

DC Wrap: Kind touts ranking as Wisconsin's most bipartisan House member

Posted on Thursday, Mar 21, 2019

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

The men and women of the Wisconsin National Guard deserve an environment free of sexual harassment and assault and I believe an impartial outside review of past actions, current protocols and future improvements is the best way to meet that objective.

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, in a [letter](#) calling for a review of the Guard's sexual assault and harassment policies. Gov. Tony Evers also sent a similar [letter](#) last week to the National Guard Bureau's Office of Complex Investigations. A Wisconsin National Guard spokesman said the Guard will provide the office any information their officials ask for and that he looks "forward to the opportunity to work together toward continuous improvement."

You can't milk an almond, and the FDA must clarify and enforce the definition of milk that's already on the books, that milk comes from cows. Wisconsin dairy farmers and consumers across the country deserve this important clarification.

- U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, R-Wausau, [touting his bill](#) that would require the Food and Drug Administration to change how non-dairy beverages are labeled. The legislation is also backed by Baldwin.

The rollout of the Green New Deal didn't go very well. But the aspirational goal of recognizing the danger of climate change is something that we need to recognize and work toward.

- U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, [as quoted in an NBC News article](#). Kind's comments came at a town hall in his district after voters called on him to back the Green New Deal. Kind declined to endorse it.



This week's news

— Dem U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, calling himself an “independent voice in Congress,” is touting his recent ranking as the state’s most bipartisan House member.

[The Bipartisan Index](#), from the Lugar Center and Georgetown University’s McCourt School of Public Policy, ranks all members of Congress based on how frequently a member introduces bills that get sponsors from the opposite party, and how often they co-sponsor legislation from the other side of the aisle.

Kind, D-La Crosse, has ranked in the top 25 of all House members since the index’s launch in 2015. Over that time, Kind has consistently finished first among the state’s congressional delegation.

For the length of the entire 115th Congress from 2017-18, he ranked 18th. His ranking for the first year of the session was 21st, according to [last year’s table](#).

Kind in a statement pledged to “continue to put politics aside to find solutions to the problems Wisconsinites face.”

“Back here in Wisconsin, I often hear about how fed up people are with the gridlock and dysfunction in Washington,” he said in a [statement](#). “I’m fed up too, which is why I work to bridge the gap between Democrats and Republicans and work together to get the job done.”

The other Wisconsin House members received the following rankings: U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, 57th; U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, 156th; U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, 210th; U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, 339th; U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, 365th; and U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, 379th.

Former House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, was excluded from the ranking.

[In the Senate](#), U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, ranked 51st, while U.S. Sen.

Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, was 62nd.

— The feds could move money from Dane County's Truax Field and Monroe County's Fort McCoy to cover wall funding along the southern border.

That's according to a list from the Department of Defense that shows almost \$6.8 billion in projects across the country that could have their funding diverted or delayed following President Trump's national emergency declaration.

The [list](#), posted by U.S. Sen. Jack Reed, D-RI, includes \$23 million for construction of a new training barracks at Fort McCoy and \$8 million for a small arms range at Truax. The lists shows the funding would be awarded in January 2020 and March 2020, respectively.

Trump in mid-February issued the declaration in order to go around Congress to fund a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. Both the House and Senate voted to overturn the move, but Trump last week vetoed the measure. It's unlikely Congress will override it, per national media reports.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, who supported the resolution to block Trump's action, said in a statement the Constitution mandates Trump can't "spend money on whatever he wants" unilaterally.

"This is clear misuse of funding appropriated by Congress and the President should not be diverting investments in military readiness, because it will make us less safe," she said in a statement from her office.

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson said he's worked to convince Trump and others in the Senate "to fix our broken immigration system" and address the "growing humanitarian crisis," in part by looking to secure the border.

The Oshkosh Republican was among the GOP senators who voted against the resolution on the floor.

"If Democrats in Congress do their job and work with Republicans to pass appropriation bills on time, all construction projects should proceed on schedule," he added, according to a statement his office provided.

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind is bringing back his bill to require members of Congress put any unused office funds toward paying down the national debt.

The bill comes as Kind announced he's returning [nearly \\$108,000](#) to the U.S. Treasury from his own budget for that cause.

In all, the La Crosse Dem says he's returned nearly \$2 million to the Treasury since first winning election to the House in 1996.

Kind's bill, which is cosponsored by Republican U.S. Rep. David Schweikert, of Arizona, would codify that practice across both chambers. The leftover funding from each member's budget could be used for debt or deficit reduction.

Calling the effort "the fiscally responsible thing to do," Kind in a [statement](#) last week said the approach should be taken by every office.

"Now more than ever, we need to re-instill a sense of fiscal responsibility in Congress," he said. "I want to lead by example, which is why every year - with the help of my staff - I find savings in my office budget and return our unused funds to the U.S. Treasury to pay down our National debt."

— U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner is again attempting to modernize one part of the Voting Rights Act.

The Menomonee Falls Republican [reintroduced](#) his "Voting Rights Amendment Act" this week, which aims to tweak the current law by instituting an updated and constitutional practice by which to judge whether states are in compliance.

Sensenbrenner in a [statement](#) called for passing his bill before the next election.

"The right for each legal voter to cast a ballot is sacred, and we must restore and modernize the Voting Rights Act before the next election," he said. "I am proud to have twice led bipartisan efforts to reauthorize one of the most significant civil rights laws in American history and will continue to fight to ensure that every eligible individual who wishes to cast a ballot can do so."

— U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, has a new press secretary.

That's Jeanette Lenoir, who previously worked in the House from 2003 to 2005, before serving as an anchor, reporter, producer and radio talk show host for various companies.

She replaces Libbie Wilcox, who left Moore's office to work as the press secretary and digital director to U.S. Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, D-NY.

[See Lenoir's LinkedIn page.](#)

Posts of the week

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCitE8n4nU/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BvAir4PH4Jq/>

ICYMI

[National emergency declaration could divert funds from Truax Field](#)

[Tony Evers, Tammy Baldwin demand review of Wisconsin National Guard sex assault policies](#)

[Senator Tammy Baldwin Celebrates Sherman Phoenix's Success During Visit with Business Owners](#)

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

[Baldwin, Duffy push for legislation to change labeling on non-dairy products](#)

[Congressmen Mike Gallagher and Mark Pocan discuss the importance of unity at History Museum in Appleton](#)

[Steil: 'My vote won't change' on national emergency declaration](#)

[Steil announces veterans fellowship program](#)

[Congressman Bryan Steil fields Lake Geneva questions](#)

[Rep. Bryan Steil on his first few months in office](#)

[Gwen Moore Opposes “so-called” Workforce Democracy and Fairness Act, Supports Work Rights](#)

[Midwest voters in Trump country face historic floods and call for climate action](#)

[La Crosse area residents want Rep. Ron Kind’s ear on climate action, health care](#)