

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Urges inclusion of contractor back pay in upcoming disaster package

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin joined a bipartisan group of 38 Senators in urging the inclusion of back pay for federal contract workers impacted by the government shutdown in the upcoming disaster relief package. While federal workers harmed by the government shutdown have since been compensated for their lost wages, federal contract employees – including janitorial, food, and security services workers – who were furloughed or forced to accept reduced work hours have not. In a bipartisan letter, the Senators urge the Appropriations Committee to include provisions to fix this wrong in upcoming appropriations legislation.

The Senators write, *“Contractor workers and their families should not be penalized for a government shutdown that they did nothing to cause.”*

They continue, *“Contractor employees perform jobs that are critical to the operations of our government, such as food service, security, and custodial work. These are often low-wage jobs that require workers to live paycheck to paycheck. As a result, the shutdown has left contractors struggling with unpaid rent and other mounting bills that many of these workers still cannot afford without back pay.”*

The Senators close the letter stating, *“There are bipartisan bills in both houses of Congress that would provide back pay to compensate contractor employees for their lost wages. As supporters of this effort, we urge you to include back pay for*

contractor employees in a supplemental appropriations bill for FY2019 or as part of the regular appropriations process for FY2020.”

In addition to Senator Baldwin, the letter was signed by U.S. Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tom Carper (D-DE), Bob Casey (D-PA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Chris Coons (D-DE), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Doug Jones (D-AK), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Angus King (I-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Edward Markey (D-MA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tina Smith (D-MN), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Jon Tester (D-MT), Tom Udall (D-NM), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Mark Warner (D-VA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

In January, Senator Baldwin joined Senator Tina Smith and others in introducing the [Fair Compensation for Low-Wage Contractor Employees Act](#), which now has 48 cosponsors in the Senate and 68 in the House of Representatives. [Senator Baldwin also signed on to a letter with 33 other Democratic Senators to the Office of Management and Budget to urge them to direct federal agencies to work with contractors to provide back pay to compensate low- and middle-income contractor employees for the wages they have lost during the shutdown.](#)

A copy of the letter is available [here](#) and the text of the letter is available below:

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy:

As discussions proceed for upcoming appropriations bills, we urge you to include a provision to provide back pay to compensate federal contractor employees for the wages they lost as a result of not being able to report to work during the recent government shutdown.

Contractor workers and their families should not be penalized for a government shutdown that they did nothing to cause. While federal employees received back pay at the end of the shutdown, federal contractors did not. Contractor employees perform jobs that are critical to the operations of our government, such as food service, security, and custodial work. These are often low-wage jobs that require workers to live paycheck to paycheck. As a result, the shutdown has left contractors

struggling with unpaid rent and other mounting bills that many of these workers still cannot afford without back pay.

There are bipartisan bills in both houses of Congress that would provide back pay to compensate contractor employees for their lost wages. As supporters of this effort, we urge you to include back pay for contractor employees in a supplemental appropriations bill for FY2019 or as part of the regular appropriations process for FY2020.

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