

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces legislation mandating VA reimbursement of veterans' emergency health care claims as VA files court appeal to avoid payout

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) introduced legislation to mandate the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reimburse veterans' emergency health care expenses from non-VA facilities that are not covered by the veteran's private insurance. Joining Baldwin in introducing this legislation includes Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), and Jon Tester (D-MT).

This legislation follows the 2016 *Staab v. McDonald* and 2019 *Wolfe v. Wilkie* decisions, both ruling that the VA must reimburse veterans for emergency medical expenses. The *Wolfe* decision also found that more than 600,000 veterans may have been affected by the VA's denial of these claims, with anywhere from \$1.8 to \$6.5 billion owed to veterans. The VA appealed this decision last month to avoid paying these claims.

"Our veterans should never have to worry whether emergency room visits will be covered by the VA," **said Senator Baldwin.** "Our veterans have bravely served and sacrificed for the freedoms we all cherish, so we need to do right by them and

their families by ensuring they receive reimbursement for the care they have earned and deserve, especially during an emergency.”

The legislation is endorsed by the American Legion, National Association for Black Veterans, Inc., National Veterans Legal Services Program and the Disabled American Veterans.

“Our veterans, who have sacrificed so much on and off the battlefield, deserve the comfort of knowing that they, and their loved ones, will be taken care of upon completion of their service to this country. This bill that seeks to provide financial reprieve for healthcare services is a way to honor their contributions to this nation. By removing the limitation on reimbursement for emergency treatment, veterans will be able to continue to live fulfilling lives with little to no additional financial burden for emergency treatment,” **said James W. “Bill” Oxford, National Commander of The American Legion.**

“Veterans in need of emergency healthcare services should not have the added burden or concern about payment or reimbursement for having received these services. As a National Service Organization, the National Association for Black Veterans, Inc. Accredited Service Representatives throughout the country are on the front line assisting veterans with obtaining services and benefits provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs. We are in support of the VA ER Reimbursement Legislation Senator Baldwin is proposing. We are in support of this legislation as it will enhance the healthcare of veterans,” **said Richard D. Kingsberry, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army, Retired, NABVETS, Inc. National Commander.**

“We greatly appreciate Senator Blumenthal and other members of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee for their dedicated efforts on behalf of hundreds of thousands of veterans who have been suffering extraordinary financial hardships, some for many years, due to the VA’s illegal mishandling of their reimbursement

claims,” **said National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) Executive Director Bart Stichman.**

The full text of the Senate legislation can be found [here](#).