

# DC Wrap: House to take up bill to pump \$310B more into Paycheck Protection Program

Posted on Thursday, Apr 23, 2020

**Welcome to our weekly DC Wrap, where we write about Wisconsin's congressional delegation. Sign up here to receive the newsletter directly: <https://forms.gle/YLYZtjWHPSt24HhZ7>**

## **Quotes of the week**

"It's time for us in Congress to go back to work. I can think of no more essential business than us trying to help our constituents in this time of crisis."

*-U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher on Fox News discussing Congress's current recess.*

"Here's the reality, the state has received almost nothing from FEMA. The bottom line is we can't reopen Wisconsin until we get our testing capacity up."

*-U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan on FEMA's response to requests from the Wisconsin government for additional PPE.*

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## **This week's news**

**— The House is scheduled today to take up a Senate-passed measure to provide over \$480 billion in additional coronavirus relief, with over \$310 billion going toward the Paycheck Protection Program.**

The bill passed by voice vote in the Senate after the \$350 million initially allotted for the PPP ran out in just two weeks.

Lawmakers have been grappling with how to best replenish the small-business loan program. Republicans, led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, have pushed for a measure targeted specifically toward providing PPP funding. But Dems countered with a package featuring more dollars for healthcare providers and state and local governments.

The deal that ultimately passed the Senate includes additional funding for hospitals and testing Dems fought for but doesn't provide more funding for states and cities struggling financially during the crisis.

In an interview with Fox News on Wednesday, U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher said the rate which the Small Business Administration had distributed money through the PPP was unprecedented.

"We have gone through 14 years worth of SBA loans in just 14 days just to give a sense of the need that's out there for our small business," the Green Bay Republican said.

Still, he called for "substantive improvements" to the program, including disincentives for healthy businesses to apply.

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson proposed limiting loan forgiveness for certain businesses that accessed the Paycheck Protection Program.

Speaking on a Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce webinar, the Oshkosh Republican noted the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic is hitting small businesses harder. Many of these companies weren't able to access the PPP loans after the \$349 billion fund quickly ran out.

In an attempt at "rectifying some of the problems" with that program, he's calling for "limiting forgiveness for businesses that accessed those loans, that really should not have accessed them."

"They are not hurt financially; they're probably making as much if not more money next year," he said. "They shouldn't have those loans automatically forgiven ... the assumption is almost all of that will be forgiven. And it really shouldn't be."

See Gallagher's interview [here](#).

**— Vice President Mike Pence praised employees at a General Electric plant in Madison for their work to produce ventilators, saying their efforts were saving lives.**

Pence on Tuesday toured the facility and then did a roundtable with Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and GE employees. He told them President Trump sent him to thank company employees for their efforts.

“Frankly, I felt more than a little emotional looking at a lot of the members of the team here,” Pence said. “It’s a privilege for me to be able to be here just to say thank you for all you are doing.”

HHS announced a \$336 million contract with GE to produce 50,000 ventilators by July 13 under the Defense Production Act.

Plant employees are represented by the International Association of Machinists union Local 1406, which quickly ratified a new deal last month to help ramp up production of the ventilators. The union’s existing contract at the time wasn’t set to expire until June.

During his tour of the plant, Pence spoke to a series of plant employees, praising them for their efforts. He also accepted a blue T-shirt that read “Union machinists save lives.”

On a conference call organized by the state Dem Party, U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan said he was outraged by the visit.

“While it’s great we have local companies stepping up... the bottom line is the federal government’s response has been pathetic,” the Town of Vermont Dem said.

Pocan ripped FEMA, saying it has “completely fallen apart” and its response to the state’s needs has been “nonexistent.” He highlighted a sheet showing requests from the Evers administration for supplies had largely gone unfulfilled and said the agency in some cases had sent only a handful of items when thousands had been requested.

“The question for Vice President Pence today is: where the hell is the federal response for places like Wisconsin?” Pocan said.

**— Former GOP U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy's campaign account took a six-figure hit in the first quarter as its investments went south amid the COVID-19 drop the market took.**

The Wausau Republican's latest filing with the FEC shows a loss of \$203,389 from an Edwards Jones account.

Duffy, who resigned from Congress in September, still listed nearly \$1.7 million in the account at the end of March.

He listed \$37,396 in expenses during the period, including \$5,550 in returned contributions to three groups. Duffy also donated \$5,000 to a victory fund run by Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., as well as \$2,000 to GOP state Sen. Tom Tiffany, who the former lawmaker has endorsed in the May 12 special election for his old seat.

The rest of Duffy's expenses include staff and travel, including a \$644 expense in January stay at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C.,

Since leaving Congress, Duffy has signed a contract as a contributor with CNN and registered to lobby the U.S. Capitol.

See the [report](#).

**— Dems in the Wisconsin congressional delegation have all endorsed Joe Biden for president since Bernie Sanders suspended his campaign shortly after the Wisconsin primary.**

U.S. Rep Gwen Moore on Wednesday announced her endorsement of Joe Biden, the fourth and final member of the state's Dem congressional delegation to do so.

"I have been blessed to know Joe Biden and I can tell you that he truly is the man that you keep hearing about: caring, decent, and thoughtful," the Milwaukee Dem said in a statement. "He is a man who is genuinely engaged in the fight to improve the lives of every American."

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, an ardent Bernie Sanders supporter who served as chair of the Vermont independent's presidential campaign in Wisconsin, announced his endorsement Monday as part of a joint rollout with Congressional Progressive

Caucus members.

“Together we must turn the country towards a fundamentally new direction of equality, prosperity and justice under the strong and decent leadership of Vice President Joe Biden,” the group said in a statement.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin endorsed Biden last week, while U.S. Rep. Ron Kind said on April 3 he was backing the former vice president.

See the CPC release [here](#).

See Moore’s release [here](#).

**— Baldwin is calling for a national subsidized employment program for under- or unemployed workers during the coronavirus crisis.**

In a letter to Senate leaders, she proposed federal funding be provided to states to offset wages, while local organizations establish employment programs that would provide a benefit to the community. The program, she said, would lay a permanent groundwork so it can be used again during economic downturns.

“Congress has taken important steps to stabilize the economy in the near term, but we believe bold initiatives are needed to help workers and businesses recover from the longer-term economic devastation caused by the pandemic,” Baldwin and her colleagues said in a release. “Subsidized employment should be a central part of our efforts to help Americans transition back to work.”

Baldwin has four backers for the proposal, including U.S. Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J., and Michael Bennet, D-Colo.

See the release [here](#).

**— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil says the city of Kenosha now meets federal air quality standards on the ground.**

Said Steil: “Thanks to the support from federal, state, and local partners, Kenosha

has cleaner air and can better protect those in our community for years to come.”

The air standards now meet the 2008 NAAQS for ozone, as the concentration of fuel pollutants have dissipated. The EPA now will work to redesignate Kenosha to help ensure future air quality levels continue to meet the standard.

See the release [here](#).

**— The two third-parties that garnered the most votes during the 2016 election have failed to gain access to the presidential ballot this time around, but party officials said they will still have a candidate running in Wisconsin in November.**

Libertarian Party of Wisconsin Chair Matthew Bughman and Wisconsin Green Party Co-Chair Barb Dahlgren say their candidates will run as independents in the state’s presidential election, though neither party has settled on a presidential candidate yet.

Both parties had ballot access during the 2016 presidential election. Libertarian presidential candidate Gary Johnson gathered over 106,000 votes, roughly 3.6 percent of all ballots cast statewide, while Jill Stein of the Green Party garnered just over 31,000 votes. Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in Wisconsin by some 23,000 votes in 2016.

But both parties lost their ballot status after the 2018 gubernatorial election.

State statute grants ballot access to parties whose candidates received at least 1 percent of the total votes cast in the previous gubernatorial election. If a party doesn’t run a candidate in the gubernatorial election or that candidate fails to break 1 percent, that party is still eligible for ballot access if one of its candidates clears 1 percent in a race for statewide office on the same ballots as the gubernatorial election.

Ahead of November’s election, the Constitution Party is the only third party with ballot access after its 2018 candidate for attorney general, Terry Larson, garnered nearly 2 percent of the vote.

State law also allows parties that fail to gain ballot access through election results a

separate avenue to the ballot. Parties can petition for ballot access by collecting 10,000 signatures — including at least 1,000 from at least three different congressional districts — between Jan. 1 and April 1. But an Elections Commission spokesman said no parties cleared that threshold ahead of the deadline earlier this month.

“The 10,000 mark was out of reach for us,” Bughman said. “During the middle of winter, and then you throw in COVID-19 and all the other hurdles and it was just not something feasible.”

Instead, candidates from both parties will run as independents, a designation that requires a candidate to collect 2,000 signatures between July 1 and Aug. 4 with no congressional district requirement.

Dahlgren echoed Bughman’s concerns about coronavirus, adding social distancing requirements could make the petition process far more difficult.

Still, neither Dahlgren nor Bughman said they felt losing ballot access party-wide would have a significant impact on their presidential candidate.

“Party ballot access for us, there’s not a lot of advantages other than the presidential candidate getting onto the ballot without having to do anything,” Bughman said, noting the Libertarian Party rarely has contested presidential primaries.

Dahlgren, meanwhile, said independent candidates can include a party status and would effectively not look any different to a voter than if the party had ballot status.

### ***Posts of the week***

50 years ago today, Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson issued a call to action and 20 million people mobilized for the first Earth Day.

As we celebrate [#EarthDay50](#) join me in carrying on Sen. Nelson’s legacy by building our movement to take bold action on climate change.  
[pic.twitter.com/Kk3ir35u5s](https://pic.twitter.com/Kk3ir35u5s)

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [April 22, 2020](#)

Great time at Heritage Hill State Park enjoying this beautiful Wisconsin day. Now more than ever, it's important for Wisconsinites to get outdoors to stay healthy. [pic.twitter.com/duJuR5ZQJv](https://pic.twitter.com/duJuR5ZQJv)

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [April 22, 2020](#)

The USPS is essential.

Its workers are essential.

Its services are essential.

Before, during, and after this pandemic.

We must do everything in our power to protect the USPS.  
<https://t.co/LopFIKidG9>

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [April 20, 2020](#)

More help will soon be on the way for Wisconsin businesses wanting loans to keep their workers on the payroll. The Senate passed a deal for an additional \$310 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program [#PPP](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/EvyE1f7XQ6](https://pic.twitter.com/EvyE1f7XQ6)

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [April 22, 2020](#)

Headed to Italian House for takeout tonight. Ate lots of meals here freshman year! It's in Janesville next to Craig HS. Support our local businesses and workers! [pic.twitter.com/N4fMVB EW67](https://pic.twitter.com/N4fMVB EW67)

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [April 22, 2020](#)

## **ICYMI**

[Congressman wants increase in testing capabilities](#)

[U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin: Pence can't distract from Trump's stunning failure](#)

[Sens. Chuck Grassley, Ron Johnson Aren't Done Investigating Russian Disinformation In Steele Dossier](#)

[Congressman suggests voting by mail](#)

[Congressman Mike Gallagher Calls For Congress To Reconvene To Provide Debate In Coming Relief Legislation](#)

[Gwen Moore talks about Joe Biden, the Democratic field and the DNC in Milwaukee](#)