

DC Wrap: Baldwin's push to overturn short-term health plan rule falls short; Pence teases Trump Wis. visit

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Welcome to our weekly DC Wrap, where we write about Wisconsin's congressional delegation. Sign up [here](#) to receive the newsletter directly.

Quotes of the week, Oct. 5-11

I think the Democratic base was already there. This definitely — I could just see it from traveling around the country in the last few days, traveling around Wisconsin — the Republican base is definitely animated after this.

- House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, regarding the battle to confirm nominee Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court. Ryan's comments came at the National Press Club in D.C. on Monday, days after Kavanaugh was confirmed by the Senate 50-48. [See the video of Ryan's comments](#). Dems in both chambers, including U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, [have criticized](#) the confirmation as "a blight on Washington."

Leah Vukmir unfortunately thinks the expansion of Medicare will get rid of Medicare.

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, in the first Senate debate with GOP contender Leah Vukmir ahead of next month's election. Baldwin was responding to charges from Vukmir that the "Medicare for All" single-payer plan would eliminate Medicare.

I would fall in front of a truck before I would let people go without coverage for preexisting conditions.

- Vukmir, who in addition to serving in the state Senate works as a nurse. She was calling out Baldwin for being either ignorant or "trying to deceive people" on the issue of pre-existing conditions, saying before the ACA, those with pre-existing conditions were still covered under Medicare and Medicaid. If Obamacare is repealed, Vukmir said, that coverage would remain.

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[See more coverage of the debate at WisPolitics.com.](#)

Are you concerned about the credibility of the FBI – credibility, integrity and impartiality? This is a legitimate concern.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, questioning FBI Director Christopher Wray this week over the agency's image, as he pointed to aspects of the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server and other things, per [media reports](#). Johnson chairs the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which held the hearing with Wray.



This week's news

— A Democratic effort led by U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin to block a Trump administration rule boosting short-term insurance plans failed to pass the Senate this week by one vote.

The effort to block the plans, dubbed “junk insurance” by critics, received a 50-50 vote, which fell short of the simple majority required to succeed. The only Republican to vote for the effort was U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, of Maine.

President Trump had earlier threatened to veto the measure if it passed. The short-term insurance plans don't have to adhere to Affordable Care Act rules that require coverage of pre-existing conditions. They also don't have to provide comprehensive coverage, and carriers can charge clients more based on medical histories.

Baldwin, D-Madison, in a [statement](#) touted the bipartisan support she received, though she chided the other Senate Republicans for failing “to keep their promise to protect people with pre-existing conditions from being denied coverage.”

Proponents of the short-term plans have argued they are more affordable than

plans on the ACA exchanges.

That includes U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, who [ripped](#) Baldwin's effort, saying a vote against the rule "is a vote against affordable health insurance, and a vote against personal freedom and choice."

Two state Democratic lawmakers, Rep. Lisa Subeck and Sen. Jon Erpenbach, slammed the plans shortly before the Senate vote yesterday and criticized "predatory" insurance companies for increasing premiums on those with pre-existing conditions.

They praised Baldwin for "holding drug companies accountable."

GOP U.S. Senate candidate Leah Vukmir has previously expressed support for short term, limited duration health plans, arguing they give consumers more choice in making health care decisions.

— Vice President Mike Pence ripped Tony Evers at a Green Bay fundraiser, calling the Dem gov candidate a "big government, big labor liberal."

He also teased an upcoming Wisconsin visit by President Trump.

The veep yesterday praised Gov. Scott Walker as a "commonsense conservative" with a track record of "creating jobs and prosperity" throughout the state. And he said though he believes "with all my heart" Wisconsin would re-elect Walker, "it's going to take all of us to do it."

Pence also hit on Evers' comments that "everything is on the table" in regard to a transportation funding as well as GOP charges that Wisconsinites can't afford Evers because of his willingness to increase taxes..

"Translation: your tax cut is on the table, your paycheck is on the table, your wallet is on the table," Pence told supporters at a state Republican Party fundraiser at the Oneida Golf & Country Club. "Wisconsin needs to vote to send Scott Walker back to the governor's office to keep your paycheck, your wallet, your tax cut off the table."

Pence's visit to Wisconsin included a second stop in Eau Claire for an another fundraiser with Walker. It follows a visit Aug. 30, when he went to Milwaukee to headline an event for Republican U.S. Senate candidate Leah Vukmir. Vukmir, Walker and GOP U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher were also at today's event.

Pence said Trump is slated to come to Wisconsin “in just a few days,” though the state GOP and Trump campaign didn’t immediately provide details. A White House spokesman said he is “not aware of anything at this point,” but directed further questions to the campaign.

This would be the president’s first visit in the run-up to the general election; he was last in Wisconsin June 29 for Foxconn’s groundbreaking in Mount Pleasant.

Dems used Pence’s visit to knock Republicans on healthcare.

They highlighted Walker’s refusal to accept federal money to expand Medicaid and the lawsuit AG Brad Schimel filed, with the gov’s approval, that could overturn the Affordable Care Act. If successful, Dems warned, it would end protections for pre-existing conditions outlined in Obamacare.

Dem state Sen. Caleb Frostman, who won a special election in June for his northeastern Wisconsin seat, questioned how Walker could turn down federal money to expand Medicaid but find \$3 billion for a state tax incentive for Taiwanese manufacturer Foxconn to locate in southeastern Wisconsin.

Evers, meanwhile, again called on Walker to drop out of the 20-state lawsuit looking to overturn the Affordable Care Act in response to the fundraisers today.

“When I’m governor, I’ll direct the state to drop this lawsuit my very first day in office,” Evers said in a new video. “Because everybody should have access to affordable, quality health care.”

[See more in WisPolitics.com’s Wednesday PM Update.](#)

— The latest Marquette University Law School Poll found Wisconsin voters likely to turn out in November are split on new Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

The poll, conducted in the days before and after the Senate votes on his nomination, found 42 percent of likely voters had a favorable impression of him, while 44 percent had an unfavorable one.

Meanwhile, 39 percent had a favorable impression of Christine Blasey Ford, who accused Kavanaugh of assaulting her, while 35 percent had an unfavorable one.

The poll also found 47 percent of likely voters supported Kavanaugh's nomination, while 48 percent opposed it.

Other highlights of the latest poll include:

*47 percent of likely voters approve of President Trump's job performance, while 52 percent disapprove. Among men, the split was 58-40, while it was 36-62 among women. Last month, 43 percent of all likely voters approved of his job performance, while 54 disapproved.

*44 percent had a favorable impression of U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, while 35 percent had an unfavorable one.

*And 41 percent had a favorable view of House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, while 49 percent didn't.

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin maintained a double-digit lead in the latest poll, largely unchanged from the September survey.

This month, 53 percent of likely voters backed Baldwin, D-Madison, while 43 percent supported state Sen. Leah Vukmir, R-Brookfield, compared to a 53-42 split in Baldwin's favor last month.

Meanwhile, Baldwin's favorable-unfavorable rating among likely voters was 49-42 after being 48-40 last month. Vukmir's split was 30-43 after being 26-38 in September.

Healthcare has become a major issue in the Senate race, with Baldwin knocking Vukmir on pre-existing conditions and the GOP challenger hitting the Dem incumbent on Medicare-for-all.

The poll found voters split on a national health care plan with 47 percent in favor and 44 percent opposed. Meanwhile, 94 percent of likely voters said it was very or somewhat important for insurance companies to continue covering pre-existing conditions, while 5 percent said it was not too important or not important at all.

[See the full poll results.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind is urging President Trump to send federal assistance to Wisconsin for clean up and recovery efforts following recent severe

weather and flooding across the state.

The request follows an Oct. 4 [letter](#) from Gov. Scott Walker seeking a federal disaster declaration for 18 counties that were damaged by the storms and flooding between Aug. 17 and Sept. 14.

Kind in his [letter](#) to Trump Friday asked for “swift consideration” of the gov’s ask, highlighting “catastrophic damage” across the state.

“I ask that you work as quickly as possible to process this request to ensure the families, farmers, and businesses impacted by the storm are able to recover as quickly as possible,” the La Crosse Dem wrote.

— Kind also introduced legislation aiming to aid the next generation of workers by investing in early-career programs.

The “Compete for the Future Act of 2018” would establish a prize competition to reward youth and pre-apprenticeship programs that are successful in preparing high school students for good-paying jobs in high-demand industries.

The bipartisan legislation would give priority to programs recognized by the The Opportunity Zones project — which invests money in low-income communities. There are 15 designated zones in Kind’s 3rd CD.

Kind in a statement touted the legislation as a solution to calls from students and employers for more hands-on training opportunities.

“I am proud to help introduce the Compete for the Future Act, which will invest in the next generation of Wisconsin workers by bolstering industry partnerships and bring real-world experience right to our students and apprentices,” he said.

— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman and a Trump administration official toured a series of work centers this week.

The Glenbeulah Republican was joined by Assistant Secretary of Education Johnny Collett for the tours in the 6th CD, which included stops at Lakeside Packaging Plus in Oshkosh, Brooke Industries, Inc. in Fond du Lac, and RSC Empowers in Sheboygan.

“These non-profit businesses employ individuals with disabilities, who love their jobs

and have access to critical services and a safe working environment, as a result of their employment,” Grothman said in a [statement](#). “This is a message I’ve heard routinely from parents of sons and daughters with disabilities and the individuals themselves.”

Posts of the week

Did I find a pumpkin that would make a pie big enough for the whole town at the Pickett Community Center Fall Fest? pic.twitter.com/iL7FVjSSJS

— Glenn Grothman (@GrothmanforWI) [October 8, 2018](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Boj8FY3H674/?hl=en&taken-by=repronkind>

ICYMI

[Senators Ron Johnson, Tammy Baldwin react to Kavanaugh’s confirmation moving ahead](#)

[Ron Johnson votes yes, Baldwin votes no on Kavanaugh confirmation](#)

[Senate panel questions FBI Director Christopher Wray about Brett Kavanaugh, credibility](#)

[Tammy Baldwin and U.S. Senate Democrats fail with 50-50 vote to block Trump rule on short-term health plans](#)

[Wis. Gov. Scott Walker catches up in polls, while Sen. Tammy Baldwin maintains steady lead](#)

[Trump administration threatens veto as Tammy Baldwin pushes to overturn rule on health coverage](#)

[Senator Tammy Baldwin, Leah Vukmir Debate Range Of Issues In Milwaukee](#)

[Senate Dems Want Republicans to Take a Position on ‘Junk’](#)

[Freshman Congressman Mike Gallagher Faces First Re-Election Bid](#)

[Vice President Mike Pence supports Walker, Vukmir at Republican fundraiser in Green Bay](#)

[Glenn Grothman and Dan Kohl battle over who's the real politician in Wisconsin congressional race](#)

[Political novice challenges Gwen Moore for 4th Congressional District seat](#)

['We cannot afford such wasteful mismanagement': Congresswoman calls for investigation into WisDOT](#)

[Progressive Caucus Launches Center for Policy Development, Outreach](#)

[Political tenure, agriculture, health care, veterans, and bipartisanship, 7 Investigates profiles the District 3 Congressional race](#)