

DC Wrap: Johnson, Baldwin split on new short-term health care plans rule

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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.

Note: *This is the last DC Wrap newsletter until Congress is back from the August recess. Thanks for reading!*

Quotes of the week, July 27-Aug. 2

I certainly don't like playing shutdown politics.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, in [response](#) to President Trump's comments on [Twitter](#) that he'd be willing to shutdown the government if Congress doesn't implement tougher immigration laws and pump more money into a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

FYI @PressSec, buying beer & wine is not a fundamental tenet of our democracy, the right to vote is. Sarah Sanders equating the voter suppression crisis in this country to a trip to the grocery store is irresponsible & dangerous.

- U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, in a [tweet](#) after President Trump at a rally Tuesday said voter ID laws are reasonable, because shoppers "[need a picture on a card](#)" if they want to buy groceries. White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders [defended](#) the comments in a news conference Wednesday, noting IDs are required for buying alcohol.

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This week's news

— U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson are on opposite sides of new rules from the Trump administration to expand short-term health care plans.

The new [rules](#), announced Wednesday, will let short-term health plans last up to a year. The inexpensive plans, which the Obama administration capped at three months, don't have to cover pre-existing conditions and other kinds of health care required under the Affordable Care Act. Under the new language, the plans would also be renewable for an additional two years.

Johnson in a [statement](#) applauded the move as “a significant step in restoring personal freedom and individual choice in health care.”

“I appreciate the Trump administration providing relief to the forgotten men and women harmed by Obamacare,” the Oshkosh Republican said. “The final rule expands options for consumers and provides additional flexibility for market-based consumer protections in the short-term market, like guaranteed renewability, that the Obama administration made illegal.”

Baldwin, meanwhile, knocked what she called the expansion of “junk plans” at the expense of protecting individuals’ “access to quality, affordable care.”

“We cannot let the Trump Administration and big insurance companies rewrite the rules on the guaranteed health care protections that people depend on because no family should be forced to choose between helping a loved one get better or going bankrupt,” the Madison Dem said in a [statement](#).

— Johnson is aiming to meet with President Trump's nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court later this month.

While he was originally scheduled to sit down with Brett Kavanaugh today, Johnson's office said a scheduling conflict forced caused both sides to push the meeting back, though an official date has yet to be decided.

Baldwin announced in mid-July she won't support Kavanaugh, saying she doesn't have confidence he'll be a “fair, impartial and independent” justice.

— Baldwin isn't backing away from her support of Sen. Bernie Sanders' Medicare-for-all plan after a new study from a libertarian policy center found it would boost government health spending by \$32.6 trillion over 10 years.

Still, her campaign also stressed that she has supported other measures to rein in health care costs.

GOP rival Leah Vukmir, meanwhile, called the price tag outrageous.

The Mercatus Center at George Mason University in Virginia found Sanders' plan to cover all U.S. residents through Medicare with no copays and deductibles would require historic tax increases to cover the costs.

Baldwin campaign spokesman Bill Neidhardt noted Baldwin has also backed expansion of Medicare coverage to those in the 55-64 age group and transparency for pharmaceutical corporations that plan to increase drug prices.

Baldwin's campaign knocked the Mercatus Center, which receives funding from the conservative Koch brothers. They have targeted Baldwin in this year's Senate race with more than \$5 million spent against the Madison Dem by groups associated with the brothers, according to Baldwin's campaign.

"Powerful special interests like the Koch brothers are spending millions attacking Tammy because they want a bought-and-paid-for politician who will put insurance companies and drug corporations back in control of Wisconsin's health care," Neidhardt said.

The study found U.S. health care spending under the plan would drop over time, including about \$300 billion lower in 2031. But those savings could disappear if hospitals and doctors aren't willing to accept lower fees for patients who are now privately insured.

Vukmir said Wisconsin can't afford the plan.

"Shifting the burden onto taxpayers does not make healthcare more affordable," she said. "The Bernie-Baldwin agenda will bankrupt us and undo the economic progress we're seeing with President Trump."

See more on the [study](#).

— Baldwin has also introduced legislation to provide flight-training services to veterans interested in becoming commercial pilots.

The bipartisan “American Aviator Act” would require the FAA to administer grants to veterans to become commercial pilots and in other flight-related areas, such as work as a certified flight instructor.

“This legislation increases opportunities for veterans looking to pursue flight training and careers as commercial airline pilots,” Baldwin said in a [statement](#). “We have a real need for qualified pilots, and if we make the training more available to veterans we can provide them with a good paying job.”

— Conservation in the Great Lakes region was one of the issues U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman discussed with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke during his recent trip to Wisconsin.

Zinke is the third high-profile member of President Trump’s administration to Wisconsin in the past week.

Grothman and Zinke first met in Sheboygan on Friday with various conservation groups during which they discussed topics ranging from Great Lakes restoration efforts to how to engage youth in hunting and other outdoor activities, according to Grothman’s office.

Grothman, whose east-central Wisconsin 6th Congressional District includes a stretch of the Lake Michigan shoreline, has been an advocate for the Great Lakes cleanup effort. The Glenbeulah Republican’s efforts to support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative include the signing of a [letter](#) requesting federal funding for the clean-up.

The Sheboygan meeting also touched on the threat Asian Carp pose to the region. The House last year passed Grothman’s amendment to the Hydropower Modernization Act of 2017 that requires the Department of the Interior to consider the threat of invasive species like Asian Carp when installing fishways.

Other topics discussed include opening up lands to sports men and women, restructuring the Department of the Interior, cleaning up the Great Lakes and selling federal lands. Grothman and Zinke also met with city and county officials in Thiensville, where they toured a park and dam.

Meanwhile, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos also visited Wisconsin last week. The two attended a meeting at Adams-Friendship Middle School to learn about the area's school health and safety efforts.

— U.S. Reps. Mark Pocan and Gwen Moore have signed onto a letter urging the Trump administration to restore funding to a group helping Palestinian refugees.

[National media reports](#) show the U.S. has given \$60 million to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, down from \$360 million last year.

The two Dems, who joined some 70 others Monday in sending the [letter](#) to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and White House national security adviser John Bolton, wrote more aid is needed to “alleviate the growing humanitarian crisis in the Gaza strip.”

“We all recognize the serious security and political challenges in Gaza,” they wrote. “However, U.S. support for the basic human rights of Palestinians living in Gaza must not be conditioned on progress on those fronts.”

— First Lady Tonette Walker this week highlighted ways to expand trauma-informed care to foster care, during a panel discussion hosted by U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher.

The Green Bay event on Tuesday also included state Reps. Paul Tittl and Joel Kitchens.

“Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress are a root cause or exacerbating factor of many of our biggest public health issues,” Walker said in a [statement](#). “This is certainly the case for children in foster care and our state's need for supportive and skilled foster parents is growing.”

Posts of the week

It was a perfect day for Holland Fest in Cedar Grove yesterday!
pic.twitter.com/lcMqMM3Os2

— Glenn Grothman (@GrothmanforWI) [July 29, 2018](#)

https://www.instagram.com/p/BI5drk-HB_P/?taken-by=repronkind

ICYMI

[‘UpFront’: Johnson encouraged by European Union deal, says Trump is listening](#)

[Protest over Brett Kavanaugh nomination held in downtown Milwaukee](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson hopes \\$12 billion aid package for farmers “never gets implemented”](#)

[GOP senator rebukes Trump’s call for a government shutdown: ‘I don’t think it would be helpful’](#)

[Senator Ron Johnson tours U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba](#)

[Latest polls suggest Scott Walker faces tougher re-election path than Tammy Baldwin](#)

[In Context: Tammy Baldwin’s CNN interview on immigration](#)

[Baldwin proposes pilot training for vets](#)

[Aluminum tariffs a concern to Crown Beverage Packaging in La Crosse](#)

[Geography as destiny: As Paul Ryan exits, will it be more of the same?](#)

[Rep. Gallagher Hosting Trauma Informed Care Forum](#)

[Rep. Sean Duffy reacts to tariffs, emergency farm aid](#)

[Duffy’s campaign orders NY Times, gives to other Republicans as he far outpaces rivals](#)