

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 15, 2020

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
1880 2nd Street NW
Washington, DC 20024

Mark A. Morgan
Acting Commissioner, U.S. Customs
and Border Protection
801 9th St NW
Washington, DC 20001

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf, Secretary Azar, and Acting Commissioner Morgan:

We are writing to request that additional federal resources immediately be directed to the 13 airports, including Chicago O'Hare International Airport, responsible for screening passengers following the President's new directives with regard to passengers arriving to the U.S. from Schengen countries.

It is unacceptable that the airports responsible for this screening have received little guidance or few resources to execute this new policy, more than three days following the President's announcement. Chicago O'Hare International Airport reports it has not received any contact from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to discuss how to accommodate these new travel restrictions, now in effect for travelers coming from 26 additional countries.

As a result—despite the Airport employing its own resources to the fullest extent—this has caused large crowds and wait times of up to 4 to 6 hours for returning U.S. citizens. Not only do these extensive wait times cause issues for the Airport and its travelers, but given the ongoing COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, it increases the risk for the City of Chicago and all who pass through it, as it contradicts current public health guidelines for masses of people to be in such close proximity to one another at this time.

We request that you expedite the process of providing guidelines and the necessary resources, including staff and any required screening apparatus and processes, to these 13 airports to ensure their operations are not disrupted and that public health is preserved.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dick Durbin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Duckworth". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator