STATE AFFAIRS
WISPOLITICS
Wisconsin's Premier Political News Service

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Joins colleagues in introducing legislation to provide historic, permanent investment in home care for seniors and people with disabilities

Posted on Thursday, Jan 26, 2023

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. Get the app or access via desktop.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) joined Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), and a group of colleagues in introducing the *Better Care Better Jobs Act*. The bill would expand access to home and community-based services for older adults, people with disabilities, and injured workers, while increasing pay and improving benefits for caregivers. In addition, it would also enhance Medicaid funding for home care, helping many of the over 650,000 people on waiting lists nationally, receive care in the setting of their choice, allowing them to stay active in their communities, and live independently. The legislation would also strengthen the caregiving workforce, improve quality of life for families, and boost the economy by creating good-paying jobs to make it possible for families and workers alike to thrive economically.

"Having served as my grandmother's primary caregiver as she grew older, I know firsthand how important it is that our loved ones are provided with the quality care they urgently need in the comfort of their own home," **said Senator Baldwin.** "As our nation continues to experience a caregiving crisis, the *Better Care Better Jobs Act* does right by our caregivers by providing them with the proper pay and benefits they need to keep our seniors and family members with disabilities cared for during what is often the most difficult times of their lives."

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the urgent need to ensure that all Americans

have the option to receive quality, long-term care in a setting that meets their needs and preferences, and the vast majority of Americans prefer to receive such care and support at home. While all states provide coverage for *some* home care services, there are significant variations and gaps in coverage due to varying eligibility and benefits standards. The home care workforce—a majority of whom are women and people of color—earn a median wage of $13 per hour with few or no benefits while providing life-sustaining care. Roughly 18 percent of these workers live in poverty. This results in exceptionally high annual turnover rates, estimated to be above 60 percent.

The *Better Care Better Jobs Act* would increase payment rates to promote recruitment and retention of direct care workers, increase wages, and develop and update training opportunities. The legislation would also provide support to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to conduct oversight and encourage innovation to benefit direct care workers and care recipients.

In addition to U.S. Senators Baldwin and Casey, the *Better Care Better Jobs Act* is cosponsored by Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Patty Murray (D-WA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), John Fetterman (D-PA), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Tina Smith (D-MN), Ed Markey (D-MA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Jack Reed (D-RI), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Angus King (I-ME), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Peter Welch (D-VT), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Ben Ray Luján (D-NM), and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA).

An online version of this release is available here.