

# Democratic congresswoman plans to visit graves and place flowers for constituents this Memorial Day

By [Sunlen Serfaty](#), CNN

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Rep. Lauren Underwood, a Democrat from Illinois and chairwoman of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Health, Emergency Preparedness and Communications, is seen on Capitol Hill in March.

**(CNN)** — Democratic Rep. Lauren Underwood of Illinois is planning to place flowers and visit the graves of her constituents' loved ones for them this [Memorial Day](#), so that they can stay home [amid the coronavirus pandemic](#).

The freshman lawmaker, who worked at the Department of Health and Human Services before running for Congress, also has a message for people who are not social distancing or wearing masks this holiday weekend.

"I'm worried, I'm worried that we're going to see a spike in cases, an increase in hospitalizations, and that more people will die," Underwood told CNN's Ana Cabrera on Sunday. "While we've all been at home, the virus has been outside waiting for us."

That's one reason Underwood, who serves on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, is taking it upon herself to go where at-risk people may not be able to on Monday.

"We know that there's a lot of people who are in high risk groups that don't feel comfortable going out on Monday," Underwood told CNN in an interview Friday. "There are essential workers, people who may not feel well themselves and so we just wanted to create an opportunity during this time to make sure that we can offer this service."

It is a unique sign of the times, as many this holiday weekend are having to look for alternative ways to remember loved ones who have died, while also staying home.

Underwood will start at 6 a.m. CT on Monday and plans to visit three different veterans' cemeteries in Illinois. She'll place flowers at each grave site to honor their service.

Asked about why people in some parts of the country are resuming life as normal this weekend, Underwood said different places have had different experiences with the virus, but she warned that doesn't mean places without as many cases are in the clear.

"There's been a little bit of a disparate experience with Covid-19. I live in a state that's had a lot of cases for a long time -- we've had pretty consistently around 4,000 people in Illinois hospitalized due to Covid-19 -- and I, personally, continue to get emails about deaths in my personal network, people who are dying of all ages," Underwood told Cabrera on Sunday.

"I talk about my colleagues, who, for example, in their communities might not have a health care crisis. They might only see in their backyards an economic crisis, and so they're not feeling the tensions of both," she added.

"But just because you haven't felt the impact of the health care crisis yet, doesn't mean that it's not on the other horizon, so please take this opportunity to protect yourself and your families and all of us in our communities."

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