

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Backs bill protecting service members' access to abortion and reproductive health care services

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) joined Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) in introducing new legislation – the Protecting Service Members and Military Families' Access to Health Care Act – that would codify the Department of Defense's (DOD) February 16, 2023 policy to ensure service members and their families can access reproductive health care, including abortion services, regardless of the state in which they are stationed.

“Our service members and their families sacrifice so much to serve our country, and we have a commitment to do right by them by providing comprehensive health care, including reproductive and abortion care,” said Senator Baldwin. “As more states like Wisconsin limit a woman’s right to make decisions about her own body, family, and future, we owe it to service members to ensure they can get the critical reproductive care they need wherever their service to our nation takes them.”

In March, Senator Baldwin signed [a letter](#) to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin reaffirming support for the reproductive health care policies issued by DOD earlier this year and the right of service members and their family members to access reproductive health services without penalty or additional cost due to their service. An estimated 40 percent of active-duty servicewomen, who are stationed based on the needs of the nation and not personal preference, now serve in states that have banned, restricted or worked to curtail access to abortion since the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* last year.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Allow service members to access non-covered reproductive health care through an administrative absence, to prevent loss of accrued leave and with full pay;
- Allow a service member to accompany a spouse or dependent who receives non-covered reproductive health care through an administrative absence;
- Provide a service member, or their dependent, access to travel and transportation allowances to receive non-covered reproductive health care (this does not include payment for the reproductive care services); and
- Ensure the protection of the privacy of the service member requesting administrative absence in order to access or accompany a spouse or dependent accessing non-covered reproductive health care.

The Protecting Service Members and Military Families' Access to Health Care Act is endorsed by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the National Women's Law Center, VoteVets, the Center for Reproductive Rights, the Service Women's Action Network, Vet Voice Foundation, Power to Decide, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and the National Partnership for Women and Families.

Bill text of the legislation is available [here](#).