

# DC Wrap: Gallagher supports some gun bills; Wis. lawmakers on Trump's steel, aluminum tariff proposal

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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, March 2-8**

The House has passed nearly 500 bills, but most of the bills aren't the big things. So it's almost a different problem. It's not that nothing's happening; it's that we're doing a lot of things but they're not the things that truly matter right now.

*- U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay, in a WIsPolitics.com Washington, D.C. event this week lamenting his chamber's legislative work this session, saying lawmakers often "punt on the big stuff," including changes to immigration and gun laws.*

Right now, it really does feel different. And I think this is a moment that if we don't take advantage of (it), we are remiss in doing our jobs. We have to be as brave as high school students across the country.

*- U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, who recently told reporters in Madison that changes to federal gun laws are a possibility in the aftermath of February's Florida school shooting.*



## **This week's news**

**— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher says he'd support a series of initiatives aimed at curbing gun violence as state lawmakers look to beef up school safety**

**measures.**

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The discussions come on the heels of a Parkland, Fla., school shooting last month that left 17 dead.

Gallagher told attendees at a Washington, D.C. WisPolitics.com breakfast this week while he has “yet to hear any solution that I think would have prevented this 100 percent,” that isn’t an “excuse for inaction.”

Among the measures the Green Bay Republican said he’d back is one that looks to improve state reporting to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. The legislation, he said, marks “a good first start” and amounts to “something I think we actually could get done in the House and the Senate.”

And he [pointed to a call he made](#) following the Las Vegas shooting last fall to further regulate bump stocks, as the feds do with automatic weapons, saying he’d still support action on that front.

Gallagher also signaled he’s open to having a debate about raising the age to buy a firearm from 18 to 21, though he did express reservations about the bill and noted he’d “prefer to leave that decision with Florida.”

The Florida state Senate and House passed a bill this week that would raise the age to buy a firearm from 18 to 21, among other things.

“I do think we’re creating a weird scenario where you can join the military when you’re 18 but you can’t buy a rifle until you’re 21, and you can’t get a driver’s license until you’re 16. But it sort of begs the question at which point do you become an adult and at which age do we demand certain things of you as a society,” Gallagher said.

He also called legislation on so-called gun violence restraining orders “sort of a good idea.”

The proposal, also referred to as a red flag law, would allow family members or acquaintances who fear someone is a threat to themselves or others can ask police to temporarily seize his or her firearms and prohibit that person from buying others.

But he avoided a direct answer on whether to ban so-called “assault weapons,” as he said: “Who am I to tell a single mom who maybe has three kids that she can’t have a semiautomatic rifle that’s very easy to use to defend them?”

“I know the AR 15 looks scary, but is it the look that makes it the thing that we should ban?” he said. “I don’t know, I don’t know what the standard you can define is. We have four million of them in circulation, are we talking about having the government confiscate all of them? I just don’t know how to make that work at the end of the day I don’t think it would actually do anything to prevent this.

See more from the event in Friday’s Report.

### **— Gallagher also joined other GOP Wisconsin electeds in pushing back on President Trump’s plan to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum.**

Meanwhile, Dem Sen. Tammy Baldwin says she’s waiting to see the details before weighing in.

Trump announced last week that he would set tariffs of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum.

But Republicans, including Gallagher, House Speaker Paul Ryan, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, and Gov. Scott Walker have raised concerns about the proposal.

At the D.C. breakfast this week, Gallagher said an across-the-board tariff, like the Trump administration suggested, “makes no sense,” adding it would “have the practical effect of hurting our allies like the UK, like Canada, without actually imposing that many costs on the Chinese, which is the intent of the whole thing.”

“This sort of very indelicate protectionism rarely if ever works,” he said, pointing to the steel tariffs [then-President George W. Bush imposed in 2002](#) that were declared illegal at the World Trade Organization.

The office of Ryan, R-Janesville, has said it’s “urging the White House to not advance with this plan.”

“The new tax reform law has boosted the economy, and we certainly don’t want to jeopardize those gains,” a spokeswoman for Ryan, R-Janesville, said.

Meanwhile, Johnson, R-Oshkosh, said during a Bloomberg News [appearance](#) the tariffs would hurt Wisconsin manufacturers and the American economy, and do not target bad actors like China.

“The president said he enjoys conflict. Markets don’t like conflict; investors don’t like conflict. Markets like stability and certainty and so do investors. I am highly concerned with this administration’s move that could spark a trade war. The president claims we could win a trade war — I don’t think anybody does. There’d be an awful lot of collateral damage,” he said.

And Gov. Scott Walker [has said](#) there “is not a market in America that can support the demand for ultra-thin aluminum for employers here in Wisconsin and across the country.”

“Ironically, American companies who will feel the negative impact of the tariffs can actually move their operations to another country, such as Canada, and not face new tariffs on the sale of their products,” Walker said. “This scenario would lead to the exact opposite outcome of the administration’s stated objective, which is to protect American jobs.”

**— Baldwin, D-Madison, said she backs “targeted trade action and sending a strong message to bad actors,” including Russia and China.**

Still, she expressed concerns “blanket tariffs” could lead to a trade war with U.S. allies including Canada that would ultimately harm Wisconsin’s agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

“I would like to see us focus on putting in place strong Buy American standards to support American steel and take on China’s cheating,” she said. “They are not playing by the rules on steel, aluminum and paper. As the nation’s leading paper producer, when China cheats, our Wisconsin workers and manufacturers lose.”

**— The latest Marquette University Law School poll shows U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is underwater as she mounts her re-election bid.**

In all, 37 percent of respondents have a favorable impression of the Madison Dem, while 39 percent don't. In June, during the last Marquette law school poll, the split was 38-38 for Baldwin.

Meanwhile, other Wisconsin figures were viewed more favorable. House Speaker Paul Ryan, for example, had 46 percent of registered voters say they have a favorable opinion of the Janesville Republican, while 39 percent do not. In June, it was 44-44.

And 40 percent of registered voters have a favorable impression of U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, while 30 percent do not. In June, Johnson's split was 39-32.

President Trump's figures were also under water in the state. Forty-three percent of registered voters approve of his job performance, while 50 percent do not. In June, Trump's split was 41-51.

The survey of 800 registered voters was conducted Feb. 25-March 1 and had a margin of error of plus or minus 4.5 percentage points. The poll used live interviewers, who conducted 60 percent of the surveys via cell phones.

[See the release.](#)

[See more from the poll results in the WisPolitics.com Election Blog.](#)

**— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan recently called on Congress to act on gun control legislation, saying lawmakers should follow the lead of the high school students who have been calling for an overhaul of firearm laws.**

The Town of Vermont Dem also pushed fellow Democratic lawmakers to embrace calls for universal background check legislation and a ban on so-called "assault weapons."

Following last month's school shooting in Parkland, Fla., that left 17 dead, high school students from the school and others around the country have been vocal in their support for new gun laws.

"This feels different than it's ever felt before," Pocan told reporters at his Madison office. "I think the reason it feels different is with the high schools students being so active across the country and the kids in particular down in Florida at Parkland who

have been so articulate, but more importantly so authentic.”

Pocan also said he’s optimistic Congress would be able to pass gun legislation as part of the fiscal year 2018 funding bill.

Lawmakers face a March 23 deadline to approve a spending bill and avoid another government shutdown.

“I think there’s a number of other smaller measures around mental health and other things, again, let’s make it a package, if that’s what will make everyone happy, that looks at this from different ways,” Pocan said.

Meanwhile, Pocan said while President Trump has said he’d sign an executive order to ban bump stocks, he’d prefer to see a bill that couldn’t be easily repealed by a future president.

[See more from Pocan’s comments in Friday’s PM Update.](#)

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

Happy 181st Birthday to the [@WI\\_Guard](#)! Flashback to when I flew with the 176th Fighter Wing of Wisconsin Air National Guard!  
[pic.twitter.com/DuaCN8cvRG](https://pic.twitter.com/DuaCN8cvRG)

— Sean Duffy (@SeanDuffyWI) [March 5, 2018](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/repronkind/posts/10155634947972955>

## ***ICYMI***

[Koch brothers-backed group runs two ads hitting Tammy Baldwin on problems at Tomah VA](#)

[Tammy Baldwin favorability tepid in US Senate poll; GOP challengers unknown](#)

[Tammy Baldwin ‘deeply troubled’ by comments of Trump judicial nominee Gordon](#)

[Giampietro](#)

[Tammy Baldwin begins push to turn out Milwaukee voters in the fall](#)

[How the 'right-to-try' movement muscled its way into Washington](#)

[Sen. Johnson 'hopeful' on adding SAFETY Act language to DHS bill, as other 'divisive' amendments fall away](#)

[Mark Pocan on gun control: 'We have to be as brave as high school students'](#)

[Pocan Says Tone Has Changed In Federal Gun Debate](#)

[Congresswoman Gwen Moore and Louise Slaughter write letter to House committee on Appropriations in response to growing lead pollution crisis](#)

[Rep. Kind participates in 'Read Across America Day'](#)