

# **U.S. Sen. Baldwin: After request, Department of Labor Inspector General to conduct audit of OSHA's actions during COVID-19 pandemic**

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**WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)**, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, along with Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Bob Casey (D-PA) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), today applauded the Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Inspector General's decision to review the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) actions during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. DOL has decreased their investigation and enforcement activity during the pandemic, including issuing only one coronavirus-specific citation to date, and has failed to issue an OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) to create enforceable safety standards for workplaces specific to the threat of COVID-19.

The senators [requested](#) an audit last month after DOL refused to issue an ETS to create enforceable workplace safety standards during the pandemic, despite the growing numbers of sick and deceased essential workers. In a letter sent to the senators, the DOL OIG agreed to consider the senators' specific concerns as part of its comprehensive Pandemic Response and Oversight Plan.

"I have repeatedly called on the Trump Administration to put in place enforceable

health and safety standards to protect workers during this pandemic, but they have failed to act. This Inspector General review of OSHA's inaction will help us hold the Department of Labor accountable and shine a bright light on the Trump Administration's failure to do right by workers on the frontline of this pandemic. We must force action to require all workplaces to protect the health and safety of their workers, protect workers who report unsafe working conditions, and prevent additional outbreaks and further spread of the coronavirus," **said Senator Baldwin.**

"The Department of Labor has completely abandoned workers during this crisis, and workers and the American public deserve full accountability for the agency's refusal to do their job," **said Senator Warren.** "I'm glad the Inspector General will be looking into why OSHA has refused to protect workers during this crisis, and look forward to the results of its investigation so we can hold OSHA and the Trump Administration accountable."

"The pressure on frontline workers right now is enormous, so I'm glad the Inspector General will audit OSHA's pandemic response, as we requested," **said Senator Kaine.** "Ensuring the health and safety of workers is non-negotiable."

"Essential workers across the country have been putting their safety on the line during this pandemic. The Trump Administration has turned its back on them," **said Senator Sanders.** "The Inspector General must conduct a detailed and thorough investigation into OSHA's failure to keep workers safe."

"Trump's OSHA has failed to protect frontline workers who are keeping our country running during this global pandemic-showing up every day despite the risks to their health and safety," **Senator Duckworth said.** "I am glad the Inspector General has answered our call for an investigation into this botched response, and I will continue to hold the Trump Administration accountable for its response to this global pandemic."

In April, Senators Baldwin and Duckworth [\*introduced the COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act\*](#), which would require the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard that establishes a legal obligation for all workplaces, including meat processing plants, to implement an emergency temporary standard to keep frontline workers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a permanent comprehensive infectious disease exposure control plan. Senator Baldwin's legislation was included in the *HEROES Act*, which was passed by the House of Representatives last month in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

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