

Durbin, Duckworth: Defense, labor, health, education appropriations package provides critical funding for Illinois

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), Vice Chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, and Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), today released the following statements on Senate passage of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Department of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations package – which provides \$674.4 billion for the Department of Defense and \$178.1 billion for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies. The legislation will now head to the House of Representatives for final passage before being sent to the President for signature.

“Passing appropriations bills on time is about being good stewards of the taxpayer’s money. Thanks to good work on both sides of the aisle, we are looking at real savings in every part of the Pentagon just by getting our work done on time. From Rock Island Arsenal to Scott Airforce Base and Naval Station Great Lakes, Illinois plays a key role in our nation’s defense. This bill safeguards that role and Illinois defense jobs by continuing investments in our state’s defense installations and initiatives.

“Additionally, this bill boosts critical funding in medical research at the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will help our states better respond to the ongoing opioid epidemic, and invests in critical education programs and grants that help make college more affordable for middle-class families. Though I’m disappointed my bipartisan provision to require pharmaceutical companies to reveal drug prices in direct-to-customer TV advertisements was not included in this bill, I remain hopeful that enough Senators share my concern with rising prescription drug costs, and recognize the urgency to hold Big Pharma accountable. It is time to stop paying lip service to high drug prices and actually do something about it.

“The outcome of much of this bill shows what we can accomplish when Democrats and Republicans work together. I want to thank my partner and Chairman, Senator Shelby, as well as the Ranking Member, Senator Leahy,” Durbin said.

“I’m proud to support this bipartisan legislation that increases funding for life-saving medical research, Pell Grants and affordable childcare programs and will help states better respond to the opioid crisis,” said Duckworth. “This bill gives servicemembers a much-needed pay raise, boosts critical Illinois priorities and includes instructions I authored reminding the Department of Labor to prioritize the creation of job-training programs in communities like Golconda, Illinois, that have experienced Job Corps center closures. I also applaud Senator Durbin and the Appropriations Committee for their work to secure funding for our military arsenals – which produce the equipment that keeps the brave men and women of our Armed Forces safe – and I’m glad this bill would extend the Humvee Production line at the Rock Island Arsenal for years to come.”

Durbin has served on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for three decades. He assumed Chairmanship of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in 2013, taking over from his close friend and former Appropriations Committee Chairman, Senator Daniel Inouye. In 2015, he became the Vice Chairman of the subcommittee after Republicans assumed leadership of the Senate.

The bill includes funding for the following Illinois defense installations and priorities:

Personnel and Operations in Illinois

The bill includes funding supporting a 2.6 percent military pay raise and a 1.9 percent defense civilian pay raise. The bill also provides funds for the operation of all Illinois defense installations, including the Illinois Air and Army National Guard, Naval Station Great Lakes, Rock Island Arsenal, and Scott Air Force Base.

Rock Island Arsenal

The bill adds \$120 million to extend the Humvee production line at Rock Island Arsenal. It also provides \$99 million to stabilize rates at all three Army arsenals, including Rock Island in Illinois. Finally, it also includes \$21.8 million in support of the Army’s decision to base a new center for advanced manufacturing at the Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center (JMTC), and for base-wide improvements.

Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC)

The bill includes \$113 million for the continued operation of the integrated, Department of Defense–Veterans Affairs medical facility located in North Chicago.

St. Louis Region

The bill includes more than \$1.9 billion for continued production of F-18 aircraft at Boeing's St. Louis facility, which employs and supports thousands of downstate jobs. The bill also contains \$518.9 million for the Navy's new carrier-based unmanned aerial refueler, known as MQ-25, which was recently awarded to Boeing and will be built in St. Louis.

Illinois Innovation

The bill continues the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee's track record of providing five percent real growth in life-saving medical research, and makes critical boosts in broader science and technology research. Several Illinois universities have long-standing participation in defense medical research programs. The bill also contains \$10.3 million in support of the Department's advanced manufacturing institutes, including UI Labs.

The bill also includes funding for the following health and education priorities:

Medical Research

The bill includes \$39.1 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an increase of \$2 billion, or 5.4 percent. The bill includes a slight increase in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Opioids

The bill includes \$3.8 billion to combat the opioid crisis, an increase of \$206 million. This level includes \$1.5 billion for the State Opioid Response grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), replacing \$500 million in sun-setting 21st Century CURES funds, and maintains 15 percent set-aside to the most impacted states and \$50 million for Indian Tribes.

College Affordability and Completion

The bill includes a \$100 increase, or 1.6 percent, for the maximum Pell grant award, to \$6,195 for the 2018-19 academic year and continues support for Year-Round Pell. The bill also increases funding for TRIO and Career and Technical Education; and continues significant increases provided last year for campus-based aid programs, Public Service Loan Forgiveness, and other higher education programs.