

U.S. Sen. Baldwin, Colleagues: Introduce COVID-19 relief bill to support small businesses

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin today joined her colleagues led by U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship Ranking Member Ben Cardin (D-MD), U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and U.S. Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) to introduce the *HEROES Small Business Lifeline Act*— a comprehensive package of measures that would provide over \$370 billion of support to the hardest-hit, most vulnerable small businesses, including minority-owned businesses, businesses that have been damaged by public disturbances, and very small businesses that have been left behind in this pandemic, and industries, such as restaurants and live venues. The bill is nearly identical to the small business provisions of *HEROES 2.0*, which passed the House of Representatives on October 1.

“Wisconsin small businesses and their workers are hurting and need help to survive this economic crisis,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “President Trump let the Paycheck Protection Program expire, leaving many small businesses without a lifeline. Small businesses are the engine of our economy and we must take urgent action to provide more resources to the hardest-hit small businesses in Wisconsin, so they can keep our economy moving and get through this deadly pandemic.”

The *HEROES Small Business Lifeline Act* would:

- **Extend and improve the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to better serve small businesses.** HEROES 2.0 extends PPP through March 2021;

provides a second PPP for the hardest-hit small businesses and nonprofits; allows businesses to use proceeds on property damaged by public disturbances, expands eligibility to ensure that all nonprofits, regardless of size and type, critical access hospitals, and local news media can participate; simplifies the forgiveness process; repeals the requirement of deducting an EIDL advance from the PPP forgiveness amount; and removes limitations that unfairly restrict small businesses owned by formerly incarcerated individuals from securing a PPP loan.

- **Extend and expand the Debt Relief program.** HEROES 2.0 extends payments of principal, interest, and fees on all preexisting and new Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a), 504 and microloans for up to a year, with more relief targeted to existing borrowers in underserved markets and the hardest-hit sectors. This debt relief program is also expanded to include SBA's physical and EIDL disaster loans.
- **Support the smallest, most vulnerable businesses.** HEROES 2.0 includes a new \$40 billion Lifeline Grant program, of which half is set aside for undeserved businesses, that provides grants of up to \$50,000 to vulnerable small businesses that have suffered a significant economic loss and creates a new \$15 billion grant program for state and local governments to provide funds to vulnerable small businesses in their communities.
- **Deliver targeted assistance to small businesses in struggling industries.** HEROES 2.0 includes the Save our Stages (SOS) Act and the RESTAURANTS Act, which provide dedicated assistance for industries that rely on large gatherings, including restaurants, concert venues, and theaters.
- **Invest in underserved communities.** HEROES 2.0 invests in the mission- and community-based lenders that have a demonstrated history of getting capital to minorities, women, and other underserved communities. Specifically, it includes a dedicated \$15 billion PPP set-aside for Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs), and other mission lenders, \$1 billion in support for CDFIs, and \$13 billion for a new Neighborhood Capital Investment Program to support CDFIs and MDIs, among other key policies to support the work of these lenders in underserved communities.
- **Improve existing small business initiatives.** HEROES 2.0 builds on SBA's core programs, including 7(a), Community Advantage, 504, and the Microloan program, by making them more affordable and useful to small businesses, and provides \$1 billion for investment capital to underserved businesses. It also strengthens the accountability and transparency of SBA's Economic Injury

Disaster Loan (EIDL) program and makes other commonsense improvements like removing the Trump Administration's arbitrary \$150,000 cap on EIDL loans.

- **Help minority-owned businesses respond to COVID-19.** HEROES 2.0 provides emergency grants to minority business enterprises through the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). The legislation also formally and permanently establishes MBDA and gives it the tools to carry out its mission to help minority entrepreneurs start and grow businesses.

In addition to Baldwin, Cardin, Shaheen, Schumer and Coons, the legislation is cosponsored by U.S. Senators Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Chris Coons (D-DE), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ed Markey (D-MA), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Patty Murray (D-WA), Angus King (I-ME), Jack Reed (D-RI), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Tom Udall (D-NM), Brian Schatz (D-HI), and Gary Peters (D-MI).

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