

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Reintroduces legislation to strengthen labor protections for public safety workers

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*Bicameral legislation to ensure collective bargaining rights for police officers, fire fighters and EMS personnel*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, reintroduced legislation that protects collective bargaining rights for police officers, firefighters and EMS personnel.

“Our police officers, firefighters and EMS workers are on the frontlines every day working to keep our residents safe, protect our neighborhoods and create safer communities for all. They deserve the same essential labor protections that so many other Americans enjoy – the right to form and join unions and the right to collectively bargain,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “This legislation is about doing right by our public safety officers and making sure that while they are protecting our families and children, we are preserving their right to workplace protections.”

This legislation is supported by Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin (PFFW), Wisconsin Professional Police Association (WPPA), Milwaukee Police Association, Wisconsin Law Enforcement Association (FOP Wisconsin State Patrol Lodge 17), International Association of Fire Fighters, Fraternal Order of Police, National Association of Police Organizations, International Union of Police Associations, USW,

AFL-CIO, AFSCME, NFFE, CWA, AFT, NEA, ILA and LiUNA.

“Every day, law enforcement officers risk their lives to keep our communities safe. Extending the same basic labor protections enjoyed by nearly every other occupation to police officers would benefit both public safety and officer safety. This legislation would give the dedicated men and women that police our streets the voice they deserve to advance their working conditions, their ability to get the resources they need to most effectively serve the public, and the future of the law enforcement profession as a whole. We commend Senator Baldwin for being a leader in this arena and a valued friend of our law enforcement community,” **said Jim Palmer, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Professional Police Association.**

“In Wisconsin, we know firsthand the importance of collective bargaining and the right to form and join unions. We stand with our brothers and sisters across the country who are not afforded those same basic rights. Senator Baldwin has long been a champion of Wisconsin’s firefighters and we deeply appreciate her leadership on this issue,” **said Mahlon Mitchell, President of Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin.**

“The IAFF is proud to see Senator Baldwin re-introduce the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, a bill that will give basic collective bargaining rights to fire fighters and other public safety workers who do not have a say in their own personal safety or that of the people they protect. Senator Baldwin has a long history of fighting for and standing with working Americans. Her decision to take the lead on behalf of fire fighters provides a needed voice for the hard-working men and women who dedicate their careers to keeping their communities safe. We look forward to working alongside the Senator and our other allies to help move this important legislation forward,” **said Harold Schaitberger, General President of the International Association of Firefighters.**

“As law enforcement officers, we take our oath and commitment to protect and serve very seriously. Public safety occupations are unique, and their labor relations need to reflect that. Ours is not the traditional labor-management relationship. In our line of work, the bottom line is the safety of the public and of the officer. Law enforcement officers protecting our communities should be afforded the same basic labor protections that are extended to millions of other Americans. The right to collectively bargain over wages, hours, and terms of employment. We are proud to be strong supporters of the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act and

we are deeply grateful to Senator Baldwin for her leadership and commitment to our nation's law enforcement officers," **said Chuck Canterbury, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, the nation's oldest and largest law enforcement organization representing more than 345,000 members in every region of the country.**

"Federal law has extended collective bargaining to several different sectors, but not to public safety officers. There are many law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line every day to preserve the security and peace that our nation enjoys. However, these same officers are denied the basic American rights of collective bargaining for wages, hours, and safe working conditions. We strongly believe that the public safety is best protected through effective partnerships between first responders on the front lines and the agencies that employ them. The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act will ensure that public safety officers can meet with local officials to discuss how they do their jobs and how best to protect the public. We thank Senator Baldwin for championing this important issue," **said Bill Johnson, Executive Director of the National Association of Police Organizations.**

The *Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act* ensures specific baseline rights for first responders, including the right to form and join a union organization that is recognized by an employer, to bargain over hours, wages and terms of conditions of employment, and to prioritize the enforcement of all rights and responsibilities agreed to between an employer and labor organization. The bipartisan House companion legislation is led by Representatives Dan Kildee (D-MI) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA).

The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) which administers the labor-management program for federal workers, will be designated with managing the implementation of the legislation.

While many police officers, firefighters and EMS personnel reside in jurisdictions where these rights are provided, many still go without required workplace protections. Providing employers and their workers with a framework to define benefits and solve disputes is necessary to ensure a productive workforce and a safe working environment.

The bill is cosponsored by Senators Patty Murray (D-WA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Ron Wyden

(D-OR), and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).

More information about the *Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act* is available [here](#).

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