

U.S. Sen. Baldwin, U.S. Rep. Kind, colleagues: Call on President Trump to extend full federal funding for Wisconsin National Guard to fight COVID-19 pandemic

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin and U.S. Representative Ron Kind led their colleagues in the Wisconsin delegation, including Representatives Gwen Moore, Mark Pocan, Bryan Steil, Mike Gallagher and Glenn Grothman, to call on President Trump to restore full federal funding to Wisconsin with a one hundred percent federal cost share extension for the National Guard through the end of the year, to support the state during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In August, President Trump cut the federal cost share to 75 percent through the end of the year in all states except Florida and Texas, where cases were spreading rapidly. The reduction in federal support is costing Wisconsin \$12.5 million that could be spent on other COVID-19 efforts that are essential to mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on Wisconsinites.

Wisconsin is currently experiencing a spike in new COVID-19 cases, and the National Guard is experiencing higher than normal operational tempo due to recent civil unrest in the state. An extension of the one hundred percent federal cost share to December 31, 2020 is critical to ensuring the safety and health of our citizens, as

well as advancing efforts to reopen our state.

In the letter, the members write to President Trump, *“The work of the Wisconsin National Guard has significantly advanced our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Guard has collected over 600,000 specimens for COVID-19 testing efforts in Dane, Eau Claire, Grant, Winnebago and Milwaukee counties, and has continued to operate dozens of field testing teams, utilizing over 1,000 service members working throughout the state to provide both community and targeted field testing. Wisconsin is likely to continue statewide testing in order to assess the spread of COVID-19 through the end of the calendar year. The unprecedented size, scale, and duration of COVID-19 impacts far exceed the response capabilities of the State of Wisconsin. Without the full support of the federal government, as of August it was estimated that the Guard’s testing mission will cost the State of Wisconsin \$12.5 million through the end of the year. This unanticipated cost will hamper the state’s response to COVID-19. As cases have increased, so too have the costs associated with hiring contact tracers and supporting our health care systems.”*

“In order to protect the health of Wisconsinites, combat the concerning spread of the virus, and safely reopen our state, we must continue to respond to the public health challenge before us. The Wisconsin National Guard is vital to this effort.”

The full text of the letter is available [here](#).

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