

DC Wrap: Grothman applauds state lawmakers for moving forward on industrial hemp bill

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Welcome to our weekly DC Wrap, where we write about what Wisconsin's congressional delegation is up to in Washington. Sign up for our mailing list [here](#) to receive our newsletter directly.

We hope to see you at our next DC event, a breakfast on Nov. 16 for a discussion of new trends in polling. [Sign up here](#).

Quotes of the week, Nov. 3-9

Speaker Paul Ryan has been a steadfast leader in Wisconsin and Washington in support of conservative ideals. Contrary to recent comments made by U.S. Senate candidate Kevin Nicholson, Paul's prominent footprint in Wisconsin is visible every day through the continued achievements of the many conservative leaders that he has helped elect, guide and inspire.

- U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, in a statement defending Ryan, R-Janesville, following comments U.S. Senate candidate Kevin Nicholson made during a recent appearance at a Republican event in Jefferson County. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel previously obtained a tape from that event, where Nicholson blasted Ryan for having a "light footprint in the state." [See the story](#).

I believe we should be focused on reforms for the DNC (Democratic National Committee) to ensure a level playing field for all candidates in the future.

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, who also said last week the DNC's failures "led to an unfair process" in the 2016 primaries that resulted in Hillary Clinton becoming the party's presidential candidate, according to the Wisconsin State Journal. Baldwin's comments came in response to former DNC chairwoman Donna Brazile's publicized claims that said Clinton's campaign was largely in control of the DNC's process during the primaries last year. [See the story](#).



This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman this week applauded the state Legislature for moving forward on an industrial hemp bill, saying the effort would give Wisconsin farmers a boost.

Under the state bill, which passed the Senate on Tuesday and is expected to clear the Assembly today, the state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection would be able to issue licenses to allow the growing and processing of industrial hemp, although people with drug convictions would not be eligible for the licenses.

The statewide effort parallels work by national lawmakers — who are working on a bill backed by the Glenbeulah Republican that would exclude industrial hemp from the Controlled Substances Act's definition of marijuana, thus legalizing its production.

Grothman in an interview this week said the idea for the bill was first brought to him by farmer and former state Rep. Eugene Hahn, who made the point it's important for farmers to have a crop to provide a consistent revenue stream.

"It's an important thing in Wisconsin with our agriculture economy," Grothman said. "Corn prices go up and down, milk prices go up and down, so having another crop like hemp would give farmers a sense of stability."

Still, he was uncertain about the effort's national prospects, predicting that "if the bill came to the floor, it would pass."

But he said it would be "very difficult" to get through the Senate because one or two senators could derail it, though Grothman said if the legislation had "a good head of steam" heading out of the House, that would help.

Grothman noted the subcommittee the bill was sent to is being chaired by U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, "so hopefully he will follow the lead of the

overwhelming majority of state legislators and send this bill out of committee.”

— Grothman will also be among the first speakers to address UW-Madison’s newly created Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership.

The center is hosting its first event this month — an all-day “Leadership Across the Branches” panel event that will include professors, members of the media and lawmakers such as: Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester; Assembly Minority Leader Gordon Hintz, D-Oshkosh; and Assembly Majority Leader Jim Steineke, R-Kaukauna.

Grothman in an interview this week called the center a “fitting reminder” for the work the former gov has done. Grothman served in the state Assembly for part of Thompson’s tenure, including in the mid-90s when he became a national figure relating to welfare reform.

The center was first unveiled by GOP leadership in May, and it received \$3 million over the biennium under the state budget that was finalized in September, with \$500,000 set aside to sponsor speakers across the UW System campuses.

Grothman said he was hopeful the center would be a “place in the university where we can always remember conservative politics and policies.”

The event calendar also has a listing for spring 2018 on criminal justice reform, although speakers and an agenda are yet to be announced.

See more:

https://thompsoncenter.wisc.edu/?page_id=29

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind said he’s worried future revenue shortfalls due to the GOP tax overhaul bill will be made up for with “deep cuts” to Medicare and Social Security.

Kind, a member of the Ways and Means Committee that has spent this week marking up the bill, told WisPolitics.com those concerns are especially acute given the nation’s aging population.

“We don’t have the luxury of time to recover from huge budget deficits and making a mistake,” he said.

Still, the La Crosse Dem again voiced his support for simplifying the tax code, saying getting rid of special interest tax loopholes and making the tax code more fair and globally competitive is “long overdue.”

But he noted under the overhaul effort, large Wall Street banks seem to be the “primary beneficiaries,” adding the “well connected” would get “huge tax breaks.”

House Republicans, he said, are hoping to have the bill on the House floor next week.

Previous national media reports indicated the bill could be out of the Ways and Means Committee by Thursday.

— GOP members of the state’s congressional delegation, meanwhile, have defended the bill.

U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, said the bill would give the nation what it deserves: a fairer tax code.

“I am proud of the leadership displayed by (House Ways and Means Committee) Chairman Brady and Speaker Ryan on this historic piece of legislation, and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in Congress to bring tax relief for all Americans, and finally deliver on our promise to stimulate and grow our national economy,” he said in a statement.

And House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, has touted the legislation in news conferences and various media spots, calling it “our chance to make sure that generations to come don’t just get by, they get ahead in this country.”

— Ahead of the U.S. Senate Republicans’ release of their own tax overhaul bill this week, U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin joined 15 other Dems in urging the Senate Finance Committee to reject possible 401(k) contribution limit changes.

In the letter to committee leadership, the senators requested that “any legislation that would harm the incentives on which Americans rely today to save for their retirement” be rejected.

“Congress needs to do more to improve retirement incentives for the American people, not less,” they wrote. “Dramatically altering incentives for retirement

simply to raise short-term revenue to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy is a cynical ploy that will harm hardworking Americans in every state.”

See the release and the letter:

<https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/press-releases/baldwin-urging-senate-finance-reject-changes-401ks>

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, is joining more than 30 other House members in asking that legislation be tweaked to require the U.S. Navy to use American-made products for certain ships.

The bipartisan letter, which was also signed by U.S. Reps. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, and Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, was sent to the chairmen and ranking members of the House Armed Services Committee and House Subcommittee on Seapower.

“Jeopardizing the stability of companies—located in states across the country—that manufacture these defense components would harm our military’s ability to rely on secure and stable supplies in an increasingly dynamic global security environment,” they wrote.

“If domestic sources for critical defense components exit the market, our military could be forced into relying on countries that do not share our interests, including strategic adversaries like China or Russia, or countries with lax supply chain security practices, for parts and supplies.”

See Pocan’s release and the letter:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2017/u-s-rep-pocan-leads-bipartisan-letter-calling-for-protection-of-buy-american-requirements/>

— Pocan had triple bypass surgery on Wednesday in Madison as a preemptive measure for a cardiac issue, his office said.

“The surgery went well and Mark is looking forward to a speedy recovery so he can return to Washington soon to continue fighting for the people of Wisconsin,” Pocan’s office said in a brief statement.

Pocan is 53.

— Four bills to help veterans backed by U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher cleared

the House on Tuesday.

Gallagher, a former Marine, called the bills “critical to making sure that our veterans receive the world class healthcare, education and benefits that they deserve for their service.”

“Whether it’s tackling issues like VA accountability, job loss and mental health, or simply sitting down with a veteran to hear his or her concerns, I will always to be a strong voice for Veterans across Northeast Wisconsin in Congress,” the Green Bay Republican said.

See the release:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2017/u-s-rep-gallagher-sponsors-and-passes-four-pro-veterans-bills/>

— The House on Thursday is set to vote on U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy’s bill to make changes to the federal government’s flood insurance program.

The Wausau Republican’s bill is part of a longstanding effort to overhaul the National Flood Insurance Program and make it more sustainable.

— Nicole Tieman, communications director for U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, is heading to U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley’s office.

Tieman has been working in the Menomonee Falls Republican’s office since June 2015. Starting next week, she’ll be serving as press secretary for Grassley, R-Iowa.

Posts of the week

5 years ago today, I was elected to Congress. Thank you for the opportunity to serve! pic.twitter.com/EZEGwcMpYx

— Mark Pocan (@MarkPocan) [November 6, 2017](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/RepSeanDuffy/photos/a.517797061622516.1073741830.119657691436457/1480071272061752/?type=3&theater>

ICYMI

'UpFront': Duffy touts GOP tax overhaul plan

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2017/upfront-duffy-touts-gop-tax-overhaul-plan/>

In speech to Wauwatosa West students, Ron Johnson lauds Trump's unpredictability in North Korea diplomacy

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/communities/west/news/wauwatosa/2017/11/02/johnson-blames-china-lauds-trumps-unpredict-north-korea-issues-and-says-trumps-unpredictability-asse/814694001/>

Sen. Ron Johnson: Hope Due Process Doesn't Drag Out NYC Terror Case

<https://www.newsmax.com/Politics/ron-johnson-due-process-new-york-terror/2017/11/02/id/823752/>

Baldwin attacks Republican tax plan before a sympathetic audience in Racine

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/2017/11/04/baldwin-attacks-republican-tax-plan-before-sympathetic-audience-racine/832807001/>

4 ways Tammy Baldwin could lose in 2018

<http://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/2017/11/08/4-ways-tammy-baldwin-could-lose-2018/812865001/>

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, colleagues introduce legislation to expand services for LGBT seniors

<http://lgbtweekly.com/2017/11/07/u-s-sen-tammy-baldwin-colleagues-introduce-legislation-to-expand-services-for-lgbt-seniors/>

Koch-backed group is Half True in claiming Tammy Baldwin voted for \$5 trillion in higher taxes

<http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2017/nov/01/freedom-partners/koch-backed-group-half-true-claiming-tammy-baldwin/>

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin introduces legislation to slow revolving door between the pharmaceutical industry and federal agencies

http://www.wisconsin Gazette.com/views/u-s-sen-tammy-baldwin-introduces-legislation-to-slow-revolving/article_3f47fc5c-bffe-11e7-9253-6308c2b8595a.html

Tammy Baldwin: 'Unfair process' for Democrats in 2016 presidential primary

http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/tammy-baldwin-unfair-process-for-democrats-in-presidential-primary/article_71ca252d-0eba-584c-9f00-ad452c83a0dd.html

Rep. Kind discusses NAFTA renegotiations

<http://www.wisfarmer.com/story/opinion/editorials/2017/11/06/rep-kind-discusses-nafta-renegotiations/838671001/>

Kind representative to hold office hours in BRF

http://lacrossetribune.com/jacksoncochronicle/news/local/kind-representative-to-hold-office-hours-in-brf/article_6edbb593-104a-58a6-a310-c628e4686509.html

She Survived A Gun To Her Head. Now She Wants To Keep Them Out Of Abusers' Hands.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/guns-domestic-abusers_us_59fc84ece4b0415a420b4790

Jim Sensenbrenner defends Paul Ryan, chides GOP U.S. Senate candidate Kevin Nicholson

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/elections/2017/11/02/jim-sensenbrenner-defends-paul-ryan-chides-gop-u-s-senate-candidate-kevin-nicholson/827239001/>

Rep. Sean Duffy pushes back on 'extreme vetting' in gun sales

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/nov/7/sean-duffy-pushes-back-extreme-vetting-gun-sales/>

Rep. Sean Duffy: Tax reform will boost middle class, decrease debt

http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/govt-and-politics/rep-sean-duffy-tax-reform-will-boost-middle-class-decrease/article_bfbefd36-5631-5961-b938-f770a8411bcc.html

How many 'Democrat campaign donors' on special counsel team probing Trump campaign-Russia ties?

<http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2017/nov/03/sean-duffy/how-many-democrat-campaign-donors-special-counsel/>

Is Wisconsin's Glenn Grothman, as his rival claims, the most-partisan member of the U.S. House?

<http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2017/nov/08/dan-kohl/wisconsins-gl>

[enn-grothman-his-rival-claims-most-pa/](#)