

DC Wrap: Pocan calls on Ed Secretary DeVos to resign

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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

For two years, Senate Democrats have engaged in unprecedented obstruction of hundreds of President Trump's nominations and made Washington more dysfunctional than it already was.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, justifying his support of a Senate vote to change its rules and decrease debate time on certain nominees to two hours from the current 30. Johnson, calling the change "long-overdue," said in a statement the new rule "will help ensure the Senate is able to tackle the enormous challenges that face America." The effort failed 51-48; it needed 60 votes to advance. U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, voted against it. [See the roll call vote.](#)

There's a failure to understand how one's actions impact others.

- Baldwin, D-Madison, as quoted in a [Politico](#) story highlighting Democratic lawmakers' response to former VP and potential presidential candidate Joe Biden over his past interactions with women.

Honored to sign to protect the most vulnerable in our society. #LetUsVote

- U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy, R-Wausau, tweeting his support for a GOP-introduced discharge petition to force a vote that would require doctors to standardize the care they give between infants who survive an abortion attempt and those who weren't involved in the procedure. The petition would need 218 signatures to bring the legislation to the House floor.



This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan is urging Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to resign, slamming her as “fully unfit” to lead the federal agency.

The Town of Vermont Dem in a column this week wrote while DeVos has been at the helm of the department, students have been neglected. He said DeVos should vacate her post and “a committed educational professional” to take over.

“Given her continued failure of leadership, it is time for Betsy DeVos to step down from her role and allow a committed educational professional to stand up for our nation’s students, teachers, and administrators and support public education,” he wrote.

The op-ed comes after Pocan last week was featured in media coverage for his questioning of DeVos in a House Appropriations subcommittee hearing over the Education Department’s proposed \$18 million cut in federal funding for Special Olympics. DeVos during the exchange called the Special Olympics as “an awesome organization” and said the agency “had to make some difficult decisions with this budget.”

Later in the week, following backlash over the plan, President Trump pledged to fund the Special Olympics.

Pocan in his piece said when Trump first nominated DeVos “there were many red flags,” including that DeVos lacked public education experience. And over the time she’s been in charge of the department, Pocan continued, “DeVos has repeatedly failed to serve students in America’s public schools.”

“More than two years into the Trump administration, the damage that is being done by the Department of Education will cause lasting, lifelong effects for millions of students and their families,” he wrote.

[See Pocan’s op-ed.](#)

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin has introduced a bipartisan bill aiming to bolster family caregivers.

The bill, backed by GOP U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, of Maine, would allocate tens of millions of dollars for the Lifespan Respite Care program, which supports full-time caregivers.

Specifically, the bill would authorize \$20 million over the next fiscal year for the program, followed by \$10 million each year until it reaches \$60 million in FY 2024.

“The work of caregivers can also be emotionally and physically challenging so we need to do more to support them,” Baldwin, D-Madison, said in a [statement](#). “This legislation will help ensure continued funding for the Lifespan Respite Care Program so that our family caregivers can access the support and relief they need.”

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind is looking to safeguard the state’s access to the Mexican trade market in light of President Trump’s threats to close the southern border.

In a [letter](#) to Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue this week, Kind this week urged him to take into account “the potential harm caused by closing the southern border against farming communities in Wisconsin” when discussing the issue with Trump.

“The success of our rural economy should never be dependent on the whims of the president and the consequences of his tweets,” the La Crosse Dem said in a [statement](#).

— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman defended his vote against naming a post office for a former Democratic congresswoman, saying they should instead be named after “the great men and women who have made real sacrifices for our country.”

The Glenbeulah Republican was one of seven House GOP members to vote against the resolution this week after former U.S. Rep. Louise Slaughter and her husband Bob passed away.

Grothman in a [statement](#) called Slaughter “a nice, kind woman who was enjoyable to work with.” But he slammed the congressional tradition of naming post offices after members of Congress, saying those individuals “are well-compensated and do

not risk their lives for our country.”

“I have no problem with naming post office boxes after our veterans who have given up so much to help keep us free,” he said. “It’s a nice remembrance for them and their families and reminds our young people of the huge sacrifices that have been for our country.”

Grothman last session [voted “present”](#) on an identical resolution, which didn’t get taken up in the Senate before the session ended.

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil has joined the bipartisan Trauma-Informed Care Caucus in the U.S. House.

Fellow GOP U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher launched the caucus, an effort spearheaded by former First Lady Tonette Walker.

The caucus aims to spread awareness in Congress of trauma-informed care.

[See the release.](#)

— Steil this week also highlighted his first three months in Congress, writing he’s learned “by cutting through the dysfunction,” being solutions-oriented and listening to his constituents, “I can achieve results for Southeast Wisconsin.”

The freshman Republican from Janesville in an [op-ed](#) in The Journal Times also touted the six listening sessions and two telephone town halls he’s held so far, as well as his work to help a woman get Medicare assistance for her husband.

“I came to Washington ready to work with my colleagues and focus on solving the issues facing the First District,” he wrote.

Posts of the week

It's a great honor to receive the Policy Maker of the Year award from Raliance, a group dedicated to protecting victims and stopping sexual violence in an age of heightened assaults and victimization. I'm proud to support their work. 🙏🙏🙏 pic.twitter.com/ValEziaanV

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [April 3, 2019](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BvpBcvJnZ6Q/>

ICYMI

[Senator Ron Johnson sides with Trump, calls border “out of control”](#)

[Senate Homeland Security chairman blames DACA and court decisions for staggering border surge](#)

[Senator Tammy Baldwin working on legislation after Call 4 Action story](#)

[Senator Tammy Baldwin stops at Marshfield Clinic in Weston](#)

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

[Congressman Kind talks health care, flooding and farming](#)

[Steil, other Wisconsin House members advocate for SeniorCare](#)