

DC Wrap: Johnson laments House's failure to pass 'right-to-try' bill as 'disappointing'

Posted on Thursday, Mar 15, 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

There's almost to the point of cockiness on the part of some Democrats that we should not work with the Republicans now because for sure we're going to get a Democrat majority in 10 months.

- U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, to Milwaukee radio host Steve Scaffidi on the prospect of a Dem wave in the upcoming midterm elections, adding Republicans have to "get a lot more energy out there" and have the enthusiasm the party had "two Novembers ago" in terms of fundraising and voting. [Hear the full interview.](#)

If you think tax reform is big and regulation reform is big, this will be more substantial because it will have a huge impact on our ability to sell our goods overseas and still pay great wages to our families.

- U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, R-Wausau, who said at a town hall meeting this week he backs President Trump's decision to slap tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, [as reported by WPR](#). The report noted Duffy also acknowledged the tariffs could lead to a trade war. Other Republicans, including U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, Speaker Paul Ryan and Gov. Scott Walker have spoken out against the tariffs.

These out-of-state billionaires think they own Wisconsin. Well, they don't. Wisconsinites want a senator who works for them not special interests.

- Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, in a [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel report](#) detailing spending from third-party groups in the U.S. Senate race. Conservative groups have spent more than \$9 million for ads knocking Baldwin, according to the report, while \$4 million in ads from outside groups have also been bought in support of Baldwin. Baldwin is up for re-election later this year.

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**



This week's news

— **U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson says he'll continue to work to pass the so-called "right-to-try" bill after it failed to clear the House this week.**

The bill, which would let terminally ill patients get experimental drugs not yet approved by the Food and Drug Administration, cleared the Senate with unanimous support in August.

But the legislation on Tuesday only garnered 259 supporting votes, short of the two-thirds majority it needed for passage under the rules for fast-tracked bills, according to national media reports. Meanwhile, 140 House members opposed the bill.

"It's disappointing to see the House fail to pass common sense legislation that would give the right to hope to so many terminally ill patients in America," Johnson said in a statement. "I pledge to work tirelessly on behalf of patients and their families until right to try is signed into law."

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, joined the state's GOP congressman in supporting the bill, while Dem U.S. Reps. Gwen Moore and Mark Pocan voted against it. House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, did not vote.

President Trump during his State of the Union Address earlier this year called on Congress to pass the effort, saying it would give those with terminal conditions access to those treatments, which he said "could potentially save their lives."

The bill could again be voted on in the chamber under rules that allow a simple majority vote to pass it, per national media reports.

[See the roll call vote.](#)

— A bill aiming to prevent gun violence cleared the House this week with support from all members of the state’s congressional delegation.

The bill, which ultimately cleared the chamber 407-10, passed exactly one month after a Parkland, Fla., high school shooting that left 17 dead.

Under the legislation, federal grants of up to \$50 million a year would be made available to fund school and police coordination, training, threat assessments and more.

Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, praised the effort [in a statement](#), saying the bill would give “law enforcement, school officials, and students the training, technology, and resources they need to identify and prevent threats.”

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, R-Wausau, said while there’s more to be done to protect kids, the bill would “provide a multi-layered approach to identify threats and prevent violence.”

“As a society, we must take a hard, honest look at what’s causing our kids to become angry and violent, including overmedication and violence in Hollywood,” he said.

[See the roll call vote.](#)

— Republican U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner officially announced his bid for re-election this week.

If he wins and serves out the full term, the Menomonee Falls Republican would tie former Dem U.S. Rep. Dave Obey, of Wausau, as the longest serving member of Congress in Wisconsin history.

“I remain committed to the principles of lower taxes, limited government and self-reliance, which I have embraced throughout my career. More than ever the climate in Washington is volatile, and I am energized to stay in the fight, to push for commonsense ideals, and to preserve our conservative values the citizens of the 5th District hold dear,” the 74-year-old said in a statement.

Democrat Tom Palzewicz and Independent David Warnacut are also vying to

represent the 5th CD.

[See the release.](#)

— Five Wisconsin House members this week signed onto a letter requesting money in the upcoming appropriations bill for tech apprenticeships.

The [letter](#), led by U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, asked the chairs and ranking members of the House Appropriations Committee and a related subcommittee to including “strong investments” for apprenticeships and career and technical education in the tech field.

In a [separate statement](#), Grothman said a heightened focus on those areas is “especially important for filling high-skill, in-demand jobs in fields like technology.”

U.S. Reps. Ron Kind, Mike Gallagher, Sean Duffy and Jim Sensenbrenner also signed onto the letter.

— Kind is calling on the federal agriculture secretary to protect Wisconsin farmers if the nation’s trade allies retaliate following the announcement of new steel and aluminum import tariffs.

The La Crosse Dem asked Secretary Sonny Perdue in a letter Tuesday what efforts the department would take if the European Union implements retaliatory tariffs.

“I hope the potential harm that could be caused by tariffs against Wisconsin farming communities is taken into account when you advise the President about what is best for our nation’s farmers,” Kind wrote.

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, meanwhile, has also sent a letter looking for more information on the Trump administration’s decision to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum.

The Oshkosh Republican [in a letter](#) to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross asked for models and the analysis that led to the decision to add a levy of 25 percent on imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum while exempting Canada and Mexico for now.

“Higher input costs will increase the cost of products to American consumers and make American products less competitive globally, thereby jeopardizing the United States’ export industries and costing American jobs,” Johnson wrote.

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is asking the feds to quickly implement her plan to provide family caregivers more support.

President Trump signed the Madison Dem’s bill into law earlier this year after it cleared the Senate in January.

And [Baldwin in a letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services this week asked the agency for “swift, comprehensive and thoughtful implementation of the law.”

“This new law would formally recognize and support the millions of family caregivers who are overlooked in our health care system,” wrote Baldwin and fellow bill authors U.S. Sen. Susan Collins and U.S. Reps. Gregg Harper and Kathy Castor.

Posts of the week

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BgT4ergBheX/?taken-by=repgwenmoore>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BgBfVJZhSgl/?taken-by=repvallagher>

ICYMI

[‘UpFront’: Johnson says Trump tariffs risky for economy](#)

[GOP Sen. Johnson: ‘I would’ back bill opposing tariffs](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson says, ‘Let’s not be snookered again’ in talks with North Korea](#)

[Bice: The drinking age in Wisconsin is 21? That’s news to Sen. Ron Johnson](#)

[Ron Johnson Says Trump Is ‘Following China’s Lead’ On Drug Dealer Death Penalty](#)

[GOP senator mistakenly says drinking age is 18, not 21](#)

[Tammy Baldwin defiant as millions in outside money pours in against her in Senate](#)

[race](#)

[Tammy Baldwin searches for right path to keep key Senate seat](#)

[Congressman Sensenbrenner running for re-election](#)

[Wisconsin lawmakers react to Tillerson firing](#)

[Sean Duffy Optimistic Trump Tariffs Will Boost Economy](#)

[Rep. Glenn Grothman hosts job fair in Neenah](#)

[Where does Wisconsin's congressional delegation stand on Donald Trump's tariffs?](#)