

# **Durbin, McConnell, Duckworth Urge Army To Procure Gray Eagles For 38th Infantry Division In Illinois And Kentucky**

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), U.S. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today sent a letter to U.S. Army Secretary Christine Wormuth and Chief of the National Guard Bureau General Daniel Hokanson requesting a detailed execution plan and fielding strategy for the acquisition of the first Gray Eagle Unmanned Aircraft Systems for the Army National Guard.

Together, the Senators secured \$350 million in the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) omnibus spending bill to fund the procurement of 12 new Gray Eagle drones for the Army National Guard, with the intent of fielding these aircraft as part of the 38<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division comprised of units in Illinois and Kentucky.

“Together, we successfully championed the inclusion of \$350 million for the procurement of 12 modernized MQ-1C Gray Eagle UAS platforms for the Army National Guard. Under current Army doctrine, Guard units must be prepared to deploy as a Division-sized element and utilize the same equipment and training as their Active Duty counterparts. Illinois and Kentucky Army Guard units are among those that comprise the 38th Division, which is well postured for fielding of these unmanned aircraft systems in support of state and federal missions,” the Senators wrote.

In the letter, the Senators emphasized that Gray Eagles serve as assets to the U.S. military and that delays in procuring the new drones will hinder military readiness and training schedules.

“The Gray Eagle provides unique intelligence, surveillance, and armed reconnaissance capabilities for the Army, as well as increased endurance, improved reliability and maintainability, and greater payload capacity to support the National Military Strategy,” the Senators wrote. “The current lack of Gray Eagles in Army Guard divisions restricts the component’s ability to train for and conduct large-scale combat operations impacting overall readiness, and the procurement of these aircraft will help fulfill a long-standing Army Guard operational requirement that has been ignored for far too long.”

The Senators concluded their letter by requesting a detailed plan for procuring the promised drones to bolster the 38<sup>th</sup> Division’s mission.

“While it has been more than a year since the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023* was signed into law, the Army has yet to put these funds on contract. We request a response by April 12, detailing the Army’s plan for executing this \$350 million appropriation for the Army National Guard and urge you to field these aircraft to the 38th Division without delay,” the Senators’ letter concluded.

Full text of the letter is available [here](#).