

DC Wrap: Grothman hosts Sheboygan panel on EPA pollution rules; state Dems blast farm bill

Posted on Thursday, May 3, 2018

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, April 27-May 3

What good does it do if everyone just keeps these little secrets? This affects all of us. I've seen it over and over again, the power of telling your story.

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin speaking in Milwaukee for the first time publicly about her mother's mental illness and prescription drug addiction. The Madison Dem was raised by her grandparents, but she hadn't said why until this week, when she said she realized staying silent about mental illness and the struggles of drug addiction was no longer an option for her. Baldwin's mother, Pamela Bin-Rella, died at age 75 in August. [See more from AP.](#)

There are 300 million guns in America today — 300 million. They're not going away. We have all kinds of gun control on the books, and it hasn't prevented these tragedies.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, who told an audience of high school students in Kiel he prefers tightening school security rather than imposing tougher gun regulations in response to mass shootings. [See the full story from The Sheboygan Press.](#)



This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman hosted a panel this week during which he claimed EPA pollution rules are hurting business in Sheboygan County.

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Grothman's Tuesday [field briefing at UW-Sheboygan](#), which included members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, centered on what he considers the misplacement of an air quality monitor that picks up pollution from outside the area, including Chicago, Milwaukee and Indiana.

The Glenbeulah Republican's complaint comes as the EPA moves forward with implementing stricter air-quality regulations for ozone. In 2015 the agency lowered the acceptable level of ozone from 75 parts per billion to 70 parts per billion.

The EPA in December put parts of Sheboygan County on a preliminary list of places that do not meet its stricter ozone regulations, a decision the agency affirmed in its final ruling Tuesday.

Grothman contends Sheboygan County's placement on that list and the stricter regulations that may go along with it are unfair.

"The most devastating consequence of this is the direct limitation on economic growth. Companies are required to jump through unnecessary hoops in order to expand, discouraging many to do so," [Grothman said in a previous statement.](#)

He blames Sheboygan County's classification on the EPA using an air quality monitor at Kohler-Andrae State Park. That monitor measures pollutants from urban centers to the south, not from Sheboygan County.

"More industrial areas on Lake Michigan, such as Chicago, create ozone pollution, which is blown over the lake and into Sheboygan County," he said. "The result is higher readings for the sensors placed along the lake. The subsequent regulations imposed on Sheboygan County because of these readings do not reduce pollutants created elsewhere."

Grothman figures Sheboygan County would meet the EPA's ozone standards if they switched to using the Haven air quality monitor located downwind of those urban sources.

Other parts of the state that do not meet the EPA's new ozone regulations include portions of Kenosha, Door, Manitowoc, Milwaukee and Ozaukee counties.

Missing from the list: parts of Racine County, where Foxconn's new factory is slated to be built.

— Democratic state lawmakers contend House Republicans will be “taking food out of the mouths of children” if they pass their current version of the farm bill.

A [Legislative Fiscal Bureau memo](#) released by Dems shows an estimated 75,720 people, or about 11.1 percent of food stamp recipients, would lose eligibility. Those numbers are based on enrollment in September 2017.

Of that number, 23,369 are children — about 8 percent of all children currently eligible. In total, the reductions in eligibility would cut federal benefits for food stamps by about \$23.8 million annually.

In September 2017, 682,924 Wisconsinites received benefits. Of those, 291,956 were children.

Senate Minority Leader Jennifer Shilling, D-La Crosse, blasted the findings in a news conference this week, saying: “I think it's bad enough that Republicans have fought to give millionaires yet another tax break this season, but then to turn around and deny low-income children access to food, it's unthinkable.”

But House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, lauded the farm bill when it passed out of the House Agriculture Committee in mid-April.

“Included in this farm bill are much-needed reforms that will strengthen America's workforce and help people move out of poverty,” the Janesville Republican said in a statement at the time. “For too long, vague and unenforceable requirements have discouraged work and left many good jobs unfilled.”

The reductions in eligibility stem from a provision in the current draft of the farm bill

that would limit broad-based categorical aid, which allows people to qualify automatically for SNAP benefits if they also receive benefits from other public assistance programs.

[See more on the bill in a WisPolitics.com story.](#)

— Democratic Congressman Mark Pocan is nudging longtime friend Rep. Peter Barca not to run for his old congressional seat in the 1st CD.

Pocan, who is endorsing Randy Bryce in the Democratic primary, told reporters at a news conference Monday in Madison he's relayed his concerns to the Kenosha Democrat and former leader of Assembly Democrats.

"I think I tried to explain the realities that are out there. It's difficult to put a campaign together in three and a half months before a primary. And let's face it. An ironworker scared away the speaker of the House of Representatives from running. That speaks volumes," said Pocan, D-Town of Vermont.

Barca, who said he hopes to make a decision in "days, not weeks" on a congressional bid, stressed he has a "long, positive, strong relationship" with Pocan and the two had a "good, solid" conversation. He said Pocan noted how late it is to be getting into the race, Bryce's head start on fundraising and other factors that the congressman believed would make a bid harder.

Still, Barca said it was not a contentious conversation and he didn't believe Pocan was necessarily trying to dissuade him from running.

"I've been a member of Congress before, so it's not like I don't understand what it takes to run a congressional race," said Barca, who was the last Dem to hold the seat after winning it in a 1993 special election and then losing in the 1994 GOP wave.

[See the full story at WisPolitics.com.](#)

— Republican freshman Rep. Mike Gallagher is touting President Trump's endorsement of his resolution calling for congressional term limits.

[Trump's expressed support](#) of the resolution came during a recent bipartisan

meeting in the Oval Office of freshman House members who support term limits.

The resolution would propose a constitutional amendment that would limit members of the House to six terms and those of the Senate to two terms.

Gallagher [wrote on Twitter](#) this week such a resolution is in line with the nation's guiding principles.

"Our government should be of the people, by the people," the Green Bay Republican wrote. "Term limits are something that both sides of the aisle should be able to unite behind."

— Milwaukee attorney Mike Brennan's nomination to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals could face a vote on a cloture motion next week.

The Senate's schedule includes coming in Monday to resume consideration on a cloture motion for the nomination of Kurt Engelhardt to the 5th Circuit. The Senate then plans to take up cloture motions on five other judicial nominations, one at a time.

[See the schedule.](#)

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is applauding the passage of bipartisan opioid response legislation through the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, of which she is a member.

The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 has more than a dozen provisions, including authorization for grants supporting prevention, response and treatment.

"In Wisconsin, we have seen a growing problem of methamphetamine abuse in our state and a spike in fentanyl overdose deaths," [said Baldwin, D-Madison](#). "This bipartisan legislation is an important step forward and will help provide Wisconsin the tools we need to save lives."

The legislation now goes to the full Senate.

Posts of the week

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BiNTC7oHezB/?taken-by=senronjohnson>

Just some of the incredible art my constituents submitted to the Congressional Art Competition this year. Every year their talent and vision blows me away! Thanks to @NM_MKE for hosting this fabulous student gallery. pic.twitter.com/qmJPww71Rf

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [April 28, 2018](#)

ICYMI

[Sen. Tammy Baldwin shares story about mother's drug addiction](#)

[Sen. Tammy Baldwin tells own story of mother's struggles with addiction](#)

[Tammy Baldwin talks about late mother's opioid addiction](#)

[Guns 'not going away,' Ron Johnson tells students in Kiel](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson says people walk up to U.S. border, say a few words and are let in](#)

[Pocan Won't Endorse In Democratic Primary For Governor](#)

[Mark Pocan: Food stamp work requirement plan 'a farce'](#)

[Pocan: House Chaplain Ouster Shows Dysfunction](#)

[Roll Call: Key votes from the Wisconsin congressional delegation this week](#)

[Rep. Gallagher meets with President Trump on term limits](#)

[Democrat Dan Kohl disavows Nancy Pelosi, becoming latest candidate to do so](#)