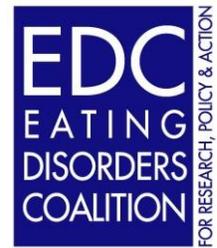


# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Senators Awarded for Their Efforts Combating Eating Disorders**

*'Anna Westin Act' is the first-ever eating-disorders-specific legislation in Senate to receive bipartisan support at introduction*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2015 – Four women Senators from Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin and West Virginia – both Democrat and Republican – are being honored tomorrow for their role in standing up for the 30 million Americans experiencing eating disorders.

Senators Amy Klobuchar [D-MN], Kelly Ayotte [R-NH], Shelley Capito [R-WV] and Tammy Baldwin [D-WI], will be presented with the “Champion for Eating Disorders Award,” an honor bestowed by the Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action, at 2 p.m., tomorrow, Oct. 28, at the Senate Dirksen Building, Room 106.

“Millions of Americans are affected by the crippling symptoms of eating disorders, but very few receive the proper treatment they need,” said Klobuchar. “I am proud to be leading this group of bipartisan female senators who have been working hard to get the Anna Westin Act passed, and it is an honor to receive this award. I will continue to fight to ensure we are doing all we can to give patients like Anna the tools they need to get the crucial help they deserve.”

The Senators introduced the Anna Westin Act of 2015 in honor of a 21-year-old woman who lost her life to an eating disorder. Westin’s insurance company refused to cover the costs of her treatment, and the consequences were ultimately fatal. This is the first-ever eating-disorders-specific legislation in the Senate to receive bipartisan support at introduction.

“I am honored to be recognized by the Eating Disorders Coalition, and I was pleased to work with Senators Klobuchar, Capito and Baldwin to introduce the bipartisan Anna Westin Act in the Senate,” said Senator Ayotte. “This bill would bring greater awareness to the dangers of eating disorders and provide better treatment to the 30 million Americans, including tens of thousands of New Hampshire residents, who struggle with eating disorders. Our bill would also improve training for school personnel and health care professionals so that they can better identify warning signs and help direct individuals with eating disorders to professional help and treatment.”

The new bill was written to help those suffering from eating disorders to receive equal treatment as those with other health issues. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses, taking the lives of more than 13% of people who suffer from them. They do not discriminate by age, race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

“Millions of Americans suffer from eating disorders, but so few receive the treatment they need and deserve,” said Senator Capito. “Anna Westin’s story underscores the need to ensure treatment is available and accessible and to enhance awareness and prevention. I am proud to work with Senators Klobuchar, Ayotte and Baldwin on commonsense legislation that will improve access to treatment for those suffering from an eating disorder and ultimately save lives.”

(More)

Prior recipients of the Champion for Eating Disorders Award include Representatives Ted Deutch [D-FL] and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen [R-FL] for introducing the Anna Westin Act of 2015 (H.R. 2515) to Congress earlier this year.

"Women and men with eating disorders deserve the same access to quality health care that is available to individuals who are suffering from medical conditions and other mental health illnesses," said Senator Baldwin. "I am proud to work with Senators Klobuchar, Capito and Ayotte on this important bipartisan legislation to help improve awareness, prevention, treatment and diagnosis to better support the 192,000 Wisconsinites who are struggling with an eating disorder. I am honored to join my colleagues in receipt of this award, and I thank the Eating Disorders Coalition for their continued advocacy on this critical issue."

Kitty Westin, the mother of Anna Westin, also established The Anna Westin Foundation (now The Emily Program Foundation) in her home state of Minnesota to help prevent other families and friends from experiencing similar tragedies. To learn more about the Westins, [click here](#).

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*The Eating Disorders Coalition is a Washington, D.C.-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of treatment providers, advocacy organizations and entities, loved ones of individuals struggling with eating disorders, and people experiencing these disorders nationwide. For more information regarding the Anna Westin Act of 2015, contact Katrina Velasquez at [kvelasquez@eatingdisorderscoalition.org](mailto:kvelasquez@eatingdisorderscoalition.org) or at 202-241-6617. Additional resources can also be found at [www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org](http://www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org).*