

DC Wrap: WI congressmen call for farming extension; Kind pushes for upping Medicare reimbursement rates

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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

“He’s growing the economy. He’s put my people back to work in Wisconsin. They have higher wages, lower unemployment. We’re killing it in Wisconsin. You want to impeach that guy?”

– U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, R-Weston, said on the possibility of impeachment of President Donald Trump in a fiery back and forth during an interview with MSNBC’s Chris Hayes. [Watch the full interview here.](#)

“Big polluters have so much power in Washington that they not only get the Trump administration to deny science, they get them to roll back progress reducing carbon pollution and ensuring our children have clean air to breathe. #ClimateCosts”

– U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin tweeted in response to the EPA’s rollback on an Obama-era plan limiting coal emissions. [See the tweet here.](#)



This week's news

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, fellow members of the Wisconsin congressional delegation, and a broad bipartisan coalition of federal lawmakers sent a letter to the

U.S. Department of Agriculture requesting a time extension on planting after heavy spring rainfall across the Midwest.

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The letter implored USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue to make an accommodation for Wisconsin farmers that would give farms affected by the weather flexibility for the harvest and grazing of specific crops.

The letter added that in addition to the delays caused wet weather, dairy and livestock farmers across the Midwest are predicting substantial feed shortages this year due to winterkill of alfalfa.

“Farmers still have the opportunity to recover from these challenges and plant crops that will allow them to put up feed for their livestock,” the letter said. “However, USDA regulations are preventing farmers from being able to respond to these difficult growing conditions.”

See the letter:

<https://gallagher.house.gov/sites/gallagher.house.gov/files/3.27.19%20Dairy%20Implementation%20Letter%5B1%5D.pdf>

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, introduced bipartisan legislation to increase Medicare reimbursement rates for rural Wisconsin health care providers.

The Keep Physicians Serving Patients Act of 2019 would adjust the geographic practice cost index to increase the estimated costs of labor and practices expenses in rural areas. The current formula produces lower Medicare payments to rural providers when compared to their urban counterparts.

“Rural communities have unique needs when it comes to health care. Physicians and health systems in rural Wisconsin provide high-quality care, but the flawed Medicare reimbursement formula is harming Wisconsin providers and putting pressure on rural health systems,” Kind said.

The legislation was introduced by Kind along with Reps. Abby Finkenauer, D-Iowa,

Adrian Smith, R-Neb., and Darin LaHood, R-Ill.

— Baldwin also has introduced a bill to restore funding for navigators, which help rural residents and other underserved populations enroll in health insurance.

Since 2017, federal funding for navigator programs has been reduced more than 80 percent, making it harder for state-level organizations to help people secure coverage.

In Wisconsin, that funding drop has significantly diminished resources for Covering Wisconsin and the Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program, two of the state's largest official navigator agencies. Because of the loss of federal support, in-person navigator assistance services have been cut in the Fox Valley region, Kenosha and Racine County, as well as rural southwestern, northern and western counties and other areas.

The ENROLL Act was introduced alongside U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, a Pennsylvania Democrat. It would allocate \$100 million in annual funding for the program, and would also require that states have at least two navigator programs located in the state, including one "community-based organization."

Covering Wisconsin is backing the new legislation along with more than 60 health care and patient advocacy groups around the country.

See the release:

<http://www.baldwin.senate.gov/press-releases/baldwin-casey-introduce-enroll-act>

See the bill text:

http://www.baldwin.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/ENROLL%20Act_%20Baldwin%20Casey.pdf

See a previous story on navigator funding in Wisconsin:

<http://www.wisbusiness.com/2018/navigator-program-director-hopeful-about-enrollment-numbers/>

Posts of the week

Remembering when kids and I were young. [#HappyFathersDay2019](#)
[#throwback pic.twitter.com/vB89TyOFhg](#)

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [June 16, 2019](#)

Great seeing you today and talking about ways we can continue to combat climate change and protect Wisconsin's natural heritage for future generations to come! <https://t.co/iKNk5rwGei>

— Archive: Rep. Ron Kind (@RepRonKind) [June 12, 2019](#)

Ran into state Rep [@BobKulp](#) this morning on my run to Menards. Great minds think alike! [pic.twitter.com/vPOjafpIRd](#)

— Sean Duffy (@SeanDuffyWI) [June 15, 2019](#)

During [#JuneDairyMonth](#), there's no better place to be than the Watertown Agri-Business Club Dairy Breakfast! [pic.twitter.com/lvrgAoFyT3](#)

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [June 15, 2019](#)

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