

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces legislation to slow revolving door between the pharmaceutical industry and federal agencies

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin has introduced new legislation that will slow the revolving door between the pharmaceutical industry and the federal agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), that are entrusted to keep patients and the public safe.

“The pharmaceutical industry has a deep-rooted and strong influence in Washington and a revolving door between drug companies and government cannot undermine the safety of our communities,” **said Senator Baldwin**. “Patients, families and the public need to have trust that the DEA and FDA are working for them, not powerful Washington interests.”

To slow that revolving door and help ensure that conflicts of interest do not erode the effectiveness of pharmaceutical regulators at the expense of patients and public safety, the Pharmaceutical Regulation Conflict of Interest Act will:

Expand Cooling Off Periods & Tighten Lobbying Rules

- Increase the prohibition on former senior pharmaceutical regulators lobbying

the federal government from one to two years and expand the definition of “lobbying contact” to include any lobbying activities and strategy

Reduce Conflicts of Interest

- Require pharmaceutical regulators to recuse themselves from any official actions that directly or substantially benefit the former employer or client(s) for whom they worked in the previous two years before joining federal service

According to the *Associated Press* and the Center for Public Integrity, the makers of prescription painkillers like OxyContin, Vicodin and fentanyl, spent \$880 million on campaign contributions and lobbying from 2006 through 2015. In 2016 alone, the Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America had the nation’s fifth-largest federal lobbying expenditures – at more than \$19 million dollars, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

There is currently a revolving door between these pharmaceutical companies and federal regulators. [This was made plain in an October 15 Washington Post story outlining a troubling connection between a top opioids regulator and the pharmaceutical industry.](#) This report described how a 2016 law may have undermined the Drug Enforcement Administration’s efforts against drug distribution companies supplying prescription opioids to doctors and pharmacies that allowed those drugs to enter the illicit market. It further revealed that this proposal had been written for its House sponsor by a senior DEA lawyer who had helped design the Administration’s efforts to crack down on bad actors, then joined a private law firm retained by the pharmaceutical industry. [Previous reporting by the Post in December 2016](#) detailed how more than 30 DEA officials responsible for regulating the drug industry have left for jobs with pharmaceutical companies or the law firms representing them since 2005.

Senator Baldwin’s Pharmaceutical Regulation Conflict of Interest Act will enhance the integrity of our drug regulatory system by mitigating the effects of the revolving door between industry and government. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Edward Markey (D-MA), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Tom Udall (D-NM) are original cosponsors of the legislation.

Text of the legislation is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).