

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Working for Wisconsin in National Defense Authorization

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin voted for the final version of the bipartisan *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020* that includes a number of measures that deliver results for Wisconsin. The final version of this defense funding bill now heads to the President's desk for his signature.

“I voted in favor of this bipartisan defense authorization legislation because it makes important investments to strengthen our national security and support our service members and their families,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “In particular, I am pleased the final bill includes a pay raise for our troops and gets rid of the widow's tax. It makes sure that federal Small Shipyard grants support American workers and businesses, and authorizes funding for a number of projects important to Wisconsin's military personnel and our Made in Wisconsin economy.”

Supporting Service Members and Military Families

The bill includes a 3.1% pay raise for service members and eliminates the military widow's tax. Senator Baldwin is a cosponsor of the bipartisan *Widow's Tax Elimination Act* that was included in NDAA to repeal the law that prevents as many as 65,000 surviving military spouses nationwide from receiving full Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs survivor benefits.

Strengthening Buy America Standards for Small Shipyard Grants Program

Senator Baldwin's [bipartisan legislation](#) to strengthen Buy America requirements for federal Small Shipyard Grant funding was included in the final NDAA. The measure will support American businesses, manufacturers and workers.

While Buy American requirements already apply to the Small Shipyard Grant Program, there is a loophole in the Maritime Administration's rules that allow these federal grants to be used to purchase foreign-made equipment. Baldwin's provision in NDAA will close this loophole to support American businesses and workers like Marine Travelift in Sturgeon Bay, which employs nearly 200 workers and uses Wisconsin-sourced materials to manufacture boat handling equipment that is exported around the world.

Reinforcing Navy Shipbuilding in Wisconsin

The bill includes more than \$1 billion in initial funding for the Navy's Future Frigate. Fincantieri Marinette Marine is competing to build this future ship in Wisconsin, which will continue to support Senator Baldwin's priority of expanding good-paying Made in Wisconsin shipbuilding jobs.

The final defense funding bill also included Baldwin's amendment to require certain Navy ships to be built using domestic diesel engines, like those produced by Fairbanks Morse Engine in Beloit.

Additionally, the bill includes Baldwin's bipartisan amendment to direct the Navy to examine how it can bring more Navy maintenance work to Great Lakes shipyards.

Protecting Workers against China's Attempts to Undermine American Industries

Senator Baldwin, along with Senators John Cornyn (R-TX), Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH), secured their amendment in the final NDAA to prevent federal funds from being used by transit agencies to purchase rail cars or buses manufactured by Chinese state-owned, controlled, or subsidized companies.

The Chinese government continues to use a range of state subsidies and predatory practices to support its market ascension in certain sectors of the United States' economy, including rail manufacturing and bus manufacturing. This amendment would prevent federal transit funds from being used by transit agencies to procure Chinese rail assets and ensure transit agencies develop and execute a cybersecurity plan to protect American industries and national security.

Boosting Wisconsin Manufacturers

The final NDAA includes an increase of \$130 million for Oshkosh Defense's Tactical Wheeled Vehicles.

Investing in Hi-Tech Careers in the Chippewa Valley

Senator Baldwin secured an amendment requiring a plan from the Department of Defense to leverage commercial supercomputing for defense, allowing the U.S. and Wisconsin to continue advancing American leadership in supercomputing, provide critical technology to our most difficult research and computational questions, and accelerate the deployment of new computer technology. Cray Computing in Chippewa Falls has been building the world's leading supercomputers for decades and will be competing to develop and build the next generation of supercomputers. To compete with countries like China, the Department of Defense must begin taking advantage of the innovation, science, research and technology presented by the commercial sector.

Combatting Water Contamination in Wisconsin

Senator Baldwin has been taking action to ensure Wisconsin has clean drinking water, including addressing water contamination from chemicals containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The final NDAA bill requires that the military phase out the use of firefighting foam containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), prohibits the uncontrolled release of PFAS at military installations, and provides new tools for states to initiate environmental cleanup of PFAS at military facilities, including sites in Wisconsin like Truax Field.

However, provisions she supported in the Senate's NDAA to provide resources for nationwide environmental testing for PFAS and establish enforceable standards for PFAS in drinking water were not included in the final legislation.

"Communities in Wisconsin are facing concerning levels of PFAS contamination in their drinking water and the federal government needs to take urgent action to protect public health," **said Senator Baldwin**. "I strongly supported provisions in the Senate-passed NDAA this summer that would protect Americans' drinking water from PFAS, and it's just wrong that they are not included in this defense reauthorization bill. I helped introduce legislation to develop better ways to detect PFAS chemicals in our water and environment, and the Senate should bring it up for a vote and pass it. I will keep working to get this done."