

# Grothman, Kohl clash on health care, immigration, climate change in first debate

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6th CD Dem Dan Kohl accused opponent Glenn Grothman of voting to effectively abolish protections for pre-existing conditions, while the Republican congressman denied the charge as the two candidates met for their first debate last night.

Kohl and Grothman both said they support providing protections for those with pre-existing conditions. The two also offered similar views on ways to lower the cost of health care.

Still, the candidates differed significantly on issues such as climate change and abortion rights.

Kohl's charge against Grothman over protections for pre-existing conditions put the two in the throes of a health care debate affecting nearly every political race this cycle.

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Specifically, Kohl last night charged Grothman, through his votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act, attempted to “effectively gut protections” for people with pre-existing conditions through a special provision Kohl said would remove limits on what insurance companies could charge those with pre-existing conditions.

“[Republicans] realize it was a political weakness for them, so they tried to cover their flanks when in fact they were voting to remove those kinds of protections,” Kohl said.

But Grothman refuted the charge, as his campaign has done throughout the fall. To

clear the record, he read the text included in the repeal efforts, which he said prevented health insurers from limiting health care access for those with pre-existing conditions.

“I sat in there with Republicans [behind] closed doors before we came up with this. It was almost unanimously agreed that this provision had to be part of Obamacare repeal, and it was,” Grothman said.

Grothman said the free market is the best way to lower the cost of healthcare, specifically through association health plans. Both Grothman and Kohl also said they support reimportation of drugs to lower costs and allowing Medicare and Medicaid to negotiate drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.

On climate change, Grothman railed against imposing regulations to address rising global temperatures, calling them an unfair burden on manufacturers that wouldn't bode well for his political prospects.

“You're saying the congressman with more manufacturing jobs than anywhere else in the country is going to take the lead in putting Wisconsin manufacturers at a disadvantage compared to other places around the globe? I mean that's ridiculous,” Grothman said.

He also criticized international agreements on climate change as unfair to Americans by arguing only the U.S., and not other countries would abide by any economically limiting restrictions imposed.

His comments come as a new report commissioned by the United Nations shows drastic measures must be taken in the next decade to thwart devastating global consequences of rising temperatures this century.

Kohl, however, said “climate change is real,” and said he'd be an advocate for renewable energy initiatives.

“This is one of the most urgent challenges of our century,” he said. “We need to heed the science.”

On other issues:

*Abortion:*

Grothman argued *Roe v. Wade* is not settled law, citing the number of states that still wish abortion were illegal.

“I think Planned Parenthood probably still hasn’t forgiven me for being the author of the 24-hour waiting period bill here in the state of Wisconsin,” Grothman said.

Kohl, on the other hand, said the court decision is settled law and should remain in place.

“These procedures are the most difficult, gut wrenching choices that families make, so I don’t think it is the role of government to interfere with those choices,” Kohl said.

### *Immigration*

Grothman called for securing the nation’s southern border with a wall and increased enforcement. He also said he supports a crackdown on illegal immigration to reduce the resources spent on services for illegal immigrants.

Kohl agreed the nation needs a secure border, but argued for an immigration overhaul to address workforce needs.

### *Tariffs*

Grothman said “some tariffs may be OK,” but balked at tariffs on steel and aluminum, which affect the state’s manufacturers.

Still, the Republican said he gives the president credit for attempting to address America’s trade imbalance with other countries.

Kohl, however, was more broadly opposed to tariffs, though he admitted the country does need to crack down on China.

The Democrat advocated for working with allies to address trade imbalances rather than resorting to proliferating trade wars.

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