

Sen. Baldwin: Senate Appropriations Committee fully funds Senator Baldwin's "Jason's Law"

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Jason's Law is holding the VA accountable, strengthening oversight of VA opioid prescribing practices and providing safer care for veterans

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, applauded the Committee for fully funding the *Jason Simcakoski Memorial and Promise Act*, or "Jason's Law." Baldwin worked to include \$52 million for implementation of Jason's Law in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Military Construction-VA Appropriations Bill, which passed the Appropriations Committee today.

Signed into law in 2016, Senator Baldwin's bipartisan legislation earned the support of the Simcakoski family, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), The American Legion, and other veterans service organizations. Jason's Law is holding the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) accountable, strengthening oversight of the VA's opioid prescribing practices and providing safer care for our veterans. Earlier this year, Senator Baldwin secured full funding for implementation of Jason's Law in the FY2018 omnibus spending bill signed by President Trump.

"Jason's Law is working to hold the VA accountable, produce results and provide safer care for our veterans," **said Senator Baldwin.** "There is much more to do,

and I am grateful that we are working together to fix problems at the VA and put in place bipartisan solutions that serve our veterans and their families.”

As [Stars and Stripes recently reported](#), according to a government watchdog report from the Government Accountability Office, from the end of 2013 to the start of 2018, the VA cut its opioid prescription rate by 41 percent.

Jason’s Law played a key role in that improvement, including by strengthening the VA’s Opioid Safety Initiative, and in Wisconsin the bipartisan reform has helped the Tomah VA Medical Center achieve a 47 percent decrease in the number of veterans on chronic opioids. For veterans on opioids and benzodiazepines, there has been a 76 percent reduction. During a Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on May 9, 2018, Dr. Carolyn Clancy of the Veterans Health Administration acknowledged the progress being made at the Tomah VA. Dr. Clancy also recognized that the Tomah VA is ahead of the national average in decreasing the number of veterans on both opioids and benzodiazepines.

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