



# TAMMY BALDWIN

United States Senator *for* WISCONSIN

Dear Gregg,

This week, Senators Tammy Baldwin and Dan Sullivan's (R-AK) *Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act* passed the U.S. Senate unanimously. Senator Baldwin's bipartisan legislation would expand and support Tribal Veterans Service Officers and County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO), the community-based employees who work directly with veterans to inform them of eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs and services, file pension and compensation claims, and help them enroll in job, housing, disability, and education benefits. CVSOs play an outsized role in helping veterans in rural, native, and other hard to reach communities connect with VA services.

"Our veterans have sacrificed so much to serve their country and we owe it to them to make it as easy as possible to access the benefits they've earned," said **Senator Baldwin**. "I am proud my bipartisan legislation to help our veterans access their hard-earned benefits is moving forward so we can do right by those who served us."

Out of the estimated 19 million veterans in the United States, only a small fraction utilizes the care and benefits they are entitled to.

[>>> Have you been helped by a Tribal Veterans Service Officer or County Veterans Service Officer? Share your story here](#)

While CVSOs work tirelessly to connect veterans with their federal benefits, they currently receive zero funding from the federal government. Specifically, the legislation would create a grant program to improve outreach to veterans and increase the number of county and tribal veterans service officers. By increasing the number of CVSOs, states will also be better able to leverage their local and federal resources to serve our veterans.

In Wisconsin, several CVSOs helped sound the alarm about a doctor at the Tomah VA who was misdiagnosing veterans who were suffering from traumatic brain injury. In part because CVSOs identified a troubling pattern, Senator Baldwin and impacted patients successfully got the VA to identify, reexamine, and in appropriate cases, deliver those misdiagnosed their earned benefits.



[WATCH: How CVSOs help veterans connect with the benefits and services they are owed](#)

Earlier this year, Senator Baldwin traveled around Wisconsin on her “Delivering for Our Veterans Tour,” meeting with veterans and advocates in New Richmond, Wausau, Green Bay, and Racine to discuss the need to pass the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act and highlight new benefits for veterans harmed by toxic exposure.

“I would strongly encourage your support and passage of this ‘first of its kind’ legislation to expand and continue to provide CVSO services to those who have served our great country,” said **Joseph Aulik, Brown County CVSO Veterans Service Office Director.**

“CVSOs are the ‘boots on the ground’ for veterans and returning service members. They serve as local, responsive advocates connecting those in need with services. Every additional dollar CVSOs nationwide would receive could assist in outreach and claim submission, and improve access to VA mental health, homeless services and healthcare our nation’s veterans richly deserve. Furthermore, local CVSO offices would be able to hire additional staff to keep up with rising demand. I am very hopeful the CVSO Act will be passed by Congress to assist our returning heroes in obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled,” said **Phillip Landgraf, St. Croix County Director of Veterans Affairs.**

[Read more about Senator Baldwin's bipartisan \*Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act\* and see why her bill is supported by the National Association of Counties, the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, the Wisconsin and Alaska Departments of Veterans Affairs, the Wisconsin State Association of County Veterans Service Commissions and Committees, the Wisconsin Association of Counties, and the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs here.](#)