

U.S. Sen Baldwin: Votes for Bipartisan Safer Communities Act to help save lives

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin voted for the *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act*, legislation that will enact the most significant new reforms to take on gun violence since the 1990s. The legislation passed the Senate by a 65-33 vote.

“For the past three decades, Congress has failed to take action on gun violence and far too many lives have been lost. Today, we move from doing nothing to saving lives.” **said Senator Baldwin.** “This bipartisan legislation will help protect people from gun violence, help reduce mass shootings, and help keep kids safe at school. We are taking a positive step forward to expand background checks, protect survivors of domestic violence, and help Wisconsin join 19 other states that have put in place red flag laws that allow law enforcement or family members to petition courts to temporarily remove deadly firearms from someone who is a threat to themselves or someone else. We are making investments that expand access to mental health services, improve school safety, and fund anti-violence programs that will help build safer communities. I have said for years that we have a moral responsibility to act on gun violence and now we are taking action to save lives.”

COMMONSENSE GUN SAFETY AND ANTI-VIOLENCE REFORMS

Support for State Crisis Intervention Orders. Provides \$750 million for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program for states like Wisconsin to create “red flag” laws and administer extreme risk protection order programs that help ensure deadly weapons are kept out of the hands of individuals whom a court has determined to be a significant danger to themselves or others, consistent with state and federal due process and constitutional protections. State crisis intervention court proceedings and related programs include: Mental health courts; Drug courts; Veterans courts; Extreme risk protection order programs, which must include “pre-deprivation and post-deprivation due process rights that prevent any violation or infringement” of the Constitution and the right to be represented by counsel.

Protections for Victims of Domestic Violence. Closes the “boyfriend loophole” by adding convicted domestic violence abusers in dating relationships to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Creates a process for removal from NICS five years after the completion of the sentence, only if there are no intervening prohibited crimes or other similar offenses.

Clarified Definition of ‘Federally Licensed Firearms Dealer’. Cracks down on criminals who illegally evade licensing requirements and clarifies which sellers need to register, conduct background checks, and keep appropriate records.

Penalties for ‘Straw Purchasing’. Creates federal straw purchasing and trafficking criminal offenses, allowing prosecutors to target dangerous illegal gunrunners and illegal weapons trafficking.

Enhanced Reviews Process for Gun Buyers Under 21. Requires an investigative period to review juvenile and mental health records, including checks with state databases and local law enforcement, for buyers under 21 years of age. NICS will have up to three business days to conduct the initial enhanced search. If that search reveals a possible disqualifying record, NICS will have an extended

window of no more than ten business days total to complete the investigation. It is not an established waiting period since each individual's review could be vastly different from just a matter of hours to up to 10 days. Provides additional funding to the FBI to administer new process checks in NICS and grants to help states upgrade criminal and mental health records therein.

Violence Interruption Funding. Provides \$250 million in funding for community-based violence prevention initiatives.

INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN AND FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline/9-8-8: Appropriates \$150 million to support implementation of the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline that provides 24/7, free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. In 2019, Senator Baldwin introduced the bipartisan National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, which passed Congress and became law in 2020.

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic: Expands the existing Medicaid CCBHC demonstration program to all states to increase access to community based behavioral health services.

School-based mental health: Helps states to implement, enhance, and expand school-based health programs under Medicaid through updated guidance, technical assistance, and state planning grants.

Gold standard in mental health coverage for children: Improves oversight of states' implementation of Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit, the country's gold standard in children's health

coverage, to strengthen children's access to comprehensive mental health care services.

Telemental health services for children: Requires CMS to provide guidance to states on how they can increase access to behavioral health services through telehealth under Medicaid and CHIP.

Teleconsults for pediatricians and mental health specialists: Provides \$80 million in grants to support pediatric primary care providers to rapidly access mental health specialists' expertise in guiding the treatment of their patients.

Training for pediatric providers: Appropriates \$60 million over five years for training in mental health for primary care clinicians who treat children and youth.

Community and first responder mental health training: Appropriates \$120 million over four years to prepare and train community members and first responders on how to appropriately and safely respond to individuals with mental disorders.

Support for states to expand mental health services: Provides \$250 million for states, DC, and territories to enhance comprehensive community mental health services.

Building awareness of and access to services for mental health: Appropriates \$240 million over four years for programs that increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth, provide training for school personnel and other adults who interact with school-aged youth to detect and respond to mental health issues, and connect school-aged youth who may have

behavioral health issues and their families to needed services.

School-based trauma support: Includes a set aside of \$28 million for grants to support trauma care in school settings.

Support after traumatic events: Appropriates \$40 million over four years to improve treatment and services for children, adolescents, and families who have experienced traumatic events.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS

School Based Mental Health Services and Staff: Provides \$500 million through the School Based Mental Health Services Grant Program to increase the number of qualified mental health service providers that provide school based mental health services to students in school districts with demonstrated need.

Training and Pipeline Development for School Based Mental Health Staff: Provides \$500 million in funding to the School Based Mental Health Service Professionals Demonstration Grant. This money will help train and diversify the pipeline of school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists.

Improving Conditions for Student Learning: Provides \$1 billion in funding through Title IV-A to support a variety of activities to improve conditions for student learning, including developing positive school climates through evidence based practices.

Out of School Programs: Provides \$50 million in funding to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which funds extracurricular, after school and summer programs, with a focus of new funding to target programs for older youth.

School Safety: Provides \$300 million in funding through the STOP School Violence Act to institute safety measures in and around schools, support school violence prevention efforts and provide training to school personnel and students. Codifies the SchoolSafety.gov clearinghouse, which provides evidence-based resources to improve school safety. Prohibits use of funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to train or equip any person with dangerous weapons in schools.

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