Congressional Oversight Of Israel Military Assistance**

February 7 2024 9:20 AM



WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) and more than half of their Democratic Senate colleagues in filing an amendment to the bipartisan National Security Supplemental and Border Security compromise that would maintain the congressional notification requirement for all U.S. assistance to foreign militaries. Specifically, the amendment would strike a provision in the proposed national security supplemental

funding bill that would allow the Secretary of State to waive Congressional notification requirements for U.S. funding for Israel under the Foreign Military Financing Program. If passed, the amendment would preserve the congressional notification process for Israel, just as congressional notifications are required for all other nations.

“Our nation requires that any country receiving American weapons—whether through foreign aid or foreign military sales—follow conditions already in U.S. law,” said Duckworth. “I strongly believe in the critical role Congressional oversight plays in ensuring these conditions are met when our nation transfers weapons to any ally or partner, so I’m proud to join Senator Kaine along with Senator Durbin and more than half of my Democratic colleagues in the Senate in offering this amendment to prevent our oversight role from being undermined.”

“The U.S. is an indispensable country in helping allied nations in times of conflict,” said Durbin. “The October 7 Hamas terrorist attack on Israel was reprehensible, and I will continue to support security aid for Israel’s defense. We also have a responsibility to ensure that arms transfers to any country—including Israel—are held to the same standards. With this amendment, we are reinforcing that key point in line with American values and preserving Congress’s oversight responsibilities.”

Along with Duckworth, Durbin and Kaine, the amendment is supported by U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair and U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee Chair Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Mark R. Warner (D-VA) as well as U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Peter Welch (D-VT), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Rev. Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Tom Carper (D-DE), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Laphonza Butler (D-CA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Jon Ossoff (D-GA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and Tina Smith (D-MN).

Last week, Duckworth and Durbin joined U.S. Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Chris Coons (D-DE), Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and 19 of their Senate colleagues in a letter to President Biden [urging](#) the administration to encourage Israeli officials to take five specific steps to significantly increase urgently needed humanitarian aid for civilians in Gaza.

Since Hamas broke the ceasefire that existed prior to October 7th, 2023, Duckworth has worked tirelessly to bring home hostages and alleviate suffering of innocent civilians in Gaza.

Following negotiations, Duckworth aided in the [release](#) of Illinoisans Judith and Natalie Raanan who were taken by Hamas terrorists during the October 7 attacks on Israel. Duckworth continued [underscoring](#) the need for all parties to remain laser-focused on the safe return of all hostages being held by Hamas, drastically improving the delivery of lifesaving aid, providing safe corridors for civilians and aid workers as well as humanitarian pauses in fighting, and on restoring essential services to Gaza. Duckworth has consistently called for bringing sustained and greater [humanitarian relief](#) into Gaza to [minimize](#) the suffering of innocent civilians. Her efforts include [urging](#) for the inclusion of full humanitarian assistance in any national security funding packages, [calling](#) for humanitarian [cessations](#) of hostilities, [pushing](#) for [fuel](#) to be allowed into Gaza for hospitals and water treatment and [more](#).

Durbin joined a number of his Senate Democratic colleagues in a [letter](#) to President Biden to work with Israel and international partners to implement a plan that will protect innocent civilian life in Gaza, deliver sustained humanitarian aid, and work toward the long term goals of ending Hamas's threat, bringing hostages home, and achieving sustainable peace in the region through a two-state solution.

Durbin led 106 of his colleagues in a [letter](#) to President Biden calling on his Administration to designate the Palestinian territories for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and/or authorize Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Palestinians present in the United States. Durbin has also [spoken](#) with United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres to discuss avenues to reopen key Gaza hospitals under the supervision of a credible, neutral third party in order to help innocent civilians caught in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict.