

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Baldwin joins over 20 senators urging President Biden to issue executive order to defend Americans' right to an abortion

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) joined more than 20 of her Senate colleagues in sending a letter to President Biden urging him to immediately issue an executive order directing the federal government to develop a national plan to defend Americans' fundamental reproductive rights, including their right to an abortion. The initiative was led by Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Patty Murray (D-WA), Chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

“As extremist judges and Republican politicians intensify their efforts to strip Americans of their basic reproductive freedoms, you can demonstrate to the country and women everywhere that you will do everything in your power to fight back,” **the senators wrote.**

The senators continued, “We urge you to immediately issue an executive order instructing the leaders of every federal agency to submit their plans to protect the right to an abortion within 30 days. Americans across the country are at risk of losing their fundamental rights, including their constitutional right to abortion protected for generations. They deserve no less than a whole-of-government response.”

After decades of activism by Republican extremists, the Supreme Court is poised to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, reversing nearly 50 years of settled law and eviscerating the right to a legal abortion. Anti-abortion violence is on the rise, with assaults and

threats of harm against abortion providers more than doubling between 2016 and 2020. Anti-abortion politicians have introduced nearly 550 abortion restrictions in 42 states and passed radical laws completely banning abortion and placing bounties on providers offering medical services. And if *Roe v. Wade* is gutted by this right-wing Supreme Court, Republican leaders have already signaled their next move: a nationwide ban on abortion in all 50 states.

President Biden has previously mobilized the full force of the federal government on behalf of several key Administration priorities such as racial justice, voting rights, and competition. In the letter, the lawmakers urge the President to act with equal boldness and urgency to protect the right to an abortion. In particular, the lawmakers suggest the following actions for the President's consideration:

1. **Increasing access to medication abortion.** Federal agencies could take steps to increase the accessibility of medication abortion and ensure the wide availability of accurate information about medication abortion.
2. **Providing resources for individuals seeking abortion care in other states.** Federal agencies could explore opportunities to provide vouchers for travel, child care services, and other forms of support for individuals seeking to access abortion care that is unavailable in their home state.
3. **Establishing a reproductive health ombudsman at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).** A new ombudsman could educate the public and analyze data collected by HHS about access to reproductive services. For example, this office could gather information about insurers' coverage of reproductive health services (such as contraception); disseminate information about how individuals could connect with Title X clinics, reproductive health clinics, and abortion funds; and provide the public with safety information related to self-managed abortions outside formal medical settings.
4. **Enforcing "Free Choice of Provider" requirements.** HHS could explore more aggressively enforcing federal requirements that guarantee Medicaid beneficiaries have the ability to seek family planning services from their provider of choice.
5. **Clarifying protections for sensitive health and location data.** HHS's Office for Civil Rights could clarify how websites or mobile applications that collect information related to reproductive health (such as period trackers) should protect personally identifiable information and other sensitive data, especially given the risks presented by the sale of this data in states that

criminalize reproductive decision-making.

- 6. Using federal property and resources to increase access to abortion.** The Department of Justice and all relevant agencies could analyze the types of reproductive health services that could be provided on federal property, especially in states where such services are limited by state law or regulation. The Department of Defense could assess the feasibility of moving military personnel and their families and any authority to ensure that members and their families can access reproductive health care when they need it. The Office of Personnel Management could explore requirements that all federal employees are provided paid time off and reimbursement for expenses necessary to access abortion. And all federal agencies—including those who retain custody or control over individuals or provide healthcare to them—could conduct a review of their regulations and policies that limit abortion care and other reproductive health services and promulgate new regulations that expand access to those services.

The letter was also signed by Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT); Cory Booker (D-NJ); Sherrod Brown (D-OH); Maria Cantwell (D-WA); Tammy Duckworth (D-IL); Dianne Feinstein (D-CA); Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY); Maggie Hassan (D-NH); Martin Heinrich (D-NM); Amy Klobuchar (D-MN); Edward J. Markey (D-MA); Jeff Merkley (D-OR); Christopher Murphy (D-CT); Alex Padilla (D-CA); Jacky Rosen (D-NV); Bernie Sanders (I-VT); Brian Schatz (D-HI); Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH); Tina Smith (D-MN); Debbie Stabenow (D-MI); Chris Van Hollen (D-MD); and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

With the right to an abortion under attack by the Supreme Court and Republican extremists across the country, Senator Baldwin has mobilized Congress and the American people to protect women and their constitutional right to an abortion:

- On May 20, 2022, Senator Baldwin [urged the Federal Trade Commission to protect the data privacy](#) of women seeking reproductive health care, expressing her concern over reports that data brokers are selling location data that allow purchasers to see how many people sought abortion services and other family planning care.
- On May 17, 2022, Senator Baldwin joined thirteen of her Senate colleagues in [sending letters to two data brokers](#) demanding answers regarding their collection and sale of the cellphone-based location data of people who visit abortion clinics such as Planned Parenthood.
- On May 10, 2022, Senator Baldwin [delivered a speech on the floor](#) of the

United States Senate on the consequences of Roe being overturned in Wisconsin and the need to protect the constitutional right to an abortion and pass the Women's Health Protection Act.

- On May 9, 2022, Senator Baldwin penned [an op-ed in Cosmopolitan explaining](#) the urgent need for Americans to let their voices be heard in favor of preserving women's reproductive rights.

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

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