

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Leads push for new employment program to help workers and businesses recover from COVID-19

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin is leading her colleagues in calling for a new federal employment program that will help workers and businesses recover from the economic devastation caused by COVID-19. In a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, Senator Baldwin proposes a national subsidized employment program to provide unemployed and underemployed workers wage-paying jobs to help them get through this public health and economic crisis.

Federal funding would be provided to states in order to offset employers' cost for wages and any needed on-the-job training and provide other supportive services. The program would enable states and local organizations to scale up or establish subsidized employment programs that meet the needs of their communities, including by directly employing subsidized workers in public service and infrastructure jobs. The program incorporates lasting structural and countercyclical features, including technical assistance to support planning and implementation, in order to lay the groundwork for a permanent program that is flexible enough to expand to meet the needs of unemployed workers when the economy is weak, and to continue to provide necessary employment support when labor demand is stronger. This national subsidized employment proposal is informed by the successful programs that states were able to get up and running quickly during the Great Recession to place individuals in a wage-paying job.

The Senators write, *“Congress has taken important steps to stabilize the economy in the near term, but we believe bold initiatives are needed to help workers and businesses recover from the longer-term economic devastation caused by the pandemic. Subsidized employment should be a central part of our efforts to help Americans transition back to work.”*

They continue, *“Jobless claims have now reached unprecedented levels. The worst may be yet to come. More than 22 million unemployment claims have been filed in the last four weeks. When it is safe for the nation to go back to work, not all workers will have their same jobs waiting for them. Many are likely to continue to be left out of the labor market, despite being willing and able to work. Federal funding for subsidized employment should be available to provide support for workers and employers.”*

The Senators conclude, *“This national subsidized employment proposal is informed by the successful programs that states were able to get up and running quickly during the Great Recession to place individuals in a wage-paying job. We urge you to consider this proposal and look forward to working with you.”*

Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Cory Booker (D-NJ) also signed the letter. The full letter is available [here](#).

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