

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2020

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write today to request that you reconsider your decision to limit the federal cost share to Wisconsin to seventy-five percent for the use of the National Guard under Section 502(f)(2)(A) of Title 32, U.S. Code, through December 31, 2020, in support of the fight against COVID-19. In April, Wisconsin was granted a 100 percent federal cost share. This was terminated by your August 3 memorandum, which reduced the federal share to 75 percent and required states to cover 25 percent of the cost. This change applied to all states and territories except Florida and Texas. At the time, COVID-19 cases were spreading rapidly in Florida and Texas. Wisconsin is currently experiencing a spike in new COVID-19 cases, and the National Guard is experiencing higher than normal operational tempo due to recent civil unrest in the state. All state civil unrest missions performed by the Guard are covered by the state. An extension of the one hundred percent federal cost share to December 31, 2020 is critical to ensuring the safety and health of our citizens, as well as advancing efforts to reopen our state.

The work of the Wisconsin National Guard has significantly advanced our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Guard has collected over 600,000 specimens for COVID-19 testing efforts in Dane, Eau Claire, Grant, Winnebago and Milwaukee counties, and has continued to operate dozens of field testing teams, utilizing over 1,000 service members working throughout the state to provide both community and targeted field testing. Wisconsin is likely to continue statewide testing in order to assess the spread of COVID-19 through the end of the calendar year. The unprecedented size, scale, and duration of COVID-19 impacts far exceed the response capabilities of the State of Wisconsin. Without the full support of the federal government, as of August it was estimated that the Guard's testing mission will cost the State of Wisconsin \$12.5 million through the end of the year. This unanticipated cost will hamper the state's response to COVID-19. As cases have increased, so too have the costs associated with hiring contact tracers and supporting our health care systems.

In order to protect the health of Wisconsinites, combat the concerning spread of the virus, and safely reopen our state, we must continue to respond to the public health challenge before us. The Wisconsin National Guard is vital to this effort. Therefore, we request that you grant a one hundred percent Federal cost share under Section 502(f)(2)(A) until December 31, 2020 in order to allow the Wisconsin National Guard to continue supporting these mission critical tasks.

Thank you for your urgent consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Bryan Steil
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress