

DC Wrap: June 2-8

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Quotes of the week

I'm not sure I'd put a bet on it.

– U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, last week on whether Republicans will be able to repeal and replace Obamacare. [See the story.](#)

How do these truly draconian cuts in federal financial aid programs reflect anything other than an effort to push college further out of reach to more and more young people?

– U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, questioning Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos on Tuesday at an appropriations hearing on the education budget. DeVos responded that the budget seeks to make college and higher ed “more flexible for students.” [See the video.](#)

This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan says GOP struggles since President Trump took office amount to “five months of wasted opportunity for the Republicans.”

“We’re still on training wheels. We’re still falling down on the trailing wheels,” Pocan said at a WisPolitics.com breakfast on Wednesday. “There’s not a whole lot happening.”

Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, said the amount of issues Republicans have disagreed on — from the overall budget to an Obamacare replacement to tax reform — are “definitely piling up” and said House Speaker Paul Ryan will have to decide to cater to either moderates or the conservative wing of his caucus.

Democrats, he said, have to “fight the good fight and try to stop the bad things from happening.”

But Pocan, who's now co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, said Dems also have to put out an alternative vision that invests in health care and critical infrastructure for Americans, from broadband to ensuring their water is safe.

Republicans, he said, aren't reaching out to Democrats, adding the whole year has been "extremely difficult to watch."

"I'm saying, 'Oh my god, this is an embarrassing period in our country, and will you please put down your phone, President Trump?'" he said.

See more from Pocan's comments in Friday's REPORT.

— U.S. Reps. Ron Kind and Jim Sensenbrenner are among the most bipartisan members of Congress, while U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman ranks at the bottom of a new study.

The findings come from the Lugar Center, established by the former GOP senator from Indiana. Its index in the Senate also found U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson ranks 52nd in bipartisanship, while U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin ranked 75th.

The center measures how often members of Congress co-sponsor a bill from the opposite party and how often their own bills get support from the other side of the aisle. It looked at the previous session of Congress and excluded House Speaker Paul Ryan and other congressional leaders.

Here are the rankings for Wisconsin House members last session:

- *Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, 19th
- *Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, 65th
- *Reid Ribble, R-Sherwood, 90th
- *Sean Duffy, R-Wausau, 250th
- *Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, 265th
- *Gwen Moore, D-Madison, 355th
- *Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, 426th

See more:

<http://www.thelugarcenter.org/ourwork-Bipartisan-Index.html>

— A controversial GOP bill backed by U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy that make changes to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is up for a vote

before the House today.

The bill, called the Financial CHOICE Act, would also repeal a portion of Dodd-Frank, giving the government the authority to intervene in a failing giant financial firm.

Duffy, R-Wausau, is a member of the U.S. House Financial Services Committee , which is introducing the CHOICE Act, and is an original co-sponsor of the legislation.

— Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai said in Milwaukee this week he’s optimistic about the U.S. continuing “the digital revolution into the future.”

Pai was in town for roundtables with U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, who invited the FCC head to meet with state broadcasters and the broadband industry. Pai said he’s committed to putting in the “right regulatory framework for promoting more infrastructure investment” while keeping the internet open — though his critics say he’s going too far.

“There’s a great sense of optimism about the future, that people are willing to invest, to innovate, to create, to compete if they have regulatory certainty coming out of Washington,” he said.

Johnson, R-Oshkosh, is chair of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

See a video with Pai’s comments:

<https://twitter.com/SenRonJohnson/status/871901232264249345>

Listen to Johnson’s podcast with Pai:

<https://soundcloud.com/senronjohnson/net-neutrality-a-solution-looking-for-a-problem>

See more on the visit in the ICYMI section below.

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson this week praised the new DHS Secretary for “actually enforcing the laws of this nation” and cutting the amount of people who cross the border illegally.

Johnson said at his committee this week said DHS has done a “remarkable job” in decreasing southwest border apprehensions, adding the U.S. needs to commit to

securing the border and get rid of incentives for people to come to the country illegally.

He also said that though the agency is asking for \$44 billion more, spending for DHS has gone up since Sept. 11 and that “we cannot be penny wise and pound foolish.”

But Sen. Claire McCaskill, D- Missouri, raised concerns that President Trump wants to put money into his travel ban instead of critical programs that protect the country.

Watch the hearing:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?429383-1/secretary-kelly-travel-ban-injunctions-hobbling-homeland-security-screening-effort>

— The nephew of former U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl announced on Twitter yesterday that he’s planning on running for U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman’s seat next year.

In a tweet, Daniel Kohl wrote, “In this case the rumors are true! I’m running for Congress in Wisconsin’s 6th CD!”

In a news release yesterday, Kohl slammed Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, as too partisan and said he “cannot remember a time when people in this country were so anxious about the present” and concerned about the future.

“I’m running for Congress because Washington is broken, and our Congressman puts his party’s priorities ahead of our priorities,” he said.

Also running for the seat is Scott Olmer, a business owner in Plymouth who serves as a social media consultant for the real estate industry.

Meanwhile, state GOP spokesman Alec Zimmerman said Kohl’s announcement is another sign Dems “would rather promote the liberal Washington status quo.”

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin and five other Dem senators are introducing a bill looking to improve Obamacare.

The bill comes as senators are working to make changes to the House GOP health care bill, which passed the chamber last month.

But Baldwin's bill, which is targeted to help older individuals, would cap the individual and family contribution toward health insurance premiums at 9.69 percent of their monthly income. Now, that rate is the cap for those making between 300 and 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

"It's time to stop the partisan nonsense, take repeal off the table and work to improve and strengthen our health care system," the Madison Dem said. "This reform is a real solution that will allow these Wisconsin families and Wisconsinites living in rural communities to qualify for tax credits and afford the quality coverage they need."

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, announced this week he'll be speaking at the nationwide LGBTQ march in Madison this Sunday.

In addition to the Equality March for Unity and Pride, participants will also hold a vigil for the Orlando nightclub shooting victims. That shooting, which happened last June, left 49 dead and 58 wounded at a gay nightclub.

Posts of the week

The newest member of Team Grothman! My deputy district director brought her daughter, Sophie, by the office today.

pic.twitter.com/cIQtPPbnnv

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [June 2, 2017](#)

Great to speak at to the Sheboygan Chamber of Commerce today!

[@SCCCMembers](#) pic.twitter.com/f3zjqeSbVU

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [June 2, 2017](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BU4bqWQj9DA/?taken-by=senronjohnson>

ICYMI

Ron Johnson: Tax reform an easier lift than healthcare

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/ron-johnson-tax-reform-an-easier-lift-than-healthcare/article/2624914>

“Congress needs to get it right:” Sen. Johnson says Obamacare replacement too complex to rush

<http://fox6now.com/2017/06/05/congress-needs-to-get-it-right-sen-johnson-says-obamacare-replacement-too-complex-to-rush/>

Wisconsin Democrats see optimism

http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/wisconsin-democrats-see-optimism/article_0a8976e9-5f5e-5c82-a93f-74fd841a6e80.html

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin demurs on tax reform

<http://www.sheboyganpress.com/story/news/local/2017/06/02/us-senator-tammy-baldwin-demurs-tax-reform/366352001/>

U.S. Rep. Moore defends her “Republicans go to hell” sign at Democratic convention

<http://fox6now.com/2017/06/03/u-s-rep-moore-defends-her-republicans-go-to-hell-sign-at-democratic-convention/>

Two Democrats, including a Kohl, emerge to challenge U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman in 2018

<http://www.sheboyganpress.com/story/news/politics/elections/2017/06/07/two-democrats-including-kohl-emerge-challenge-glenn-grothman/371068001/>

Grothman: Trump made the right choice on climate agreement

<http://whbl.com/news/articles/2017/jun/06/grothman-trump-made-the-right-choice-on-climate-agreement/>