

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Leads 22 colleagues in calling on FDA to end discriminatory blood donation policy

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) led a group of her 22 colleagues in [sending a letter](#) to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf expressing support for the agency's recent proposal to end discriminatory blood donor deferral policies for men who have sex with men (MSM) and instead follow science to assess blood donor eligibility using an individual risk-based assessment. The FDA's [proposed](#) blood donor deferral policy eliminates time-based deferrals that had previously existed for MSM, marking an important shift to ensure that blood donation policy is not rooted in not outdated stigmas, but rather science.

“The recent FDA proposal to end its discriminatory and medically unnecessary ban is a huge step forward in our fight towards LGBTQ+ equality and will ensure that those who need critical access to blood can get it,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “I sent a letter to Commissioner Califf encouraging the FDA to continue building on the progress we've made by following the science when it comes to blood donation policies instead of outdated stigmas and help build our nationwide blood supply.”

In addition to Senator Baldwin, the letter was co-signed by Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Bob Casey (D-PA), Christopher Coons (D-DE), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), John Fetterman (D-PA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), Tina Smith (D-MN), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Peter Welch (D-VT), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

Senator Baldwin has long advocated to end this discriminatory blood ban. In 2022, when the Red Cross declared its first-ever national [blood supply shortage](#), Senator Baldwin led colleagues in urging the Biden administration to act on the most up-to-date science and increase the eligible blood donor base to help curb the crisis. [In 2020](#), Senator Baldwin led a letter to the FDA expressing concerns with the agency's discriminatory blood donor policy amid a nationwide shortage of donated blood resulting in the FDA shortening the deferral period for MSM from 12 months down to three months.

[In 2016](#), Senator Baldwin led a bipartisan group of Senators in calling on the FDA to swiftly move to end the discriminatory blood donation deferral policy for MSM. [In 2014](#), she led over 75 members of Congress in calling on the FDA to end the outdated ban and replace it by instituting a risk-based policy.

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

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