

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces Reproductive Health Travel Fund Act

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WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Patty Murray (D-WA) introduced the *Reproductive Health Travel Fund Act*, legislation to provide women the support they need to access reproductive health services by providing grants to organizations, including abortion funds, to offset the cost of travel-related expenses.

“Right now in states across the country, Americans are unable to make their own health care decisions,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “Women in states like Wisconsin are being forced to travel out of state just to see a doctor for critical health care, including abortion. And for too many, the cost of travel, child care, overnight housing, and time away from work puts safe, comprehensive reproductive care totally out of reach. By reducing the costs of travel for people seeking reproductive care, more Americans will be able to make the health care decisions that are best for their family, health, and future.”

“In overturning Roe and passing one extreme state abortion ban after the next, Republicans have unleashed a full-fledged health care crisis that is jeopardizing women’s health and forcing them to stay pregnant against their will. This moment calls for bold solutions—and that’s why I’ve proposed creating a new, historic abortion fund and why I’m proud to cosponsor Senator Baldwin’s bill to help get women the abortion care they need,” **said Senator Murray.** “Every woman deserves to have control over her own body and be able to get the care she needs—no matter what state she lives in—and that’s what this proposal will help deliver.”

The *Reproductive Health Travel Fund Act* would set up a grant program, authorized at \$350 million per year for FY23 through FY27, to help ease the financial burden

associated with traveling long distances to access safe and legal reproductive health care. Specifically, the bill would allow the Treasury Secretary to award grants to eligible entities to pay for travel-related expenses and logistical support for individuals accessing abortion services. Funds, made available through a competitive grant, could be used for round trip travel, lodging, meals, childcare, translation services, doula care, and patient education and information services.

Eligible entities include non-profits or community-based organizations that assist individuals seeking abortions. Grants would be prioritized for entities that serve people who live in a jurisdiction that has banned or severely restricted access to abortion, serve those who travel to a jurisdiction to access abortion care, or have a program in operation that helps patients access abortion services.

“Abortion funds play a critical role in connecting patients like mine with the resources they need to get abortions,” **said Dr. Kristin Lyerly, Board Certified OB/GYN from Green Bay.** “As a physician who provides comprehensive care in obstetrics and gynecology including abortion, I’m grateful to Senator Tammy Baldwin for her leadership in helping to break down the barriers that exist for patients in abortion-restricted states and for building on the existing infrastructure of support that abortion funds provide. Until we can restore legal access to abortion in all 50 states, innovative legislation like the *Reproductive Health Travel Fund Act* will touch countless people in need of abortion care.”

“Prior to Dobbs, Wisconsinites already faced too many barriers to accessing comprehensive pregnancy care, including abortion care. Post-Dobbs, accessing that care now requires leaving our state. As an OBGYN who provides full-scope pregnancy care, it feels unconscionable to have to send my patients across state lines to obtain the health care they need,” **said Dr. Abby Cutler, Board-Certified OB/GYN in Madison.** “Too often this requires travel money, job flexibility, overnight housing, childcare – financial and logistical resources that most people struggle to secure even under the best of circumstances. Access to health care in pregnancy, including abortion care, should not depend on your zip code or your financial resources. I am grateful to Senator Tammy Baldwin for her efforts to help ensure my patients and their families get the care they need and deserve.”

“The *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health* decision exacerbated an existing abortion access crisis across the country, leaving many people unable to access care unless they travel hundreds of miles to a state where abortion is legal,” **said Mini Timmaraju, President of NARAL.** “The costs are almost always unexpected—and

steep. Senator Baldwin's legislation will help mitigate this crisis by providing essential resources to those who must travel to access abortion care. We commend Senator Baldwin for working to meet the urgent needs of pregnant people in a post-Roe world, while we work to expand equitable abortion access to all Americans."

"As one of the oldest abortion funds in the nation, WMF Wisconsin has supported Wisconsinites seeking abortion care since 1972. This work has been led by community members for 50 years in the face of discriminatory legislation like the Hyde Amendment, which historically barred the use of federal funds for abortion care. With no in-clinic abortion care available in Wisconsin since June 24, 2022, Wisconsinites are forced to travel out-of-state for abortion care," **said Lucy Marshall, Board President of WMF.** "This exacerbates the existing inequalities that so many of our community members already face, particularly people of color, young people, and people facing by economic hardship. The *Reproductive Health Travel Fund Act* would help provide necessary funding for abortion care, as well as expenses related to traveling for such care. Abortion is health care. Abortion is a human right. Nobody should be denied health care, and this bill would provide funding that is crucial at this point in this crisis."

"As a physician in Wisconsin, I have seen firsthand the detrimental impact the Dobbs decision has had on my patients' ability to access health care. Abortion bans are forcing women to travel sometimes hundreds of miles across state lines or remain pregnant against their will," **Allie Linton MD MPH, Associate Medical Director of Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin.** "As a result, pregnant patients are confronted with multiple obstacles that can prevent them from accessing the health care they need including increased costs for travel, hotel stays and childcare. I am incredibly thankful for Senators Baldwin and Murray and for introducing the *Reproductive Health Travel Act* to help assist my patients and patients around the country access the healthcare they need."

In addition to Senators Baldwin and Murray, the *Reproductive Health Travel Fund Act* is co-sponsored by Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Tina Smith (D-MN), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and Mazie Hirono (D-HI). Similar legislation was introduced in the House in July.

"Access to safe and legal reproductive health care, including abortion, should not be limited to those with the resources to travel. Blocking access to this life-saving care disproportionately impacts low-income families, women of color, and so many more

underrepresented communities,” **said Representative Marilyn Strickland (WA-10)**, who authored the House version of the [Reproductive Health Travel Fund Act](#). “I want to thank Senator Baldwin for her partnership in working to ensure equitable access to reproductive health care for all women regardless of where they live.”

The Reproductive Health Travel Fund Act is supported by the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice, Power to Decide, National Network of Abortion Funds, Physicians for Reproductive Health, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, National Partnership for Women and Families, NARAL, Center for Reproductive Rights, National Women’s Law Center, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association, Catholics for Choice, the National Council of Jewish Women and Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin.

A one-pager on *The Reproductive Health Travel Fund Act* is available [here](#). Full text of this legislation is available [here](#).

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