

DC Wrap: March 31-April 6

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This is the seventh sample of a weekly DC Wrap product from WisPolitics.com. Let us know your feedback: info@wispolitics.com

We'll be taking a two-week break from DC Wrap, as Congress is on spring recess starting today, and going through April 25. The product will pick up again on Thursday, April 27.

Quotes of the week

We're all at the concepts stage right now.

- House Speaker Paul Ryan on the progress of Republicans' health care legislation at a WisPolitics.com event in DC. Ryan, R-Janesville, said "productive conversations" are happening on the issue. See more from the event: <https://www.wispolitics.com/2017/ryan-says-house-in-concepts-stage-of-new-health-care-bill/>

The voters in my state, in Wisconsin, spoke. They voted, the 10 electoral votes, in support of President Trump, and they voted to elect me to confirm President Trump's nominee to this Supreme Court vacancy. So I believe it is our duty to listen to the voices of the voters, of the American people, the voices of Wisconsin.

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson in support of U.S. Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch. Johnson testified on the floor of the Senate on Monday in support of Gorsuch's nomination, where he also urged U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin and other Senate Dems to vote "at least for cloture." Watch his full speech: <https://youtu.be/D5cSHkkQLQo>

I do come from a district that did flip to Trump this time, but I don't think they should be reading that as a slam dunk. I'm not going to support crazy up here.

- U.S. Rep. Ron Kind [in a Politico story](#) on whether moderate Democrats will work with President Trump

This week's news

— Freshman U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher tells WisPolitics.com he won't hold himself to the term limits he's trying to push for members of Congress because one person doing so is "not going to fix the problem."

Gallagher, R-Green Bay, said the first piece of advice he got from his predecessor, Reid Ribble, was to avoid setting term limits for himself because "you actually undercut your ability to get things done in Congress." Ribble retired after his third term in Congress, one term short of the four-term maximum he said he would serve.

Gallagher said he wants to make sure he's as "effective as possible for the people of northeastern Wisconsin."

"I just want to work as hard as possible in this narrow window to get the job done and return to my private life," he said.

Gallagher is the author of a bill that would add an amendment to the Constitution on term limits. The bill would limit House members to six terms and senators to two terms. It offers exemptions for those who took office for only part of the term.

Gallagher said it's better for all members of Congress to "take that step together" rather than "one person unilaterally disarming and then being unable to advance the broader cause."

U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, the dean of the state's congressional delegation, has warned against term limits because he says Congress is stronger with those who have institutional memory. Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, has been in Congress since 1979.

But Gallagher, a former Senate Foreign Relations Committee staffer, said any member who works hard can "easily master the issues." And members would be more engaged if they didn't "have to spend all their time worrying about re-election or raising money," he added.

He also said term limits are "by no means a silver bullet or a panacea," so he's introducing several other measures to improve how Congress functions. That includes a bill to make sure members of Congress don't get paid if they can't pass a

budget.

“There’s a whole variety of reform initiatives that I think people are demanding,” he said.

Editor’s note: This item has been updated to clarify the bill doesn’t offer exemptions for current members.

Read a column from Gallagher on term limits: <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/326940-a-time-for-congression-al-term-limits>

— House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, said funding medical research is one priority on which most Republicans are willing to spend tax dollars.

“Perhaps the most popular domestic funding we have among Republicans is” the National Institutes of Health, Ryan said during a WisPolitics luncheon in Washington on Wednesday. “It’s one of the reason we got consensus on the Cures bill in the first place.”

Ryan was referencing the 21st Century Cures Act, which became law Dec. 31. It strives to speed up the drug approval process and invests in research, largely through boosting NIH’s funding.

“The ‘cures’ bill was a way of finding savings to hit these benchmarks on cures, and a lot of that’s NIH,” he continued. “So the same Republicans who drafted and passed that bill are the same Republicans who are now drafting appropriations” funding NIH and medical research.

Ryan warned against assuming too much about President Trump’s stance on the matter from his 2018 budget proposal.

“What the administration had to do, because they’re in their first year, is give us a partial budget ... they don’t have the research or the time to give us a full and complete budget, no administration does, when they’re in their first year.

“So I think you’ve just seen a piece of what they’re trying to achieve,” he continued.

Ryan said Congress needs to rein in mandatory spending, such as Social Security and Medicare, to cut the deficit, thereby enabling lawmakers to increase some

discretionary spending like medical research.

“What we’ve long believe is, we have to get savings from the mandatory side of the spending ledger, which is where the debt crisis comes from, which is where the spending is uncapped and non-controlled — it’s on autopilot — in order to make fiscal space for priorities in discretionary spending,” Ryan said. “I also do think though that there are areas of domestic discretionary spending that we can get savings from to fund other priorities” among which is “basic health research.”

Ryan also said the GOP is examining ways to bring down the cost of prescription drugs and will address the issue down the road. First Republicans need to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Then they will tackle “regulatory relief we think will bring down prices” for health insurance. Then they will enter “phase 3” areas that cannot be addressed in the budget.

That is where they will confront drug prices, Ryan said.

— U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy’s office has a new scheduler.

Eleanor Traynham moved over from the office of U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga. She started in Duffy’s office at the end of March, replacing former scheduler Iana Wilson, who is now scheduling at the Republican National Committee, Duffy spokesman Mark Bednar said.

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin’s campaign said she has raised \$2.2 million over the first three months of the year and finished the quarter with \$2.4 million in the bank.

The Madison Dem, a top GOP target in 2018, finished 2016 with nearly \$1.1 million cash on hand. That puts her spending for the three months at roughly \$900,000.

See more in the WisPolitics.com Election Blog:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2017/baldwin-campaign-raised-2-2-million-in-first-quarter-finished-march-with-2-4-million-in-bank/>

— Baldwin sent a series of letters this week to President Trump on health care and holding China accountable on trade.

Baldwin joined four other senators in a [letter](#) requesting Trump “to do no further harm” to the Affordable Care Act and “halt efforts that have already begun to

undermine access to affordable coverage.”

That letter was sent the day after she and 20 other senators sent a [note](#) to Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price demanding the release of a plan the Trump administration reportedly presented to the House Freedom Caucus that would “undermine our health care system.”

And in a [letter to Trump on China and trade](#), Baldwin and 11 other Dem senators asked Trump during his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping this week to keep his “promise to American workers” and ensure China complies with its international trade obligations.

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson said this week “we’ve learned an awful lot” in the 22 hearings his committee has held on border security.

That includes the fact that the U.S. needs a “layered approach to border security,” mixing technology, more fencing and removing incentives for people to come to the country illegally, such as the perception that people can stay in the country forever due to lax enforcement of laws.

Johnson, who chairs the Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs, held two of those hearings this week, including one with testimony from Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly.

The other focused on fencing along the southwest U.S. border with Mexico.

Watch the Kelly

hearing: <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/improving-border-security-and-public-safety>

Watch the fencing

hearing: <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/03/27/2017/fencing-along-the-southwest-border>

— Johnson and Baldwin introduced a “ban the box” bill that would prohibit federal agencies and contractors from asking about a job applicant’s criminal history until later in the interview process.

The two said Congress should make it as easy as possible to help those who get out of prison find jobs.

See the release: <https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/press-releases/fair-chance-act>

Posts of the week

https://www.instagram.com/p/BSO8_0ADTsE/?taken-by=rep_ronkind

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BSd5bxlFEfd/?taken-by=mikeforwisconsin&hl=en>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BSO68n7DtbA/?taken-by=repgwenmooreinterns>

ICYMI

Ryan says House in 'concepts stage' of new health care bill

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2017/ryan-says-house-in-concepts-stage-of-new-health-care-bill/>

Baldwin campaign: Raised \$2.2 million in first quarter, finished March with \$2.4 million in bank

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2017/baldwin-campaign-raised-2-2-million-in-first-quarter-finished-march-with-2-4-million-in-bank/>

Ron Johnson: Wisconsin voted Donald Trump so I'll confirm SCOTUS pick Neil Gorsuch

http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/ron-johnson-wisconsin-voted-donald-trump-so-i-ll-confirm/article_483503f4-538f-549d-a293-4a95e24cd5b2.html

Republican Sean Duffy wants CFPB Director Richard Cordray out, preferably through ugly firing

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/republican-wants-cfpb-director-richard-cordray-out-preferably-through-ugly-firing/article/2619409>

Too soon? Vets want national monument for Iraq, Afghanistan wars (Gallagher interview)

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/military/the-intel/sd-me-terrorism-monument-20170328-story.html>

Grassland Dairy cuts back on number of farms supplying milk (Gallagher statement)

<http://www.nbc26.com/news/grassland-dairy-cuts-back-on-number-of-farms-supplyi>

[ng-milk](#)

VA retaliation against whistleblower: doctor kept in empty room (Johnson interview)
<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/03/30/va-retaliation-against-whistleblower-doctor-kept-in-empty-room.html>

Congressional Progressive Caucus demands Trump fire 'white supremacist' Steve Bannon (Pocan comments)
<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/congressional-progressive-caucus-demands-trump-fire-white-supremacist-steve-bannon/article/2619466>

Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner talks health care, Donald Trump at respectful town hall
<http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2017/04/01/rep-jim-sensenbrenner-talks-health-care-donald-trump-town-hall/99915924/>

Rep. Ron Kind weighs in on possible elimination of federal COPS program
<http://www.wxow.com/story/35052291/rep-ron-kind-weighs-in-on-possible-elimination-of-federal-cops-program>

Grothman Aims to Eliminate Work Requirement Waivers for Food Stamps
<http://www.wisconsinagconnection.com/story-state.php?Id=373&yr=2017>

Sensenbrenner aide: Town hall 'uprising' is scripted and doesn't reflect the people
<http://www.jsonline.com/story/opinion/contributors/2017/03/30/tieman-authenticity-has-been-replaced-activism-calls-and-town-hall-meetings/99832276/>