

# DC Wrap: Wisconsin Republicans push for school safety funding; Baldwin backs anti-bullying bills

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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

It's ridiculous, isn't it? It's ridiculous. It's ridiculous that we come up against these fiscal cliffs. It's just ridiculous. This is no way to run a railroad or a government.  
- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, [to CNN](#) on Tuesday as lawmakers waited to see the language for a \$1.3 trillion spending bill they'll vote on this week. Congress has to vote to fund the government by midnight Friday to avoid another government shutdown.

Look, first of all, the special counsel should be free to follow through his investigation to its completion without interference, absolutely. I am confident he will be able to do that. I have received assurances that his firing is not even under consideration. We have a system based upon rule of law in this country. We have a justice system, and no one is above that justice system.  
- House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, [at a news conference](#) this week expressing confidence in special counsel Robert Mueller. Ryan declined to elaborate on who provided him the assurance Mueller's firing isn't being discussed and did not answer if legislation to protect Mueller is something he'd support.

But when you talk about accountability, and the president's reference to the death penalty for drug dealers, let's look at accountability throughout the spectrum. Let's talk about the pharmaceutical companies that produce these addictive opioids that need to be held accountable. Let's talk about the changes that still need to happen within the community that prescribes these drugs to better understand how addictive they can be.  
- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, [in an interview with CNN](#) on how to address the opioid crisis across the country. As part of a plan to address the crisis, President

*Trump on Monday called for invoking the death penalty against traffickers of opioids.*

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

**— Wisconsin House Republicans want to free up federal funding for school safety as state lawmakers are working to pass measures to better safeguard students.**

Among the House Republicans is U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, who's asking for \$5 billion to boost security in every K-12 school across the nation. And U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman is looking to give schools more flexibility in using existing federal dollars for school safety measures.

Duffy, R-Wausau, on Tuesday sent a letter to the leaders of the House Appropriations Committee asking for "no less than \$5 billion" for schools to buy metal detectors or wands and hire additional school safety officers, among other things.

"Our nation's schools are woefully under-secured, and programs to increase school security are underfunded. We must fix that immediately," Duffy [said in a statement.](#)

The call follows a measure the House approved last week to provide more funding for schools and law enforcement to respond to mental health crises.

Grothman, meanwhile, unveiled on Monday the so-called Student and Teacher Safety Act, which would allow schools more flexibility to use existing federal funds for physical safety improvements to their buildings.

Under the Glenbeulah Republican's plan, co-authored by Rep. Karen Handel, R-Ga., schools could also use the funding to improve coordination with local law enforcement and bolster school safety education programs.

"Students and teachers have the right to feel safe in school. But as we unfortunately saw in Florida last month, we still have work to do in preparing schools to properly identify and respond to violent individuals," [Grothman said in a statement](#).

**— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is backing two proposals aimed at better addressing bullying in schools.**

One, called the [Safe Schools Improvement Act](#), would compel schools to report incidents of bullying and harassment to the federal Education Department, implement effective bullying prevention programs and specifically ban bullying.

The other bill, which Baldwin introduced Wednesday, aims to protect public school students from bullying based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

"As multiple federal courts of appeals have recognized, current law is properly understood to protect these young people," [she said in a statement](#). "But with the Trump Administration walking back the federal government's commitment to equality, it is critical that Congress act to eliminate any doubt and ensure these students are protected from discrimination."

**— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson is calling on the Senate to "immediately" pass an updated version of the so-called "right-to-try" bill that cleared the House last night.**

The House last week failed to pass the legislation with the two-thirds majority it needed under the rules for fast-tracked bills. But yesterday, when the body only needed a simple majority, the bill sailed through on a [267-149 vote](#).

"Right to try needs to become the law of the land," Johnson [said in a statement](#). "It passed the Senate unanimously last summer, and I'm disappointed the House didn't pass that bill and send it to the president for his signature. Nonetheless, I plan to ask my colleagues to pass right to try again immediately. Terminally ill patients and

their families have waited long enough.”

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, was the only Wisconsin Dem to join all state Republicans in supporting the bill. Meanwhile, U.S. Reps. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, and Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, voted against it. Speaker Paul Ryan did not vote.

**— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan is one of several Dem lawmakers who have offered to hire former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, who was fired just days before he was set to retire.**

McCabe’s Friday firing left him two days short of being able to receive a full pension, according to national media reports.

Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, [first tweeted the offer](#) after NBC reporter Andrea Mitchell tweeted that a McCabe supporter suggested that “if a friendly member of Congress hired him for a week he could possibly qualify for pension benefits by extending his service the extra days.”

Pocan said it was a legitimate job offer to have McCabe look at election security.

“While Speaker Ryan and House Republicans have become complicit in the President’s destruction of our democracy, we must do all that we can to ensure that the investigation into Russia’s interference in our election is completed and that future elections are safeguarded from these kinds of attacks,” Pocan said.

A Pocan spokesman said his office has communicated with McCabe’s office, but has not yet heard whether McCabe will accept the arrangement.

[See the release.](#)

**— The Wisconsin State Society’s Board of Directors recently announced its 2018 officers.**

Brandon VerVelde is serving as president and Paul Conrad is serving as vice president for special events. VerVelde currently works as press secretary for the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and formerly worked on U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman’s campaign. Conrad currently works as a legal and ethics

advisor for FEMA.

The group is also [hosting a membership meeting](#) Monday at Hamilton's Bar and Grill in D.C.

[See more.](#)

## ***Posts of the week***

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BgbyF6uhjWD/?taken-by=repseanduffy>

A little snow is nothing for a Wisconsin office! Proud to report Team Kind is working through [#WinterStormToby](#), and had great meetings with the Wisconsin Farm Bureau and students from Arcadia High School. ✨  
[pic.twitter.com/kPeCdH2LmV](http://pic.twitter.com/kPeCdH2LmV)

— Archive: Rep. Ron Kind (@RepRonKind) [March 21, 2018](#)

## ***ICYMI***

[Johnson Podcast Features Conversation With James Maggie Megellas](#)

[Sen. Tammy Baldwin's fight to win back Wisconsin for Democrats, explained](#)

[Pride Fund endorses Tammy Baldwin for re-election](#)

[Wisconsin Democrat U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan offers fired FBI deputy director McCabe a job](#)

[Andrew McCabe was just offered a job by a congressman so he can get his full retirement. And it just might work.](#)

[Pocan questions DeVos on guns in schools](#)

[Rep. Kind returns money to taxpayers from annual office budget](#)

[Glenn Grothman announces town halls in Sheboygan area](#)

[Sean Duffy: 'Of course' Democrats will impeach Trump if they regain control in midterms](#)