

# DC Wrap: April 28-May 4

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*This is the ninth sample of a weekly DC Wrap product from WisPolitics.com. Let us know your feedback: [info@wispolitics.com](mailto:info@wispolitics.com).*

## **Quotes of the week**

If it's good for credit unions and it's good for small banks, it's good for rural America, it should be good enough for you to support it. Let's join hands, let's work together.

- U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, R-Wausau, [urging U.S. House Financial Services Committee Dems to support the Financial CHOICE Act of 2017](#) by touting supporters of the legislation. The GOP bill, which was previously introduced but never made it to the House floor, would make changes to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and repeal a portion of Dodd-Frank giving the government the authority to intervene in a failing giant financial firm.

Not one word of this huge bill is designed to right consumers. It is written strictly to benefit a financial sector and to unleash any sort of regulatory regime, and to take us back to where we were the day before the crash.

- U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, who [chastised some of her committee colleagues](#) for blaming consumers for the 2008 financial crash, saying that "it was the greed of Wall Street and the lack of supervision that caused these failures." She also called the bill "very, very one-sided."

## **This week's news**

**— House Republicans leaders say a vote is coming today on the American Health Care Act and they're confident they've got enough Republican support to get it passed.**

It's unclear, though, where House GOP members from Wisconsin stand on the latest version of the bill aside from Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville.

U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, R-Wausau, is "still reviewing the bill but is ready to repeal and

replace the disaster that is Obamacare,” spokesman Mark Bednar said. A spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, said he’s also still reviewing the proposal.

A spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, said she hasn’t spoken with him about the latest version of the bill, though she noted he’s supported a prior version of it.

A spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay, didn’t respond to a request for comment.

Dems have repeatedly slammed the bill, with U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, blasting it as a “massive tax cut” for “the wealthiest few.”

### **— Funding for the Great Lakes wouldn’t dry up in a spending deal the House approved yesterday, which funds the government through the end of September.**

President Trump had proposed completely eliminating funding for the \$300 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, instead using those funds on defense spending. The move drew bipartisan pushback and outrage from environmental and water advocates.

Racine Mayor John Dickert, a vocal advocate of the program and soon-to-be president of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, said national legislators’ “resounding no” to Trump’s idea came from “both sides of the aisle,” and was reflected in the spending bill.

“I think any time a new president comes in, they look at ways that they can cut the federal budget, and unfortunately sometimes they’re just not familiar with the impacts of those cuts,” Dickert said.

The program, established under then-President Obama in 2009, looks to clean up and protect the Great Lakes, keep Asian carp and other invasive species out of the waterways and more. Trump’s call to defund it came after a congressional vote last year to authorize the program for five more years, and after a Trump campaign representative last fall had said then-candidate Trump backed the initiative.

Looking ahead to the end of the fiscal year, Dickert said it was too soon to say whether the initiative would keep its full funding levels. He’s been to D.C. twice

since Trump's budget outline came out, talking to lawmakers about the importance of the program, and he says he plans to continue to do that.

Another nugget in the Congressional spending bill:

\*The National Institutes of Health, an agency that funds a good chunk of the research at UW-Madison, would get a \$2 billion boost over the next five months.

Trump had previously called for cutting NIH's budget.

Funding from the NIH is currently supporting UW research in transplant-ready organs, as well as other research looking into new strains of harmful bacteria, according to Natasha Kassulke, manager of strategic communications for research at UW-Madison. Nearly one-third of the university's annual budget comes from grants from the federal government.

**— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson wants states to be able to set up their own guest worker visa programs to address their local workforce needs.**

Johnson, R-Oshkosh, laid out his proposal yesterday at the Cato Institute, pointing out companies across the country are struggling to find enough workers. Congress, he said, should set up a pilot program under the bill to "see how much better states do" and help businesses "have the labor they need to compete effectively throughout the world."

"The federal government is not capable of coming up with a one-size-fits-all [solution] that addresses all the specific issues in individual states," he said.

The bill has the backing of groups that include the Bipartisan Policy Center, the tech industry immigration group FWD.us, several dairy and ag groups, Americans for Tax Reform and the Associated General Contractors of America.

See Johnson's remarks:

[https://www.facebook.com/CatoInstitute/videos/10154633901834077/?utm\\_content=bufferd3d4c&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://www.facebook.com/CatoInstitute/videos/10154633901834077/?utm_content=bufferd3d4c&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

**— U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy is looking for advice from the federal education department on laws Congress can pass to counter what he and other Republican legislators see as a threat to free speech on college campuses.**

In a letter last week to Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, Duffy also requested the department take steps to ensure state schools “create and support a fair environment that protects speech and fosters dialogue,” adding that “any attempts to undermine the political will of our youth ... should be weeded out and condemned.”

The letter comes as state GOP lawmakers are circulating two bills aimed at sanctioning students who interfere with others’ rights to hear from controversial speakers.

Gov. Scott Walker expressed his support for one of those bills on Sunday’s “UpFront with Mike Gousha,” before the second bill was released. Walker said in the interview that universities “should be precisely the spot where you have an open and free dialogue about all different positions.”

“But the minute you shut down a speaker, no matter whether they are liberal or conservative or somewhere in between, I just think that’s wrong,” Walker said.

Both Duffy’s letter and the state GOP legislation came after conservative commentator Ann Coulter’s appearance at UC-Berkeley was canceled. That’s where violent protests had led to former Breitbart writer Milo Yiannopoulos’s speech being called off.

Duffy referenced Coulter in his letter, saying he was “appalled by the double standard of tolerance” colleges have embraced, which he says allows “the free exchange of any and all ideas, except when those ideas challenge their own.”

“I am deeply concerned by the decision of UC Berkeley to suppress free speech on a campus that claims to be a champion of the Free Speech Movement,” he wrote.

See Duffy’s letter:

[http://duffy.house.gov/sites/duffy.house.gov/files/wysiwyg\\_uploaded/Duffy\\_Letter\\_DOE.pdf](http://duffy.house.gov/sites/duffy.house.gov/files/wysiwyg_uploaded/Duffy_Letter_DOE.pdf)

**— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin took to Twitter yesterday afternoon to criticize an executive order dealing with religious liberty that President Trump is reportedly signing today.**

The Madison Dem dubbed it a “license to discriminate.”

National media reports yesterday indicated President Trump could sign an order today that would allow business owners to cite their religious faith as a reason to refuse service to someone.

In a series of 14 tweets, Baldwin condemned the measure, saying she supports “religious freedom and the freedom of full equality for every American.”

“This isn’t presidential leadership, this is an attack on our founding principles and authorizing taxpayer funded discrimination,” she wrote.

See the tweets:

<https://twitter.com/SenatorBaldwin/status/859871785080193024>

**— Baldwin this week pushed Trump to close a tax loophole that she said lets “Wall Street millionaires and hedge fund managers” pay low taxes.**

Trump during the campaign had previously said he would eliminate the so-called carried interest loophole, which is used primarily by financial managers to lower their tax rates. TV interviews from the president and Chief of Staff Reince Priebus from over the weekend showed the administration could target the loophole.

Baldwin in a press conference Tuesday morning urged Trump to keep his campaign promise, as she blasted the loophole and the overall tax code that she said “rewards wealth over work.”

“For far too long our tax code has been rigged by powerful interests to benefit millionaires, billionaires and hedge fund managers on Wall Street,” she said. “As a result, we have an economy that awards those at the top.”

Watch the press

conference: <https://www.facebook.com/senatortammybaldwin/videos/10155302836342140/>

**— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan and the Congressional Progressive Caucus this week unveiled their own spending plan dubbed “The People’s Budget,” which the town of Vermont Dem called an “alternative path” forward.**

Pocan said at a press conference on Tuesday that while the caucus’ 74 members have been “leading the fight” against “bad ideas” from the Trump administration and Congressional Republicans, the group’s budget also outlines the members’

priorities.

Those include:

\*\$2 trillion invested in infrastructure, including expanding broadband access and public transportation, among other things;

\*\$1 trillion for a “child care for all” plan;

\*And the preservation of Obamacare and the ability of states to transition to a single-payer healthcare system.

Watch the press

conference: <https://www.facebook.com/repmarkpocan/videos/1380611008685302/>

**— U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, has introduced a bill limiting the taxpayer resources former U.S. presidents can access after leaving office.**

The bill keeps the lifetime Secret Service protection for presidents but eliminates other benefits that Sensenbrenner said in a news release no longer make sense, such as funding for a personal office and staff. Sensenbrenner said presidents today get paid significant sums for speeches and book deals, which wasn't the case when the law he's looking to amend passed in 1958.

“The common sense reforms in the Former Presidents Amendment Act would update these benefits to reflect today's society while still maintaining the necessary levels of protection our past presidents deserve,” he said.

See the

release: <https://sensenbrenner.house.gov/press-releases-statements?ID=CA590846-729E-4A10-AFA0-F6BA4F0871AC>

**— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay, is praising an executive order from President Trump aimed at protecting whistleblowers at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.**

The order establishes an Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection within the agency that would, among other things, ensure the VA deals with veteran complaints quickly and protects employee whistleblowers from retaliation.

Gallagher, a former Marine who did two tours in Iraq, said the order is “critical to improving accountability for employees at the VA and protecting whistleblowers so that our veterans can receive the best care possible.”

See the release: <https://gallagher.house.gov/media/press-releases/congressman-mike-gallagher-releases-statement-president-trump-s-new-executive>

**— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman’s office dog was featured on Roll Call’s “Dogs of the House” this week.**

Grothman’s spokeswoman, Bernadette Green, told the newspaper she adopted Todd Grrrley in July 2016 and that Grothman “loves dogs” and asked her to bring him to work every day. The dog is named after Todd Gurley, a former University of Georgia running back who now plays for the LA Rams.

See the photo: <http://www.rollcall.com/news/hoh/meet-dogs-house>

**— U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy on Monday announced a new hire for his Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing & Insurance.**

The new designee is 36-year-old John Hair, a Kentucky native and University of West Florida graduate who’s previously worked at the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies and Property Casualty Insurers Association of America, among others.

## ***Posts of the week***

Great catching up with members of the Wisconsin State Assembly this week during their visit to the Capitol. <pic.twitter.com/cPLIHhorNa>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [April 28, 2017](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BTmoxQPDMzw/?taken-by=repmarkpocan>

<https://www.facebook.com/repronkind/photos/a.385335637954.165850.89152017954/10154776237877955/?type=3&theater>

## **ICYMI**

Controversial PAC targets Tammy Baldwin with radio ads about Tomah VA

[http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/govt-and-politics/election-matters/controversial-pac-targets-tammy-baldwin-with-radio-ads-about-tomah/article\\_663a4ada-919b-5994-8e5f-c626d63af11e.html](http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/govt-and-politics/election-matters/controversial-pac-targets-tammy-baldwin-with-radio-ads-about-tomah/article_663a4ada-919b-5994-8e5f-c626d63af11e.html)

Grothman town hall draws angry, raucous crowd

<http://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/local/2017/04/30/grothman-town-hall-draws-angry-raucous-crowd/101066122/>

Grothman Pleased With Trump's First Hundred Days In Office

<http://www.kfiz.com/local-news/grothman-pleased-with-trumps-first-hundred-days-in-office>

Overtime pay or time off? GOP bill would let employees decide

<http://www.wkow.com/story/35266393/2017/04/27/overtime-pay-or-time-off-gop-bill-would-let-employees-decide>

Rep. Duffy: Democrats Would Rather Fail Than Work With Trump & Fix Things

<http://insider.foxnews.com/2017/04/29/rep-duffy-democrats-would-rather-fail-work-trump-fix-things>

Diversity in Congress: Democrats have women and minorities, Republicans have white men over 55?

<http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2017/apr/28/mark-pocan/congress-democrats-have-women-and-minorities-repub/>

Kind seeks better trade relations with Europe

<http://1410wizm.com/index.php/item/30145-kind-seeks-better-trade-relations-with-europe>

Bipartisan Index rates Wisconsin's congress members

<http://wsau.com/news/articles/2017/apr/28/bipartisan-index-rates-wisconsins-congress-members/>

Activists lobby Wisconsin Dems to include plank for same-sex marriage in party platform

[http://www.wisconsinjournal.com/news/wisconsin/activists-lobby-wisconsin-dems-to-include-plank-for-same-sex/article\\_b8691b79-bf8d-540c-aa73-2776df29652f.html](http://www.wisconsinjournal.com/news/wisconsin/activists-lobby-wisconsin-dems-to-include-plank-for-same-sex/article_b8691b79-bf8d-540c-aa73-2776df29652f.html)