

DC Wrap: Wis. lawmakers react to Ryan's retirement; Baldwin, Johnson grill Facebook founder

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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, April 6-12

No plans to run for anything. And I really don't think I'll change my mind.

- House Speaker Paul Ryan [in an interview with CNN](#) Wednesday following his announcement he won't be seeking re-election this year. The Janesville Republican said he doesn't have plans to run for another office, including president, and wouldn't seek another public office while his kids are growing up.

See the [WisPolitics.com](#) story from Wednesday:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2018/source-ryan-wont-seek-re-election-to-house-seat/>

I don't think we want to take over Syria. But I think the adults in the region, including perhaps Russia, have to step in, not only to prevent this sort of thing from happening in the future but for looking out for our allies.

- U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, [in a WLUK interview](#) Wednesday following a suspected chemical attack in Syria that killed dozens of people. The Syrian government has denied being behind any chemical attack.

Across the state, we have seen how special interests work to line their own pockets and have Wisconsin working families foot the bill. Well, they can't keep on undermining the American Dream.

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, [addressing](#) her re-election bid at the Democratic Party of Wisconsin Founder's Day Dinner on Saturday in Milwaukee.

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This week's news

— House Speaker Paul Ryan drew praise from both sides of the state's congressional delegation following his decision to forgo a re-election bid this fall.

The 48-year-old Janesville Republican announced in a news conference Wednesday morning that he'd be retiring after a nearly 20-year tenure in the House to spend time with his family.

Wisconsin members of both sides of Congress had warm words for Ryan.

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson called Ryan "a person of true integrity."

"He has served Janesville, southeastern Wisconsin and our nation honorably. We should all be grateful for his sacrifice and understand his desire to be a full time Dad," he said.

Madison Dem U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, who served with Ryan in the House, said in a statement the two "know each other well and while we have different views on policy, I consider him a friend and have a lot of respect for him as a person and a public servant."

Meanwhile in Ryan's chamber, U.S Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, [said in a TV interview](#) Ryan's decision not to seek re-election instead of running and later resigning his post underscored his honesty.

"There's certainly congressmen around here that would have been comfortable doing that," he said. "Paul Ryan was not comfortable doing that, which is one of the things that makes him so unique and beloved by his colleagues."

U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, said Ryan “would leave an indelible mark upon this institution” and U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay, called him a “humble public servant who has never once lost sight of his Wisconsin roots and values.”

U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore recalled working together with Ryan as well as sharing “countless flights to and from Wisconsin.”

“As he considers the legacy he will leave in Congress, I hope he finds the courage to put the interests of the American public first,” the Milwaukee Dem said in a statement.

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, called the announcement “a well-deserved break” [in a radio interview](#), but also said the decision signaled Ryan realized “he would’ve had a difficult November.”

“I think the Supreme Court election this spring really solidified I think the reality of Wisconsin and the reality across the country,” Pocan said, referencing liberal Milwaukee County Judge Rebecca Dallet’s victory statewide last Tuesday.

— Both of Wisconsin’s senators grilled Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg during congressional hearings this week on the social media company’s work to address privacy issues.

Republican Sen. Ron Johnson and Dem Sen. Tammy Baldwin both sit on their chamber’s Commerce Committee, which along with the Judiciary Committee held a hearing Tuesday to question the Silicon Valley tech mogul that trailed into Wednesday in the House.

The congressional inquiries come amid increasing concerns over privacy after reports the political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica gained access to data from more than 87 million Facebook accounts.

Baldwin and Johnson asked Zuckerberg a range of questions, from Zuckerberg’s willingness to explore new business models to the company’s efforts to prevent Russian meddling in U.S. elections.

Johnson, R-Oshkosh, mentioned a plan to charge users could be a logical next step if the company were to no longer take advantage of user data to sell advertising.

“There have been a number of proposals of having that data stay with the user and having the user monetize that data themselves. Your COO, Ms. Sandberg, mentioned possibly if you can’t utilize that data to sell advertising, perhaps we’d charge people to go onto Facebook,” Johnson said.

The proposal is one Zuckerberg said he generally opposes because it would potentially freeze out users around the world who aren’t able to pay for the social media platform.

“In general, we believe that the ads model is the right one for us, because it aligns with our social mission of trying to connect everyone and bring the world closer together,” Zuckerberg told Johnson.

In her questioning, Baldwin, D-Madison, highlighted Russian-created Facebook ads targeting Wisconsin during the 2016 election, as well as reports Russian actors used Twitter to divide Milwaukee after a police-involved shooting in August of 2016.

“I find some encouragement in the steps you’ve outlined today to provide greater transparency regarding political ads,” she said. “I do want to get further information on how you can be confident that you have excluded entities based outside of the United States.”

In response to Baldwin’s questioning, Zuckerberg said his company will soon make tracking of political ads much easier.

“You’ll be able to look at all the ads that they’ve run, the targeting associated with each to see what they’re saying to different folks and in some cases how much they’re spending on the ads. More transparency will really help discourse overall, and root out foreign interference in elections,” Zuckerberg said.

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan recently slammed Gov. Scott Walker for committing to send troops to the nation’s southern border, saying the gov is only doing it for political gain.

The Town of Vermont Dem’s comments come after Walker this week applauded President Trump’s “aggressive actions to secure” the border and said he’d commit Wisconsin National Guard troops to the effort.

Walker’s remarks were in response to a letter Pocan sent last week urging Walker to oppose sending troops to the border, writing they should only be asked to leave

their jobs and families for “truly serious and necessary circumstances” and should not be used as “pawns” by Trump.

But Walker in [his response letter to Pocan](#) said he favors placing training facilities along the southern border, calling it a cost-effective way to increase the U.S. military presence there.

“As Governor, I want to ensure the safety of all of our citizens, and I want to reduce access to illegal drugs as part of a comprehensive strategy in dealing with opioid and illegal drug addiction,” Walker wrote. “Therefore, I welcome President Donald Trump’s aggressive actions to secure our nation’s southern border.”

[But Pocan countered](#) Trump’s proposed actions are meant to apprehend migrants, including children, rather than address the flow of drugs from Mexico. He also said Trump is using “desperate, last ditch efforts” to rally political support given the president has not yet succeeded in finding funding for a border wall.

“Arrests at the southern border of the U.S. are at a historic low,” Pocan said. “However, both you and President Trump are refusing to accept the facts and are instead twisting the narrative for political purposes to rally the Republican base.”

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, as well as other Wisconsin Republicans, have applauded the president’s approach.

“The president has a duty to protect American citizens. Securing our borders is a priority of his administration and this committee,” Johnson, R-Oshkosh, [said in a statement](#). “I support the president’s decision to work with border state governors to deploy the National Guard to the southern border. I also look forward to working with the administration to fix the broken system and close legal loopholes that incentivize illegal immigration.”

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, raised \$3.7 million over the first three months of the year for her re-election bid.

[Her campaign said](#) it was the best ever fundraising haul in the first-quarter of an election year for a federal candidate from Wisconsin.

Baldwin’s fundraising helped push her cash on hand to \$7.8 million. Her campaign did not release how much she spent during the the three-month period. But she ended 2017 with just under \$7 million cash on hand. That means she spent about

three-fourths of what she raised.

The period included a TV buy the campaign said in late March would run in four of the state's media markets.

Posts of the week

To everyone who enjoys a [#MadeinWI](#) cold one and to all of our fantastic brewers across Wisconsin, Happy [#NationalBeerDay](#)! Cheers! ☐
pic.twitter.com/NYKqhUOaWc

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [April 7, 2018](#)

Great to hear from a Wisconsin truck driver who just completed his first long-haul job delivering a load of WI [#cheese](#) to California. He contacted us for help getting the federal waiver he needed to take the job. Our state offices can help you cut through federal red tape too.
pic.twitter.com/mgrsWU9nVD

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [April 7, 2018](#)

ICYMI

[Ryan may be forced to leave speakership by summer](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson encouraged by Trump's tweet on missiles](#)

[Democratic Sen. Tammy Baldwin Weighs In As Facebook CEO Testifies Before Congress](#)

[Tammy Baldwin raises more than \\$3.7 million in first quarter in Wisconsin U.S. Senate race](#)

['Unprecedented' outside spending hits Tammy Baldwin, boosts Kevin Nicholson in US Senate race](#)

[Tammy Baldwin lays out campaign themes in speech to state Democrats](#)

[WaPo Gives Baldwin 'Three Pinocchios' for Ad Blaming Factory Closure on Hedge Fund](#)

[Pocan slams Walker for welcoming Trump's 'aggressive actions' on border security](#)

[Rep. Ron Kind touts 'Make it in America' in Eau Claire](#)

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[Winner of 2018 Congressional Art Competition announced](#)

[Kind congressional art contest winners announced](#)

[Connect to Congress: Grothman responds to Syria chemical attack](#)

[U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher: Money spent on foreign aid important to Wisconsin's economy](#)

[Connect to Congress: Gallagher talks China, border security and 'blue wave'](#)

[Duffy supports tax bill, 'unconventional' Trump](#)

[Duffy Weighs in on Issues During Northwest Wisconsin Town Halls](#)