

DC Wrap: Johnson looks to combat child marriages by closing immigration loophole

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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

Full equality has not been won. We can't confuse progress for victory.

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, touting the "Equality Act" in an [NBC News interview](#) this week. The legislation, which aims to change the 1964 Civil Rights Act to bar discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, was reintroduced this week. While it previously hasn't received a floor vote in Congress, Baldwin is optimistic that if votes were held in both houses, it would pass each. She added if the House passes it, it "will tell us is that the 2020 elections are really important to create and vote for a pro-equality Senate and president."

Understanding the risk of Democrat socialistic tendencies should provide motivation to re-elect Republicans up and down the ballot in November 2020.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, saying voters will get a firsthand look at Dems' "extreme policies" following the party's decision to host the 2020 national convention in Milwaukee. Dem U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, of Milwaukee, said in a [tweet](#) she's "very proud and honored" the city was selected.

I'm afraid that the president is setting us up for another budget border wall fight this fall, which could suck the air out of getting anything done.

- U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, as quoted in [Politico](#). The La Crosse Dem notes Trump's 2020 budget request for more border money and cuts to entitlement programs could harm the process of getting the new USMCA North American trade deal through Congress. He said, "Realistically, if we're going to move it, we're going to have to be serious about pre-August recess." Otherwise, he added, 2020 campaigning

would start and “this thing could just not happen.”

In light of anti-Semitic comments by a certain member of Congress, I voted yes on a House Resolution condemning hatred.

- U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, in a [tweet](#) following the House’s [407-23](#) vote last week on a resolution condemning anti-Semitism, bigotry against Muslims and racism against minorities. All members of the Wisconsin congressional delegation supported the measure, despite D.C. [reports](#) and a [tweet](#) from a Politico reporter showing Grothman and several other lawmakers were listed as a “no” vote during a portion of the voting period before switching to “yes.” Grothman disputed the reports, writing in a [Twitter response](#): “I votes [sic] YES on the resolution and DO condemn hatred.” His office didn’t return a request for comment.



This week’s news

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson is looking to close an immigration loophole that has allowed individuals to bring their child brides to live with them

The legislation follows a [report](#) Johnson’s Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee released in January showing government officials have legally approved thousands of visa petitions from children or their adult partners to join their spouse or fiancé living in the U.S.

Currently, the practice is legal under the Immigration and Nationality Act. But Johnson’s bill would ban spousal and fiancé immigration if one of the applicants is under 18.

“A visa to enter the United States is a privilege, and this straightforward reform will help close a loophole that can lead to the abuse and exploitation of children,” the Oshkosh Republican said in a [statement](#).

The bill is co-authored in the House by U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, who said he’s grateful to Johnson for his efforts “uncovering this disturbing information.”

The report came about after the Senate Homeland Security Committee in 2017 requested the federal data and compiled the information. It showed that between fiscal years 2007 and 2017, more than 8,000 petitions were approved involving an adult's relationship with a minor. Largely, the girls were the younger individual in the marriage or engagement.

"The committee's eye-opening report shows the gruesome reality that people manipulate our immigration system to enter into child marriages," Sensenbrenner said.

By closing the loophole, the legislation also aims to prevent and reduce child sex trafficking, child marriages and sexual abuse, according to the [bill text](#).

[See more on the bill](#).

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is bringing back a bill to nix the carried-interest tax break, criticizing President Trump for failing to close the so-called loophole.

She also called on Trump to "stand by his word" and support her bill after the 2017 GOP tax overhaul law didn't mention the carried-interest tax loophole, which benefits those running a hedge fund or private equity firm.

"I want to see loopholes closed — like the one that favors Wall Street hedge funds and allows them to pay a lower tax rate than many Wisconsin workers," she said in a [statement](#).

Trump on the campaign trail had criticized the measure, [saying](#) "hedge fund guys are getting away with murder."

Baldwin's bill, called the "Carried Interest Fairness Act," targets the tax rate of private equity fund managers' profits, or carried interest. The top tax rate on those capital gains is 23.8 percent, while the ordinary income top tax rate is 37 percent.

The legislation would tax those capital gains at the ordinary income rates.

Baldwin two years ago offered a similar [amendment](#) to the GOP tax overhaul bill to address the loophole, but it was rejected.

— Johnson and Baldwin split over a resolution that cleared the Senate to bar the Trump administration from continuing to support the Saudi-led war in Yemen.

The resolution cleared the chamber on a 54-46 vote, a move that national media outlets are calling a bipartisan [rebuke](#) to President Trump.

The resolution would have to pass the House before heading to Trump's desk.

A previous version that got through that chamber last month included language that denounced anti-Semitism following comments from Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., but it isn't part of the Senate version.

[See the roll call vote.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan slammed Immigration and Customs Enforcement's response to his request for information surrounding raids in the state, saying the agency's reply is "abusive of what FOIA law is."

He also alleged ICE agents "intentionally lied" to Madison-area law enforcement officials by withholding information on the September arrests, based on documents he received from the agency last week that detailed their correspondence with Wisconsin police departments.

The Town of Vermont Dem filed a records request in October with ICE to get more information on the more than 80 individuals the agency apprehended in Wisconsin that fall. Among the information he requested was the contact between ICE officials and local law enforcement, the list of the criminal offenses committed by the detainees, and documentation that protocol was followed when making the arrests.

Pocan said ICE last week provided him with [411 pages of documents](#), of which 294 were fully redacted. While he said the response didn't fully answer his questions and some of his asks were disregarded, it shed some light on the arrests and the agency's operations in the state.

"There's a saying that if you can't dazzle them with brilliance, you baffle them with

bull ... I believe that's what occurred with ICE on this request," he said at a [Capitol news conference](#) this week in Madison.

Pocan, who previously introduced legislation to disband ICE, said the documents show that while there was coordination between ICE officials and local law enforcement in Wisconsin up to six weeks before the raid, there was no communication between the agency and Madison or Dane County law enforcement.

The records, Pocan said, also include a list of the criminal offenses committed by the Wisconsin detainees signified by a code. The list showed at least 39 of the people apprehended in Wisconsin had no criminal history, he said, though he added he's looking to get confirmation from ICE to ensure that's the case.

Going forward, Pocan said he's planning to file an appeal to try to get additional information on the lead-up to the raids, as well as who was caught up in them.

"I am willing to sue over the information I need to get. But I shouldn't have to sue my own government and waste tax dollars to do that," Pocan said. "So I'm going to continue to pursue every other way, but eventually I will be suing in order to get this information as well."

Posts of the week

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BuuW7MQH8xc/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BuxOqIjnvCb/>

ICYMI

[WI senators weigh in on Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee](#)

[How Sen. Tammy Baldwin is making LGBTQ rights part of the 2020 agenda](#)

[‘We need to pass the Equality Act’: Sen. Tammy Baldwin makes case for LGBTQ bill](#)

[Why higher education is vulnerable to corruption \[interview with Baldwin\]](#)

[Ron Johnson praises DNC's Milwaukee choice: ‘First-hand look at Democrats’](#)

[extreme policies'](#)

[Roll Call: Key votes from the Wisconsin congressional delegation this week](#)

[Proposed legislation could help fix doctor shortage in rural areas of Wisconsin](#)

[Wisconsin Congressmen Introduce Bi-Partisan Bill Seeking To Boost Medical Training](#)

[Mark Pocan threatens to sue ICE for additional records related to Wisconsin arrests](#)

[U.S. Rep. Pocan threatens to sue ICE over September sweep records](#)

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