

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces Amy and Jocelyn Gannon Helicopter Tour Safety Act

Posted on Tuesday, Sep 22, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, introduced the *Amy and Jocelyn Gannon Helicopter Tour Safety Act* to address longstanding helicopter tour safety concerns, particularly when flying in rapidly changing weather.

The legislation honors the memory of Amy and Jocelyn Gannon of Madison, Wisconsin, who were among seven individuals who tragically died in a helicopter crash in Koke'e State Park in Hawaii on December 26, 2019. The helicopter, operating as an on-demand commercial air tour flight, collided with a cliff along rugged shoreline. According to a preliminary report from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), visibility at the time of the crash was low due to fog and rain. As tourism has steadily grown and the number of fatal crashes like the December 2019 incident has increased, there is a need for improved safety measures at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)—including measures that would implement longstanding recommendations from the NTSB to ensure tour operators and pilots have the information and training to make safer decisions while flying in areas that experience rapidly changing weather.

“The Gannon family and Madison community have suffered the tragic loss of Amy and Jocelyn, and they have also shown incredible strength to make sure that we do right by their memories by taking meaningful action to prevent these accidents in the future,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “We must do more to prioritize passenger and pilot safety on helicopter tours and flights, especially in areas experiencing rapidly

changing weather. This legislation, named in honor of Amy and Jocelyn Gannon, will address longstanding helicopter tour safety concerns that will keep folks safe in the air, and help save lives.”

“I am grateful to Senator Baldwin for her efforts to introduce the ‘Amy and Jocelyn Gannon Helicopter Tour Safety Act,’ which effectively addresses several important aviation safety issues, including specific practical recommendations which will make helicopter tour operations safer for millions of Americans. For me personally, I am proud to have this important legislation named in honor of my wife and daughter who lost their lives in a needless tragedy which never should have happened. It is our hope that these safety measures when implemented will result in safer helicopter flights for all tourists and, most importantly, that such a catastrophic tragedy will never happen to another family and that no one will ever experience the pain and heartbreak of our loss which is compounded by the realization that these crashes are entirely preventable,” **said Mike Gannon, husband of Amy Gannon and father of 13-year-old Jocelyn Gannon.**

The *Amy and Jocelyn Gannon Helicopter Tour Safety Act* would address longstanding helicopter tour safety concerns, particularly flying in rapidly changing weather. The bill requires FAA to implement the following NTSB recommendations:

- Initiate an Aviation Weather Camera Program in Hawaii that includes the installation and maintenance of aviation weather cameras at critical locations and establish public access to real-time imagery;
- Install and maintain aviation weather cameras in mountain passes identified as being high risk and establish public access to real-time imagery;
- Equip FAA flight service station specialists with technical capabilities and training to provide verbal preflight and en route briefings using aviation weather camera imagery;
- Require all Part 135 operators to install flight data recording devices capable of supporting a flight data monitoring program; and
- Require all Part 135 operators to establish a structured flight data monitoring program that reviews all available data sources to identify deviations from established norms and procedures and other potential safety issues

Additionally, the *Amy and Jocelyn Gannon Helicopter Tour Safety Act* would require

FAA to do the following:

- Review and approve flight routes used by commercial air tour operators;
- Work with National Weather Service to develop and implement a process to evaluate flight routes, or segments of flight routes, susceptible to rapidly changing weather;
- Establish training requirements for commercial air tour operators to utilize real-time weather information made available through the Aviation Weather Camera Program;
- Require commercial air tour operators to use pilots who hold instrument ratings;
- Study the feasibility of requiring helicopters used for commercial air tours to be better equipped; and
- Study the feasibility of conducting audits of helicopter mounted videos for evidence of safe flying techniques and avoidance of dangerous terrain and rapidly changing weather events.

More information about this legislation is available [here](#). Full bill text is available [here](#).

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