

DC Wrap: Ryan undecided on future after Congress, says businesses should 'be patient' through Trump administration tariffs

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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, Sept. 7-13

Part of the joy in so many families is introducing the new generation to hunting, to fishing, to hiking, boating, all sorts of things.

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, touting Congress' need to reauthorize the critical Land and Water Conservation Fund, which provides federal dollars to further conservation efforts. The fund is set to expire Sept. 30. Republican U.S. Senate candidate Leah Vukmir said in a statement to [WAOW](#) Baldwin "pretends she's on the side of our sportsmen."

My guess is they're not really nuts about those efforts.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson in comments to [The Weekly Standard](#) following a meeting with White House trade adviser Peter Navarro last week. Johnson, a co-sponsor of a bill that would limit the president's ability to impose tariffs on the grounds of national security without congressional approval, told reporters the bill hadn't come up during their meeting. But he said the administration's "probably not real nuts" about the legislation.



This week's news

— Speaker Paul Ryan says he still hasn't decided what he'll do after he leaves the House.

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While the Janesville Republican says he has plans to be a volleyball coach come January, he added he'll figure out the rest once his term is officially up.

Ryan also said he doesn't have any regrets about his time in Congress, telling the crowd at a WisPolitics.com Q&A in D.C. yesterday he's "really, really at peace with things."

"I'm honored to have been able to get our team to put together an agenda, to take it to the country, then to have unified government and the opportunity to put this agenda in place," he said.

And he touted a series of bills that cleared both chambers so far this session, including the tax overhaul effort, heightened defense spending and legislation to expand veterans' access to VA-funded health care, among other things.

Ryan said while he's leaving Congress, he "won't divorce myself from politics and policy."

"I'm a cause guy," he said. "I'm going to be working on the causes I care about in some other capacity."

— Ryan said companies affected by the tariffs should "be patient" as the Trump administration continues pursuing its trade policies.

While he said he doesn't like tariffs, he agrees the U.S. needs trade agreements with its North American and European allies that "fit the 21st century."

After that, he said, the U.S. can “rally the developed world” to put pressure on China to “play by the rules.”

“So I think the idea and the strategy of — it’s hard ball, it’s tariffs, it’s tough talk — but if it results in good agreements with our allies and a unified developed world front to go get China to play by the rules, then that’s a pretty darn good outcome,” he said. “So I would simply say, be patient for that.”

Asked if the advice also applies to farmers, Ryan said yes, referencing recent conversations he’s had with Wisconsin ag producers who “like the end game and they like the fact that the president is trying to get a fairer deal at the end of the day for the country.”

— Ryan also blamed rising deficits on entitlement spending.

“The issue is entitlements,” he said. “It always has been and always will be.”

Recent CBO reports show over the first 11 months of the fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, the deficit was [\\$895 billion](#), \$222 billion higher than the last fiscal year.

But Ryan defended the tax cuts within the massive GOP tax overhaul package President Trump signed into law in December. Noting that revenues have increased 1 percent so far, he said the nation will see more corporations stay in the U.S. along with new jobs and better living standards that mean more “people that are coming of poverty and paying taxes.”

“Let’s keep our eye on the ball, which is we need to get control of our entitlement programs and the good news in that story is good reforms means we can better fulfill the mission of these important programs, health and retirement security, without bankrupting the country,” he said.

[See a CSPAN video of Ryan’s comments.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan says the idea of impeaching President Trump is largely a “moot conversation” given the current makeup of Congress and its leadership.

The Town of Vermont Dem, who in early 2017 brought up the possibility of impeachment on the House floor, told reporters at his Madison office this week that

Special Counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian involvement in the 2016 election is "flowing extremely well" and the best thing Dems can do is let it run its course.

"I think this is the best way to let it happen, and let's get as much information as possible," he said. "But Paul Ryan's not going to let this Congress do anything to affect this president, so it's kind of a moot conversation in many ways."

Asked about the prospect of impeachment if Dems win the House in November, Pocan said Congress would first need to "change some of the players" and then wait for more information from the Mueller investigation "that's going to be most relevant" to continue talks around impeachment.

Both, he said, "are very likely to happen at this point."

[Hear Pocan's comments to reporters.](#)

[See more in Monday's PM Update.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy is again pushing legislation to remove gray wolves from the federal endangered species list.

The Wausau Republican, as well as U.S. Sens. Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin, have been vocal in their support for delisting the gray wolf. The three last year introduced legislation that would nix gray wolves as endangered in various Great Lakes states and Wyoming.

The Obama administration in 2012 first delisted the gray wolf in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. In 2014, the wolves were returned to the federal endangered species list after a lawsuit, resulting in the end of wolf trapping and hunting.

Duffy in a [statement](#) touted the effort, saying Wisconsin officials "know what's better for our state's ecosystem better than activist judges in Washington."

"I'm proud to introduce bipartisan legislation to delist the gray wolf because Wisconsin farmers deserve to be able to protect their livestock, and they should not suffer because of the decisions made by an overreaching federal government a thousand miles away," he said.

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is calling on Speaker Paul Ryan and the House to include a permanent ‘Buy America’ commitment in the chamber’s water infrastructure legislation.

This standard would require water infrastructure projects funded through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund only use American-made iron and steel.

While the Senate version of the *Water Resources Development Act* (WRDA) which has passed the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee includes Baldwin’s permanent ‘Buy America’ requirement, it is not included in the House version of the bill.

In further efforts to advance this legislation in the House, [Baldwin has sent a letter to President Trump](#), who has previously spoken in support of the bill, asking him to ensure that there is a permanent ‘Buy America’ commitment in the final version of legislation he receives from the House.

— Dem U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore has introduced a bill to expand federal dollars for implementing new water treatment technologies.

The legislation is a companion bill to U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin’s “Water Technology Acceleration Act,” and would look to bolster funding for state and local governments.

Moore, D-Milwaukee, said in a [statement](#) the bill would “ensure communities have the resources they need to test and implement new water technologies that keep our water clean and our children healthy.”

“Inaction is unacceptable at a time when thousands of cities across the country, including Milwaukee, have drinking water with unsafe levels of lead,” she said. “We must unlock this innovative research to solve our nation’s water challenges.”

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind is calling on lawmakers to implement stricter limits on subsidy payments under the farm bill.

The La Crosse Dem's call comes as members of the House and Senate have begun meeting to reconcile differences between the versions of the farm bill that cleared the chambers in June.

Kind in April had sent a [letter](#) to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office claiming wealthy farmers are reorganizing their operations to receive Title I subsidies, which are meant to provide price and income support to certain producers.

The CBO [responded](#) last week with a letter that Kind says "proves that Washington is lavishing huge taxpayer subsidies on millionaires and billionaires, leaving Wisconsin's small and family farmers behind."

"The Farm Bill's Title I section is an unacceptable misuse of taxpayer dollars, and must be fixed before it leaves conference committee," Kind said in a [statement](#). "This is Washington incentivizing poor behavior."

— Kind is also spearheading cosponsoring legislation aiming to expand mental health care access to veterans.

The "Veterans Mental Health Accessibility Act" would allow veterans to access mental health services through the Department of Veterans Affairs from hospitals and nursing homes. Veterans currently lose their priority status within the VA for mental health care after five years, according to Kind's office.

"Our veterans have earned and deserve the best quality care we can provide, including comprehensive mental healthcare," Kind said in a [statement](#). "This important bill will help provide Wisconsin veterans streamlined access to mental health services within the VA, and help the VA better address the needs of our veterans - regardless of when they served our country."

Posts of the week

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bnjfh3qjwG1/?hl=en&taken-by=mikegallagherwi>

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

ICYMI

[Sen. Tammy Baldwin hosts roundtable discussion with Wisconsin hunters](#)

[Baldwin touts the importance of federal outdoor program in jeopardy](#)

[Wisconsin U.S. Senate race: Leah Vukmir and Tammy Baldwin exchange barbs on Tomah VA scandal and health care](#)

[Wisconsin U.S. Senate race: Tammy Baldwin, Leah Vukmir headed to crucial stage of campaign](#)

[60 Percent of Baldwin's Campaign Contributions Are from Outside Wisconsin](#)

[Flooding Update, Tariffs, Farm Bill With Rep. Ron Kind](#)

[Rep. Pocan not sure how much federal aid for flooding will come](#)

[Ron Johnson Talks Tariffs With Peter Navarro](#)

[Rep. Duffy discusses farm aid](#)

[Welders wanted: Military work drives need for skilled workers in Wisconsin](#)