

DC Wrap: Wis. Dems call on Ryan to hold net neutrality vote; Grothman bill to establish opioid task force clears House

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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

We must always be clear that we are dealing with a brutal regime with a long history of deceit. Only time will tell if North Korea is serious this time, and in the meantime we must continue to apply maximum economic pressure.

- House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, in a [statement](#) this week commending President Trump following his summit with North Korea leader Kim Jong Un. Still, Ryan warned as negotiations continue, "there is only one acceptable final outcome: complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization."

The people of Wisconsin did not send me to Washington to take people's health care away and I will continue my fight against these relentless efforts to make things worse for Wisconsin families

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, in a [statement](#) after the federal Dept. of Justice said it won't defend the lawsuit against the Affordable Care Act brought forth by Wisconsin and 19 other states. The federal DOJ argued the ACA's individual mandate is unconstitutional in its brief. The campaigns of Baldwin's Republican challengers knocked her in separate statements last week, with Kevin Nicholson's campaign saying in a [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel story](#) the ACA "needs to be repealed and replaced with a market-based solution free of unconstitutional mandates and market-rigging schemes."

It worked out just fine. He and I didn't agree on the issue of net neutrality, but we talked for half an hour on it. I make it a point not only to go to big communities, but also small ones.

- U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, when [asked in an interview with Roll Call](#) this week about the smallest crowd he faced at a town hall meeting. [Just one constituent](#) had shown up at the Rubicon event earlier this month. Sensenbrenner held 115 town halls last year, the most among members of Congress.

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This week's news

— **With the Federal Communications Commission's repeal of net neutrality taking effect this week, Wisconsin Dems are pressing Speaker Paul Ryan to hold a vote that would restore the rules.**

The effort comes after the Senate passed a resolution in a 52-47 vote last month to restore the Obama-era policy that blocked internet providers from impeding access to websites and online services or charging higher fees for the highest streaming quality. The rules officially took effect Monday.

Dem U.S. Reps. Mark Pocan and Gwen Moore took to Twitter that day to show support for net neutrality, touting its “overwhelming public support” and noting they signed a [discharge petition](#) to force a vote on the House floor.

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, also signed the petition, while none of the Wisconsin House GOP members have supported the effort. The petition is 48 votes short of the 218 needed to bypass the chamber's leadership and force a vote on the floor.

A spokesman for Ryan referred WisPolitics.com to the Energy and Commerce Committee. A committee spokeswoman pointed to statements from ECC Chair Greg Walden, R-Ore., and Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Chair Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., who pushed back against the efforts to reinstate net neutrality.

The pair said in a [statement](#) congressional Democrats are “more interested in

coming up with political slogans than legislative solutions.”

Meanwhile, Ryan [praised the repeal](#) of net neutrality when the FCC voted to repeal the rules in December, calling the policy an “egregious government overreach” and claiming the Trump administration’s repeal will “benefit all users of the internet.”

“Despite its unassuming name, the Obama administration’s net neutrality regulation threatens the free and open internet that has done so much to advance modern society,” he said in the statement.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, who voted in favor of net neutrality in May, has also called on the House to take up the effort.

“It’s time for @SpeakerRyan to let the House vote to protect a #FreeandOpenInternet,” she wrote in a tweet this week.

The net neutrality bill went to the Senate floor last month after Dems used a procedural move that allows Congress to revoke agency rules via a simple majority vote instead of the 60-vote threshold typically required. All Dems, two Independents and three Republicans backed the effort. U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, was among the majority of GOP members who opposed it.

— Former Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton sent a letter to Wisconsin’s GOP congressmen denouncing their inaction against what she called moral and ethical violations by the Trump administration.

In the letter last week, Lawton said the people of Wisconsin can no longer ignore the GOP House members’ “deafening silence” on issues that “put our state and nation in a constant state of tumult.”

She sent letters to U.S. Reps. Jim Sensenbrenner, Glenn Grothman, Sean Duffy and Mike Gallagher, as well as House Speaker Paul Ryan.

The former Lt. gov took issue with the five for not calling for an investigation into EPA Secretary Scott Pruitt following accusations he used his position for personal gain. She also criticized the representatives for not questioning or protesting the administration’s policy of separating migrant children from their families and “housing some of the children in cages.”

“You have effectively abandoned your own moral authority along with the interests

of your constituents,” she wrote.

None of the five congressmen’s offices returned a call and email seeking comment.

[See the letter.](#)

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson is calling on the Trump administration to allow for short-term health care plans that he says would give consumers more options.

The Oshkosh Republican joined 34 other senators in a [recent letter](#) to the heads of the treasury, labor, and health and human services departments, where they requested plans that would last up to a year and are renewable. Those choices, they wrote, “would allow options for enrollees who face skyrocketing premiums or who have an unexpected gap in coverage.”

Currently, those short-term plans can only last up to three months, under caps established under former President Obama’s administration.

[See the release.](#)

— Wisconsin Dems are pushing for policy inclusions in the federal farm bill as the legislation works its way through the Senate.

The bill failed to pass the House last month over a debate on immigration policy, and is now awaiting a full vote in the Senate.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin asked for improvements to dairy risk management tools to be included in the farm bill. The Madison Dem wrote in [a letter](#) to the Senate Agriculture Committee chair that Wisconsin dairy producers face low prices and an oversupply of milk in the market.

The changes Baldwin offered include allowing farmers to update the Margin Protection program — which provides dairy producers with payments when dairy margins are below the margin coverage levels the producer chooses each year — by letting them purchase higher margin coverage levels and making coverage more affordable.

“Dairy farmers work hard to prepare for the ups and downs in the market, but they have very limited options to respond to rapid price changes,” Baldwin wrote. “For this reason, a working safety net tool is critical to ensure that market dips do not threaten the future of these farms, which are the backbone of our rural economy.”

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind issued his own priorities for the farm bill this week. In his [Priorities Report](#), Kind wrote that crop insurance programs should avoid subsidizing the production of certain crops, which he says favors large agribusiness.

“Unfortunately, the Farm Bill has often been a vehicle for advancing parochial interests at the expense of sound policy and taxpayer dollars,” the La Crosse Dem wrote.

Kind also touched on the issue of trade in his report, advocating for a system of funding to help farmers expand their export markets.

“To compete with farmers around the world, we must have a robust trade agenda that seeks to expand export opportunities,” Kind wrote. “There is no better example of US presence around the world than our robust agricultural export market.”

The farm bill [passed](#) the Senate Agriculture Committee Wednesday, and heads to the full Senate for a vote, which is expected before the July 4 recess, [per national media reports](#).

— Baldwin is backing legislation aiming to prevent the Dept. of Homeland Security from separating children and parents at the southern border.

The bill, called the “Keep Families Together Act,” would only allow children to be separated from their parents if the children are being trafficked or abused.

The legislation comes as the federal government has [implemented a policy from AG Jeff Sessions](#) to separate families that illegally come into the U.S.

“Tearing families apart and traumatizing children is wrong and immoral,” Baldwin said in a [statement](#). “This legislation restores a humane approach that respects individuals seeking asylum in our country and ensures children and parents are not separated at our border.”

— Baldwin is also featured in the inaugural podcast from PayPal CEO Dan

Schulman called “Never Stand Still.”

[Watch the interview.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman’s legislation to address the opioid crisis has cleared the House.

The legislation, which would establish a federal task force with the mission of coordinating the federal response to the opioid crisis, passed the chamber on a 409-8 vote.

All of Wisconsin’s House members voted to support it, with the exception of Speaker Paul Ryan, who didn’t vote and rarely does in his leadership role.

Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, applauded its passage in a [statement](#) yesterday.

“One overdose is too many,” he said. “These are preventable deaths of precious lives. I am determined to fight to put an end to the opioid crisis and believe that this bill could be a turning point in the fight.”

The task force would help identify, evaluate and recommend best practices to states and local agencies in their fight against opioid abuse, as well as develop ways to better identify and prevent substance abuse in the home and around children and minors.

[See the roll call vote.](#)

Posts of the week

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BjxiRP6nNHd/?taken-by=repronkind>

On top of the [@uscapitol](#) with staff touring the dome. After an 18 story climb, the view is magnificent. <pic.twitter.com/d3LYRZpPNU>

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [June 11, 2018](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bj-yS2enPla/?taken-by=repseanduffy>

ICYMI

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[Tammy Baldwin, Kamala Harris encourage supporters to keep fighting in tough election](#)

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[Trump agreement with North Korea divides Wisconsin Dems and GOP](#)

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[Rep. Kind unveils Farm Bill Priorities](#)

[Rep. Gallagher: less pageantry, more talk of NK's human rights record](#)

[The King of Town Halls Reflects on Face Time](#)

[Grothman Pushing for SNAP Amendment](#)