

# DC Wrap: Wis. House Dems sign onto discharge petition to debate immigration bills; Gallagher calls to cancel Aug. recess

Posted on Thursday, Jun 7, 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

As I made clear to my colleagues in the Senate and the House before each body voted on S. 204, this legislation is fundamentally about empowering patients to make decisions in cooperation with their doctors and the developers of potentially life-saving therapies. This law intends to diminish the FDA's power over people's lives, not increase it.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, in a [letter](#) to FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb in response to [comments Gottlieb made](#) suggesting the agency may need new regulations to "balance" the requirements under the new right-to-try law. President Trump signed Johnson's bill into law May 30.

With ten Democratic candidates for governor, each one of them will rise and fall in the polls at various points over the next ten weeks. To use an arbitrary date and fundraising level for selection is wrong, especially within three weeks of the primary date when a debate performance could significantly impact the state of the race.

- U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, in a [letter](#) to the WBA Foundation. The foundation [this week announced](#) it'll limit its July 27 Dem gov debate to four candidates, based largely off the top finishers in upcoming Marquette University Law School polls.



## ***This week's news***

**— Wisconsin's House Republicans aren't saying if they're planning to sign onto a discharge petition that would force the chamber to vote on a series of immigration bills.**

**>> 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.](#)**

The state's three House Dems — U.S. Reps. Ron Kind, of La Crosse; Mark Pocan, of the Town of Vermont; and Gwen Moore, of Milwaukee — each have [signed onto the petition](#), which has so far gathered 215 signatures, three short of the 218 it needs to bring the legislation to the floor.

So far, no Wisconsin Republicans have added their names to the list, and the offices of U.S. Reps. Glenn Grothman, Jim Sensenbrenner, Sean Duffy and Mike Gallagher didn't return emails from WisPolitics.com this week seeking more information.

One hundred ninety-two of the House's 193 Dems and around two dozen Republicans are backing the discharge petition, a procedural move that lets lawmakers bypass the chamber's leadership and force a vote on the floor if a majority of members back it.

Asked about the petition in an interview with WisPolitics.com last week, Kind applauded the GOP members who had signed on to it, saying it "takes a lot of courage" for them to support it.

He also underscored the need to fix the country's "broken immigration system," which he characterized as one that's "in desperate need of (comprehensive) reform."

“I have noticed that not one House Republican in Wisconsin has signed the discharge petition yet,” he said. “And yet, we know that there are things that need to be fixed here in the state when it comes to immigration policy.”

[See more from Kind's interview in last week's DC Wrap.](#)

### **— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is joining other senators in calling for an extension of the Dairy Margin Protection Program.**

The Madison Dem asked Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to extend the June 1 deadline by 30 days. Perdue extended the deadline Monday to allow dairy producers until June 8 to sign up. The program offers financial protections against market fluctuations for dairy producers.

The senators requested the extension to allow dairy producers who may also plant crops enough time to get their crops in the ground, according to [a release](#). They say the extra time is needed for producers to to navigate recent changes made to the program.

“Previous extensions have shown evidence that enrollment grows when the sign-up period is extended,” the bipartisan group of senators wrote in their letter.

A Baldwin spokeswoman applauded the week-long extension, but called on the Trump administration “to extend it for June dairy month.” Baldwin also encouraged Wisconsin producers to take advantage of the extension [on Twitter](#).

The changes producers have to consider include the evaluation of producers' cost on a monthly, instead of bi-monthly, basis; and the exemption of certain producers from fees for catastrophic coverage. The changes were included in the most recent budget bill and were based on feedback from producers. The amount of coverage producers elect to have by Friday will retroactively apply to the first half of 2018.

### **— Baldwin and Johnson have called on the FCC to give local governments more time to evaluate broadband eligibility.**

Both senators signed a letter to FCC Chair Ajit Pai asking the commission to do more outreach to local governments to help them determine whether they may be eligible for broadband funding.

Local governments would have to challenge the FCC for inclusion into the program.

“While you have noted that state, local, and Tribal governments can participate in the challenge process, absent additional direction, they may remain unaware or unprepared to do so,” the bipartisan group of 30 senators [wrote](#).

The senators asked for a 90-day extension to allow for outreach to stakeholders and challengers to collect data for their requests.

**— Johnson is asking the Trump administration to protect the information of donors who give to nonprofit organizations.**

The Oshkosh Republican in a letter to Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and IRS Acting Commissioner David Kautter this week said that forced disclosure of that information “may threaten the freedoms of speech and association.”

[See the letter.](#)

**— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher is calling on House leadership to cancel the August recess, following news this week the Senate is limiting its break over that month.**

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell [announced Tuesday](#) senators are only getting the first week of August off and will be returning to D.C. for the rest of the month stemming from a legislative backlog that he attributed to the “historic obstruction by Senate Democrats of the president’s nominees.”

Gallagher, R-Green Bay, [wrote in a letter](#) to his chamber’s leadership on Wednesday the August recess should be cancelled so the House can work on the 12 annual spending bills it needs to pass by the Sept. 30 fiscal-year deadline in order “to avoid another last-minute funding battle like we encountered in March.”

“The House has yet to complete consideration of any of the twelve annual appropriations bills on the floor. With fewer than forty legislative days until the end of the fiscal year, Congress should remain in Washington until the work is complete,” Gallagher and others wrote. “The House should immediately begin floor consideration of all funding bills, so they can be openly debated through regular order and sent to the U.S. Senate for immediate consideration.”

**— Dem U.S. Reps. Gwen Moore and Mark Pocan are calling for federal anti-discrimination law that explicitly protects LGBT people in light of a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling.**

The call comes after SCOTUS ruled 7-2 Monday in favor of a Christian baker in Colorado who refused to make a wedding cake for a gay couple.

Moore and Pocan on Twitter this week said the decision highlights the need for such legislation.

“Just as businesses can’t refuse service based on race, religion, or gender, they should be held to the same standard when it comes to sexual orientation,” [wrote](#) Pocan, D-Town of Vermont. “Congress must immediately pass the #EqualityAct and ensure that every American has full and equal rights. #OpenToAll.”

Meanwhile, Republicans applauded the ruling.

“Today, religious freedom got a much-needed victory,” U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, [said on Twitter](#).

**— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind has joined the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus, a group looking to enact legislation to address global warming.**

The La Crosse Dem was one of five new House members to join the caucus last month, bringing the group’s total to 78, according to a [recent report from The Hill](#).

The only other Wisconsin House member in the caucus is U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay.

[See the full list of members.](#)

***Posts of the week***

[https://www.instagram.com/p/BjnTWD\\_nTgp/?hl=en&taken-by=repseanduffy](https://www.instagram.com/p/BjnTWD_nTgp/?hl=en&taken-by=repseanduffy)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bjsr7KunEc3/?taken-by=repronkind>

## **ICYMI**

[Top Republican senator predicts China is about to have a larger economy and military than the US](#)

[U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson talks big data privacy, making Wisconsin a tech hub](#)

[Sen. Johnson on Whether Mueller Appointment is Constitutional: 'I'm Not a Constitutional Scholar'](#)

[Tammy Baldwin at convention: Outside groups, billionaires want to 'buy a U.S. Senate seat'](#)

[Tammy Baldwin bashes 'special interests' and rouses Democrats at state party convention](#)

[Baldwin pushed 'Buy American' initiative](#)

[Rep. Ron Kind calls for changes to 2018 Farm Bill](#)

[U.S. Reps. Moore, DeFazio visit rail suppliers in Wisconsin, Oregon](#)

[Marshfield doctor Brian Ewert aims to unseat Sean Duffy in 7th District congressional bid](#)

[2 Democrats Make Primary Ballot To Face Sean Duffy In 7th Congressional District](#)

[Candidates set for Democratic primary, general election in Rep. Sean Duffy's district](#)

[Amid polarized times, U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner town hall draws just one \(very polite\) constituent](#)

[Sensenbrenner agrees Trump could pardon himself, but says it would lead to impeachment](#)