

DC Wrap: Kind joins WI House Dems in impeaching Trump

Posted on Thursday, Dec 19, 2019

Welcome to our weekly DC Wrap, where we write about Wisconsin's congressional delegation. Sign up [here](#) to receive the newsletter directly.

Note: This will be the last DC Wrap this year. The product will return Jan. 9. Happy holidays!

Quotes of the week

"We're here because the majority caucus, the Democratic caucus, has been hijacked by the radical left. They have wanted to reverse the course of the 2016 election ever since Donald Trump won that election."

-U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls in a floor speech before Wednesday night's votes on two articles of impeachment against Trump.

"Elections are the appropriate venue for public policy disputes. However, we're not talking about a public policy dispute. We're talking about a president who subverted national security by soliciting foreign interference in our elections — the exact thing our founding fathers feared and the exact circumstance for which they drafted the impeachment clause."

-U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee in a floor speech refuting the allegation that Dems are using impeachment to overturn the 2016 election.

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**



This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind joined the Wisconsin House delegation's two other Dems in voting for articles of impeachment charging President Trump abused his office and obstructed congressional investigations.

The two measures passed on a largely party-line vote with the state's four House Republicans joining two Dems and all 195 of their GOP colleagues present in the chamber in voting against recommending Trump's removal from office for abusing his power. A third Dem voted against the obstruction charge, while Michigan Independent U.S. Rep. Justin Amash supported both articles and U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, D-Hawai'i, voted present on both.

Kind was the only member of the delegation — and one of only three in the House — who did not announce how he intended to vote ahead of yesterday evening's roll calls.

But in a statement released shortly after the votes, Kind said Trump's dealings with Ukraine amounted to "a flagrant abuse of constitutional power" that "jeopardized our national security."

"My vote today was not about the President himself—more importantly, it was about defending the rule of law, our Constitution, and what signal we send future presidents of what is acceptable behavior," he said. "If any president—Democrat or Republican—had committed these offenses, I would have reached the same conclusion."

Each of the Republican members of the delegation had previously come out in opposition to impeachment. U.S. Reps. Jim Sensenbrenner, R-Menomonee Falls, and Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, both gave floor speeches ahead of vote denouncing impeachment. Sensenbrenner labeled the move a politically motivated "charade" while Grothman said impeachment was motivated by Dems' disdain for the president.

After the votes, fellow Republican U.S. Reps. Mike Gallagher and Bryan Steil released statements denouncing the move by the House's Dem majority.

"The House should get to work on issues impacting Americans: tackling the rising costs of health care, securing our border, and addressing our national debt," said

Steil, R-Janesville,

Gallagher, R-Green Bay, knocked House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, saying the California Dem “rushed this process, moved the goal posts, and failed to live up to her own words about the gravity of impeachment.”

“The fact that the bipartisan vote was actually against impeachment should come as no surprise given this flawed process and lack of clear evidence,” he said.

But U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, countered the move to impeach Trump “sets the precedent for all future presidents—Democrat or Republican.”

“In his long life, Donald J. Trump has never been held accountable for his actions,” Pocan said. “Today, Democrats sent a clear signal to this president and all future presidents: No one is above the law.”

See the final votes:

<http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2019/roll695.xml>

<http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2019/roll696.xml>

See Kind’s statement:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2019/u-s-rep-kind-votes-for-articles-of-impeachment/>

See Steil’s statement:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2019/u-s-rep-steil-votes-against-impeaching-president-trump/>

See Gallagher’s statement:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2019/u-s-rep-gallagher-a-state-of-perpetual-impeachment-must-not-become-the-new-normal/>

See Pocan’s statement:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2019/u-s-rep-pocan-a-vote-that-sets-the-precedent-for-all-future-presidents/>

— The Wisconsin House delegation split on a pair of spending packages totaling \$1.4 billion that would fund the government through fiscal year 2020.

One of the so-called “minibuses” contained eight of the 12 required spending bills, including measures that would fund 11 different agencies and congressional operations. The other four-bill package would fund the departments of Defense and Homeland Security, among other things.

All four Wisconsin House Republican voted against both. According to U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, both packages contained too many provisions.

“I hate to break it to you, but no one has read these bills,” the Green Bay Republican said in a release.

But U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, split with the delegation’s two other Dems — U.S. Reps. Gwen Moore of Milwaukee and Mark Pocan of Vermont.

Kind voted for the package funding DOD and DHS and against the larger measure, while Moore and Pocan both voted in the opposite direction: against the DOD and DHS appropriations and for the larger package.

In a statement after the floor votes, Kind said the larger appropriations package was fiscally irresponsible and noted lawmakers were given less than 24 hours to read the near 1,800-page text.

“This package will skyrocket our national debt—jeopardizing the future of Social Security and Medicare, failing to prepare for the 70 million Baby Boomers who are beginning their retirement, and saddling future generations with massive debt because Congress keeps passing bills that aren’t paid for,” he said.

That measure ultimately passed 297-120 with the support of 218 Dems, including Moore and Pocan, and 79 Republicans.

But both Moore and Pocan were among the one-third of the House Dem caucus that broke ranks and voted against the package containing DOD and DHS funding. The party’s progressive and Hispanic caucuses cited President Trump’s “immoral” immigration policies and “unchecked” military spending.

In a tweet after the votes, Pocan said he could not support funding Trump’s “border wall, his family separation policies & child detention centers.”

“We must fund the government without funding hate,” he said.

A Kind spokeswoman declined to comment on his vote for the second minibus.

See the roll call:

<http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2019/roll689.xml>

<http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2019/roll690.xml>

See Gallagher's release:

<https://gallagher.house.gov/media/press-releases/gallagher-no-one-has-read-these-bills>

See Pocan's tweet:

<https://twitter.com/remarkpocan/status/1207022522438496256>

See Kind's statement:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2019/u-s-rep-kind-statement-on-the-passage-of-the-omnibus-appropriations-act-2/>

— U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, however, was pleased to see his drug pricing legislation pass as a provision tacked onto the appropriations packages.

The measure will allow generic drug companies to take court action against name-brand pharmaceutical companies that refuse to release samples of their drugs. It also aims to streamline the FDA's generic drug approval process.

"While I'm disappointed that Congress has passed up another opportunity to get our fiscal house in order, I am glad that Americans will have better access to more affordable medications," Sensenbrenner said in a release.

See Sensenbrenner's release:

<https://sensenbrenner.house.gov/press-releases-statements?ID=4C9434C9-C054-4885-B038-0555A9102E41>

— Across the aisle, Moore and Kind voted to support legislation that would allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.

“Big Pharma has reaped profits off the backs of hard working Americans by imposing exorbitant price tags that they cannot justify,” Moore said in a release. “Today, we’re standing up to Big Pharma to rein in their price-gouging.”

The bill would make available the newly negotiated prices to those with private insurance as well as Medicare recipients, while also capping maximum drug prices in relation to the average price in countries similar to the U.S.

Further measures in the bill include a cap on out-of-pocket costs for Medicare Part D recipients, and an extension of dental, vision and hearing coverage to seniors with Medicare.

“Today’s vote brings us one step closer to relieving the burden of prescription drug prices for thousands of Wisconsinites, and millions of Americans. I am proud to vote for a bill that will help level the playing field so folks can pay fair prices for the prescription drugs they need without sacrificing other necessities,” Kind said in a release.

Pocan joined his Dem colleagues in support of the legislation, while all members of Wisconsin’s Republican House delegation voted against the measure.

U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman spoke out against the bill, saying it would limit access to new treatment innovations. He also slammed House Dems for not working to pass a previous Republican-proposed drug pricing bill.

“Why are you not passing a bill that would collect the vast majority of Republicans in the House and has a good chance of passing the Senate and being signed by President Trump?” the 6th CD Republican said in his floor statement.

The Dem-proposed drug pricing bill now awaits approval from the Senate.

See Moore’s release:

<https://gwenmoore.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=4415>

See Kind’s release:

<https://kind.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-ron-kind-votes-pass-landmark-legislation-lower-cost-prescription>

See Grothman’s statement:

<https://twitter.com/RepGrothman/status/1205586472755245056>

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher joined colleagues in the House to promote legislation that would withhold pay for members of Congress if they fail to pass a federal budget.

This came after last year's government shutdown, which lasted a record 35 days. According to Gallagher, any passage of a budget at this point in the legislative session will be "jammed through at the last second."

"It seems like every year around this time, Congress creates a crisis for itself," Gallagher said in a video address to his Twitter followers.

In a letter to House and Senate leaders, the bipartisan group of lawmakers outlined a provision that would prevent members of Congress from getting paid if a federal budget hasn't yet been passed.

"Withholding paychecks from Members of Congress who fail to pass appropriations is an important step to prevent government shutdowns, which hurt the economy and millions of everyday Americans. But it's also an important step to promote fiscal responsibility," the letter reads.

See the letter:

<https://gallagher.house.gov/sites/gallagher.house.gov/files/12.13.19%20-%20No%20Budget%20No%20Pay.pdf>

See Gallagher's statement:

<https://twitter.com/RepGallagher/status/1205214237636923392?s=20>

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil urged lawmakers on the House Foreign Affairs Committee to pass legislation he authored to combat human trafficking.

The bill addresses financing practices used in the existing Trafficking in Persons Report, an assessment that surveys the efforts of foreign governments to eliminate human trafficking and determines the amount of U.S. aid given to each country. Steil's bill would develop a more comprehensive TIP financial assessment.

"Right now, countries that receive U.S. aid have no responsibility to report their

efforts to prevent money laundering from human trafficking,” Steil said during his testimony.

The Janesville Republican noted the prevalence of human trafficking in all areas of the world, including in Wisconsin.

“We can change this. We must follow the money. And while this bill may be a simple change, it will have a global impact on how countries combat human trafficking,” Steil said.

See Steil’s statement:

<https://steil.house.gov/media/press-releases/steil-urges-colleagues-take-action-anti-human-trafficking-legislation>

Posts of the week

In our office, strong the Christmas spirit is. <pic.twitter.com/Is8Qr3EJrc>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [December 16, 2019](#)

Congratulations [@BadgerVB](#) on a big win! I'll be cheering you on in the Championship! <https://t.co/yjwJmLwik7>

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

I had the pleasure of attending 51 parades during this past year! It was fantastic meeting so many of you at these great events and I'm looking forward to an even better 2020. <pic.twitter.com/uheAZ0ZjYD>

— Glenn Grothman (@GrothmanforWI) [December 14, 2019](#)

Thank you to our amazing fall interns, Shukri, Julia, Delilah, and Alexis. Each of them worked incredibly hard in our D.C. office this semester. I can't wait to see what they accomplish in the future!

pic.twitter.com/StzYKsaKaG

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [December 16, 2019](#)

Had an early start to the day in Kenosha this morning.

pic.twitter.com/HldhgzoOoOw

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [December 13, 2019](#)

ICYMI

[Rep. Mark Pocan On Prescription Drug Pricing Bill](#)

[Where Wisconsin's congressional delegates were when Clinton was impeached](#)

[Connect to Congress: Rep. Gallagher talks impeachment, trade and North Korea](#)

[Sens. Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson recommend new judicial nominees for district court vacancy](#)

[Wisconsin's House members prepare for historic impeachment vote](#)

[Demonstrators push for Trump's impeachment in Milwaukee outside Ron Johnson's office on eve of House vote](#)

[Sen. Baldwin on oath senators will make as impeachment jurors](#)