

# DC Wrap: Axios editor says 'blue tsunami' possible this election cycle; MU Law poll finds Trump's numbers dipping

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## **Quotes of the week, Sept. 14-20**

This woman is willing to come forward and tell her story and we should listen to her.  
– U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, in an interview with WTMJ-AM Milwaukee radio host Steve Scaffidi, saying the Senate Judiciary Committee should hear from California Professor Christine Blasey Ford and U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh. Ford is accusing U.S. Kavanaugh of sexual assault while they were in high school. The committee later invited Ford and Kavanaugh to testify on the allegations.

Before the Judiciary Committee takes any further steps on a lifetime appointment to our highest court, the FBI must reopen its background investigation of the nominee to include this serious sexual assault allegation and ensure the Senate has all the facts.

– U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin on [Twitter](#) Wednesday. The Madison Dem earlier in the week had said Ford and Kavanaugh should appear before the committee. Her new call came after Ford's attorneys in a letter Tuesday night argued an FBI investigation should come before she appears before the committee to ensure senators are "fully informed," per national media reports. The FBI had closed an investigation into Kavanaugh's history, though Dems have urged the agency to reopen it.



## ***This week's news***

— **Axios Editor-in-Chief Nicholas Johnston says he's anticipating this midterm cycle will mark a "blue wave" election, and he's on the lookout for signs it may turn into a "blue tsunami."**

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Johnston, who spoke at a WisPolitics.com luncheon at UW-Milwaukee's Zilber School of Public Health this week, said while he had previously referred to the cycle as a "blue ripple" — denoting his team's reporting the House would flip — further polls and data points make him "feel confident" a blue wave us on the way. And he's watching to see if that could turn both the House and Senate, as well as possibly down-ballot races.

He also said Wisconsin appears to track with those broader, national trends in the upcoming general.

President Trump was the first Republican presidential candidate since 1984 to win Wisconsin. But now he's under water, according to the polls.

Asked whether the midterms are about Trump, Johnston responded that "everything's about Trump."

"The way the White House has approached this election, they're making it about Trump," he said. "The way they've approached this election is not a base-broadening election but a get-out-the-vote election, making this about immigration, making this about the wall, making this about cultural issues to get those core Trump voters out."

And he referenced a focus group Axios conducted in Ohio last week of “change voters,” or voters who supported President Obama and then Trump, or Mitt Romney then Hillary Clinton.

Johnston noted the Obama-Trump voters largely were motivated by their desire for “something different,” and they said they “would be open to voting for Democrats” this cycle.

Meanwhile, he noted a “key group” of Trump voters that Axios had been struggling to model, known as the “never-Hillary independents,” are also trending more toward the Democrats now.

Those voters, who voted for Trump because they didn’t want to support Clinton, are generally suburban and rural white men, Johnston said, though he noted tracking their income demographics has been difficult.

“That is a key sort of swing demographic, I think, and we found those also in the Trump-Obama voters and what we’re seeing in those is they are trending more towards Democrats now sort of as a vote against Trump and a vote against everything again,” he said.

### **— The new Marquette University Law School Poll found President Trump’s numbers dipped from August.**

Now, 42 percent of registered voters approve of his job performance, while 54 percent disapprove. In August, that split was 45-51.

Poll Director Charles Franklin in unveiling the poll results Tuesday noted that Trump’s standing with Republican voters had slipped. Last month, 87 percent approved of the job Trump was doing. But that dropped to 81 percent this month, which Franklin said was the first time Trump has dipped into the low 80s among Republicans during his presidency.

Among independents, Trump’s approval was unchanged at 41. But his disapproval number inched up to 54 this month, compared to 52 in August.

Meanwhile, Dem voters were more enthusiastic about voting this fall than Republicans.

Last month, 69 percent of Republicans said they were very enthusiastic to vote, compared to 67 percent of Dems. This month, 75 percent of Dems said they were very enthusiastic about voting, compared to 64 percent of Republicans. Other than last month, Dems have had an advantage on that question of between 4 and 10 points on this year's previous surveys.

Franklin said that number typically will bounce around as the campaign season progresses.

**— The poll also found House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, upside down with likely voters. Forty-two percent had a favorable impression of him, while 49 percent didn't.**

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson's split was 41-37.

Ryan isn't seeking re-election this fall, and Johnson has said he doesn't intend to run for a third term in 2022.

— In the U.S. Senate race, Dem U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin was backed by 53 percent of likely voters, while 42 percent supported GOP rival Leah Vukmir.

Last month, it was 49 Baldwin, 47 Vukmir.

Along likely voters, Baldwin's favorability split was 48 percent to 40 percent, compared to 46-42 a month ago, while Vukmir's was 26-38 after coming in at 30-29 last month.

The survey was in the field Sept. 12-16. The sample of 800 registered voters had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points. That included a pool of 614 likely voters that had a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4 percent points.

The sample was 46 percent Dem and 45 percent Republican. Last month, it was a plus-2 GOP sample.

[See the poll results.](#)

**— Baldwin and Johnson have partnered on a bill to name a Milwaukee post office after of one of the city's pioneering civil rights activists.**

The legislation, introduced Tuesday, would designate a Milwaukee post office the “Vel R. Phillips Post Office Building” in honor of the former Wisconsin secretary of state who passed away earlier this year. A companion bill, authored by Milwaukee Dem U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, cleared [the House last week](#).

In a [statement this week](#), Baldwin, D-Madison, called Phillips — the first female judge in Milwaukee County and the first African American elected to statewide office in Wisconsin — someone who “paved the way for other Wisconsinites to help make a difference in people’s lives.”

And Johnson, R-Oshkosh, in a [statement](#) called the bill “just one meaningful way that we can honor her years of hard work and sacrifice.”

**— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind has called on Gov. Scott Walker and AG Brad Schimel to withdraw from a lawsuit seeking to eliminate the Affordable Care Act.**

The La Crosse Dem’s request follows a lawsuit Wisconsin and 19 other states filed in federal court earlier this year. The lawsuit argued the ACA is invalid due to Congress’ decision to eliminate the act’s individual mandate under the GOP tax overhaul bill last year.

Schimel and Texas AG Ken Paxton later filed a preliminary injunction against the feds asking their request be granted by Jan. 1, 2019, when the individual mandate’s tax penalty is officially eliminated under the tax overhaul law.

In the filing, the two argued the ACA’s individual mandate forces individuals to purchase insurance they don’t need and compels states to spend millions to comply with the law.

Kind wrote in a [letter](#) this week to Walker and Schimel that the lawsuit’s success would “threaten the health care coverage for millions of Wisconsinites who live with a pre-existing condition” and put more than 220,000 Wisconsinites in jeopardy of

losing health coverage they purchased through the ACA.

“It is unconscionable to think that the Governor and Attorney General would willingly put the lives of over half of our state at risk, all while forcing Wisconsinites to foot the bill for this appalling lawsuit,” Kind said in a statement earlier this week. “Instead of taking away health care for people with pre-existing conditions, we need to work together to improve the quality, affordability and accessibility of health care in Wisconsin.”

**— The U.S. Senate has voted to pass bipartisan opioid crisis response legislation, which includes provisions from Baldwin.**

The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 passed Monday on a 99-1 vote, with GOP Sen. Mike Lee of Utah opposed. It includes more than 70 provisions from multiple committees.

This comes at a time when opioid overdoses are killing more people in Wisconsin than car crashes — 883 in 2017, according to the Department of Health Services. For nearly 20 years, that number has been on the rise, with over seven times as many deaths in 2016 as in 2000.

And first responders last year transported nearly 1,000 Wisconsin seniors with suspected unintentional opioid overdoses.

The bill aims to provide new solutions to these and other drug-related problems in Wisconsin and around the country. [According to the Congressional Budget Office](#), the bill would authorize \$7.9 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, and other agencies.

Baldwin wrote several of the provisions as part of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

These include: the Opioid Response Crisis Act, which expands a targeted grant program; a provision to fight against infectious diseases related to opioids; and the RESTRICT Illicit Drugs Act, which would up preventative measures at international mail facilities.

“In Wisconsin, we have seen a growing problem of methamphetamine abuse in our state and a spike in fentanyl overdose deaths,” she [said in a statement](#). “That is why I have worked to provide more resources and flexibility to help Wisconsin fight this epidemic, and to stop the flow of illicit drugs, like fentanyl, meth and illegal opioids, coming from other countries into America.”

The House and Senate will need to combine their versions of the bill before it’s sent to President Trump’s desk to be signed into law.

Johnson’s “Stopping Overdoses of Fentanyl Analogues Act” was not included in the bill, but it’s possible it could be added to the final version in the conference committee. It aims to help the Drug Enforcement Agency to more quickly schedule fentanyl analogues as they’re identified.

“Communities across our state have been devastated by the scourge of opioid addiction. I’m pleased that the Senate came together in a bipartisan fashion to pass this important bill to combat the opioid epidemic on multiple fronts,” [Johnson said in a statement](#). “To improve upon the work of the Senate, I will continue to work with my colleagues on the SOFA Act.”

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

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bn6aNZmH9v9/?hl=en&taken-by=repgallagher>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bn6xHSwn-S7/?hl=en&taken-by=repronkind>

## ***ICYMI***

[Marquette poll: Tammy Baldwin opens wide margin over Leah Vukmir in U.S. Senate race](#)

[Tammy Baldwin defends Tomah VA record and introduces veteran supporters, including Medal of Honor recipient Gary Wetzel](#)

[PolitiFact Wisconsin examines Sen. Tammy Baldwin’s Supreme Court voting record](#)

[Rep. Kind hosts roundtable focusing on safeguarding rural economy](#)

[Pension Premium Relief for Charities Left Out of Tax 2.0 Package](#)

[VIDEO: Kind discusses trade, tariffs](#)

[Debate on new tax cuts undercut by GOP election pressure](#)

[Wisconsin Senators Introduce Legislation to Designate the Vel R. Phillips Post Office Building in Milwaukee](#)

[New bill seeks to delist gray wolves](#)

[New bill would give small businesses a \\$10 million exemption from online sales tax collection](#)

[Bill Would Put Brakes on US States' Rush to Tax Internet Sales](#)