

DC Wrap: New House committee assignments shaping up

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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

If we do that, it's going to go to court and the wall won't get built.

– U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, in an [interview](#) with CNN's Jake Tapper where he said he'd "hate to see" President Trump declaring a national emergency in order to get funding for a wall on the nation's southern border. Instead, Johnson said Trump and the GOP should "keep pressure on Democrats to actually come to the negotiating table in good faith and fund what they've supported in the past."

We're just trying to find a way to get government to reopen, to be adults, and then we'll continue to talk about the wall. But again there's no reason to have a wall.

– U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, on "UpFront with Mike Gousha," produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com. Pocan said there are "so many other solutions that aren't 11th century solutions that would work" rather than putting money into a border wall. [See more at WisPolitics.com.](#)



This week's news

— **New House committee assignments are starting to take shape for members of the state's congressional delegation.**

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They include U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, [who was appointed](#) to the House Ways and Means Committee, and freshman U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, [who was tapped](#) to serve on the House Financial Services Committee.

Moore, D-Milwaukee, touted the nomination in a [statement](#) last week, pledging to push for legislation to benefit “struggling women and children” to help them escape poverty, fair trade and taxation policies and more.

“Millions of Americans struggle every day just to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. In a country as rich as ours, this cannot stand. It has long been said that we need a moral revival,” she said. “Today, I am bringing that revival to the Ways and Means Committee.”

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, is the only other Wisconsin member on the panel.

Meanwhile, Steil said his appointment to the Financial Services Committee means he can work on issues ranging from student loan debt to workforce development and more.

“This committee assignment gives me an important opportunity to address these issues. I will work to ensure the American dream is within reach of everyone; in particular, making sure individuals are able to buy their own home,” he said in a statement. “We must continue to invest in Southeast Wisconsin so we can provide higher wages for workers.”

Moore and U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy both served on the committee last session. A Duffy spokesman said the Wausau Republican will continue to be on the panel this session.

After each party’s steering committee makes recommendations for committee assignments, the names are forwarded to the full caucus and then sent to the House following approval. The chamber then votes on the resolutions to make the assignments official, according to the Congressional Research Service.

— Steil will have swearing-in ceremonies in Racine and Janesville on Sunday, his office said.

The events are set for [Racine's Memorial Hall](#) and the [Janesville Constituent Services Center](#).

— U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner won't be needing any further operations following a recent hip replacement surgery, his office said.

The Menomonee Falls Republican had surgery Jan. 10 at Mt. Vernon Hospital in Alexandria, Va., and will be recuperating and undergoing rehab for “several weeks,” according to a past [statement](#).

The operation comes after Sensenbrenner, 75 and the dean of the state's congressional delegation, tripped over a coiled power cord and broke his hip six years ago while attending a fair in Butler, Wis.

He then had surgery, which a spokesman described as “a temporary fix,” adding Sensenbrenner knew he'd need another operation again in the future.

The spokesman said there isn't a “definitive timetable” for Sensenbrenner's rehab, but he'll be able to fully resume his job duties once doctors clear him.

— Sensenbrenner this week also reintroduced his bipartisan “Disability Integration Act.”

The legislation would build on the 1990 “Americans with Disabilities Act” and a subsequent Supreme Court case in 1999 by beefing up protections for those with disabilities and ensuring states fully comply with both.

“There is much work to be done to strengthen laws to protect individuals with disabilities,” Sensenbrenner said in a [statement](#), adding the bill would ensure those with disabilities “have equal rights and opportunities.”

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson is sponsoring a bill to pay essential federal employees as the shutdown officially became the longest in U.S. history.

The bill would appropriate funding to let federal agencies — including those at the Commerce, Homeland Security, Interior, State, Transportation and Treasury departments — pay employees that are working during the shutdown.

The bill, co-sponsored by Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, would provide pay to an estimated 420,000 employees.

“The least a dysfunctional Washington, D.C. can do is pay the people we are requiring to work during this shutdown to keep our nation and our homeland safe and secure,” said Johnson, R-Oshkosh, in a [statement](#) last week.

— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman was one of seven House members to oppose a bill to guarantee federal employees impacted by the shutdown receive back pay.

The bill, which cleared the Senate Jan. 10 with unanimous support, was taken up in the House last Friday and passed [on a vote of 411-7](#). All other Wisconsin House members supported the legislation, although U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, who is recovering from a hip replacement, did not vote.

The legislation would provide back pay to all federal workers, regardless of whether they're currently working without pay or not.

Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, said in a [statement](#) Congress should instead consider his “No Work Without Pay Act,” which would provide pay immediately for federal employees forced to work during the shutdown.

“If Congress really intends to pay people whether they work or not, they should simply have them work,” he said.

The Dem-controlled House has not yet taken up the bill.

— Grothman has also introduced a bill this week seeking to end so-called

“sanctuary cities.”

The bill targets local governments who protect those that are living in the country illegally by passing local ordinances obstructing enforcement of federal immigration laws.

Under the [legislation](#), any city or county with laws or ordinances that violate federal immigration law would be ineligible for federal grant dollars, among other things.

“It is time we held states accountable for disobeying federal immigration laws and harboring illegal immigrants who sometimes turn out to be criminals themselves,” he said in a [statement](#).

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is again sponsoring a bill that would beef up lobbying rules, prohibit government workers from taking private-sector bonuses and more.

The bill, called the “Executive Branch Conflict of Interest Act,” builds off the bill Baldwin first introduced in 2015.

“When Wall Street insiders, corporate executives and long-term industry lobbyists move through the revolving door from the private sector to public service and back again, they should not be rewarded with big bonuses and a free pass to rewrite the rules to benefit corporate special interests that already have too much power in Washington,” the Madison Dem said in a [statement](#).

Posts of the week

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BsgF3LIHZ9W/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BsoWTi0HSH4/>

ICYMI

[Senator Tammy Baldwin on who’s responsible for the partial government shutdown](#)

[Ron Johnson would 'hate to see' a national emergency](#)

[Ron Johnson introduces bill to fund essential government positions](#)

[GOP Sen. Ron Johnson: "Would Hate To See" Trump Declare A National Emergency](#)

[Maclver Newsmakers Podcast: Ron Johnson Talks Shutdown And Paying Federal Workers](#)

[GOP senator: National emergency won't get wall built](#)

[Congressman Sean Duffy On The New Reality TV Style Politicians](#)

[Blame for government shutdown follows partisan lines](#)

[With Democratic majority, House GOP gets taste of riding in back seat, some for first time](#)

[Ongoing government shutdown impacting some agencies in central Wisconsin](#)

[Rep Kind says it's a farm crisis](#)

[Glenn Grothman is one of seven House members to vote against back pay for federal workers](#)