

# **U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Helps introduce legislation to ensure National Guard troops activated in response to COVID-19 receive full benefits during the public health emergency**

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) helped introduce the *National Guard COVID-19 Response Stability Act* to ensure federal funding is in place for the National Guard to continue to assist with the response to COVID-19 and National Guard troops activated continue to receive full federal benefits. The legislation, led by Combat Veteran and Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, would extend Title 32 authority for all troops activated in response to the crisis until 30 days following the end of the public health emergency (PHE). By doing so, the federal government would continue covering 100 percent of the costs of this activation.

As it currently stands, the authorization of full federal funding for National Guard response operations will expire on June 24, 2020. States, including Wisconsin, have requested extensions to make sure there isn't a lapse in authorities or federal funding for the troops on the frontline of this crisis. While the Trump administration granted a prior extension, it cynically chose a peculiar date that was later revealed to result in a hard deployment stop at 89 days for thousands of National Guard members—one day short of the 90-day threshold to receive federal benefits, such as access to education benefits and early retirement credits.

“Our country’s brave National Guard members have answered the call of duty to help our communities respond to COVID-19. We must ensure that our heroes serving on the frontlines of this pandemic receive the benefits they’ve earned,” **said Senator Baldwin**. “I’m proud to join my friend Senator Duckworth in this important effort as we work to do right by our troops that are saving lives throughout our nation and ensure our states have the resources to get through this public health crisis.”

“The Trump Administration’s repeated attempts to nickel and dime members of the National Guard would be wrong under any circumstance, but it is particularly offensive when these troops are responding to a deadly COVID-19 pandemic that has already killed more than 90,000 Americans,” **said Senator Duckworth**. “This legislation would ensure that all National Guard troops activated to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic are provided with the full benefits they’ve earned and will give states much-needed certainty during these uncertain times.”

Specifically, the *National Guard COVID-19 Response Stability Act* would amend federal law to authorize state governors to order members of the National Guard to active duty in connection with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that Guard members receive full federal benefits. This enhanced authority would be in place through the end of the Trump administration’s declared PHE for COVID-19, plus an additional 30 days to allow the Guard to shift away from Title 32 operations. Most recently, the PHE declaration was renewed on April 26, 2020 for a period of 90 days.

This legislation was also co-sponsored by Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Gary Peters (D-MI), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Mark Warner (D-VA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

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

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