

# Kind raises concern about NAFTA impasse, Trump's tariffs

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As NAFTA renegotiations continue to drag on, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind warns a failure to reach an agreement could hurt the United States' deal-making capacity with other nations.

Kind said he was "concerned about the larger message" an impasse could send to the rest of the world.

"If we can't figure out a way to make nice with our two border neighbors, there's not a country in the world that's going to be willing to sit down and talk to the United States of America with any confidence that we're going to be good faith negotiations and trustworthy partners willing to live up to the terms of our agreement," the La Crosse Dem told WisPolitics.com in an interview this week..

National media reports in recent weeks have shown the tri-county talks over the North American Free Trade Agreement have been bogged down as the Trump administration earlier this month missed an informal deadline to get a revamped deal to Congress for approval.

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While Kind supports effort to modernize NAFTA, he also cautioned that if President Trump were to pull out of the deal, the state's dairy industry could be in "extreme jeopardy."

That's because, he said, Mexico is a top dairy export market that if lost would mean Wisconsin farmers would see "even lower milk prices" and the state's greater dairy infrastructure would be endangered.

Kind, who said he's been meeting with Trump's trade team to talk NAFTA, also

raised concerns about the tariffs the administration has imposed, saying the president is “inching us closer and closer to (a) trade war every day.”

Kind also is rebuffing a proposed constitutional amendment that would lay out term limits for members of Congress.

The push, spearheaded by fellow Wisconsin U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, would limit members of the House to six terms and those of the Senate to two terms. President Trump has previously expressed support for the effort.

But while there are many new faces in both chambers, Kind said Congress has “gotten worse” because of the loss of institutional memory surrounding how to broker deals, find common ground and get along with one another.

Roughly one-third of the members of the Senate are in their first term, and Kind said “a majority” of House members have served fewer than three terms.

“It looks good on a bumper sticker — just term limits, throw all the bums out. But we’ve been doing that in the last few elections, with a tremendous amount of turnover and new faces joining Congress. And I submit Congress is getting worse rather than better with the new personalities that are coming to Washington,” said Kind, in Congress since 1997.

Kind also says “things have changed” in his 3rd CD since the 2016 general election when the district backed President Trump.

Pointing to Dem Sen. Patty Schachtner’s win in the special election for the 10th SD in January and liberal leaning Milwaukee County Judge Rebecca Dallet’s victory in the state Supreme Court race, Kind said people in his district “sense that things are not going in the right direction.”

Kind also said constituents in his district were largely concerned over what they saw as the limited economic benefit of Foxconn, adding it’s seen as an example “of southeastern Wisconsin being taken care of and the rest of the state being neglected.”

On the Dem gov race, Kind said he doesn’t see himself endorsing early “given the strengths of so many of these campaigns out there.” But he’s confident in the Dem chances for the seat, saying there’s an “eight year itch” to replace Gov. Scott Walker.

Asked if he would support Nancy Pelosi, of California, as House speaker should Dems win that chamber in November, Kind noted that he voted against her last time, but didn't say whether he'd oppose her again or if he backed any particular Democrat to replace her as leader.

"I think either way, if we pull up short (in November), there's going to be leadership change; if we're in the majority but by a slim majority, there's going to be leadership change," he said.

[Hear the audio.](#)