

DC Wrap: Kind says monitoring essential to ensure countries are meeting terms of USMCA

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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:
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Quotes of the week

"This is completely non-controversial, it's just the clearinghouse of best practices that every school in America can go to and find best practice solutions to improve safety."

-U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson on the Senate floor after Dems voiced objections to the School Safety Clearinghouse bill passed by his committee in November.

"The fallacious argument I heard during the debate of the bill was that somehow we would not be able to recruit good police officers if they are held accountable."

-U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore to MSNBC on arguments made by GOP legislators against the Justice in Policing act.

This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind says he expects the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement will be positive for the Wisconsin agriculture industry but added "the hard work is just starting."

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"Now we need to monitor it," the La Crosse Dem said. "We need to oversee it and

make sure that all the parties are living up to the terms of the agreement.”

Kind also said a briefing the Trump administration provided to a select group of lawmakers on reports that Russia paid bounties to the Taliban for killing U.S. and coalition troops in Afghanistan “doesn’t cut it” and called for every member of Congress to be briefed.

See the interview:

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil is splitting with President Trump on sending a second round of federal stimulus checks to help provide economic relief in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Media reports in Washington indicate Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is “very seriously considering” another round of checks while the president said last month his administration planned to be “asking for additional stimulus money.”

Speaking at a WisPolitics.com luncheon virtual luncheon last week, Steil labeled the first round of stimulus checks as a “broad-based approach” and said the country was “now past that phase.”

“We now need to shift away from the broad-based approach and get relief to where it’s needed,” the Janesville Republican said.

Steil said he supported providing funds to help those who had fallen on hard times because of the pandemic to pay their bills.

“That to me is very different than sending checks across the board to everyone, knowing that we’re in a situation where we’re bringing on debt,” he said.

See the luncheon [here](#).

See previous coverage of the luncheon [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson said he was concerned at how cases of COVID-19

are trending in America, and that Wisconsin may need to consider more stringent regulations for bars going forward in a virtual panel Wednesday.

Johnson said he considers all businesses essential, but that the approach of letting people into bars without restrictions may not be best for public safety. He didn't propose how bars would restrict patrons, but suggested future stimulus bills would have extra money for local bars that would be affected by regulations.

Small businesses have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic. Johnson said they would also have to be addressed in more specific funding than the block grants given out in the last two months. However, he did note that the economy is doing better than it was before the reopening, since not all businesses are doing poorly.

"Amazon is doing great," the Oshkosh Republican told an Axios event audience.

In terms of preparedness for the pandemic, Johnson said he would "probably give a pretty low grade" to current and previous administrations, but that everyone involved with the response has earned "pretty high marks."

"I'm not overly critical of our elected officials like the president, or local legislators and mayors," Johnson said. "Everyone is doing the best they can."

He said the U.S. may want to look at a model of reopening like the one Sweden has implemented, noting their death rate is "better than countries like the UK and Spain."

However, COVID data from Sweden and America suggest that the U.S. has actually handled the virus more effectively. Sweden's death rate is currently about 7.8 percent, while in America it sits at 4.9 percent. Additionally, Sweden's death rate per-capita is about 522.81 per-million, while in America 379.27 per-million have died.

"We have to make sure we are always looking at the science," Johnson said.

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher introduced a bill that would ensure America is able to continue to meet international obligations in the face of the Chinese Communist Party's aggressive military build-up. The Taiwan Relations Act requires the Department of Defense to maintain the ability

to defeat a Chinese invasion against Taiwan.

“It’s long past time to end strategic ambiguity and draw a clear red line through the Taiwan Strait,” Gallagher said. “Taiwan’s liberty is a vital national security interest of the United States.”

See the release [here](#).

— After reports broke that the Trump administration will end funding for public COVID-19 testing sites, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind sent a letter urging the administration to expand testing throughout Wisconsin and the country.

La Crosse County has recently reported a 607 percent increase in positive cases. “With new COVID-19 cases increasing, I am deeply concerned that any efforts to slow testing will only put more lives at risk,” Kind said.

Posts of the week

[#USMCA](#) enters into force today.

USMCA supports America’s Dairyland and our hardworking farmers! Did you know Wisconsin makes 26% of the nation’s cheese?

pic.twitter.com/DUfkTnTc1a

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [July 1, 2020](#)

As the CCP crushes what remains of one country, two systems, the United States has not just an obligation, but an opportunity to contribute to a global airlift to save as many endangered Hong Kongers as possible. Proud to introduce bipartisan legislation today to do exactly this.

<https://t.co/n2qYekkont>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [June 30, 2020](#)

Angelica Ross was born in Kenosha, WI and has starred in Pose and American Horror Story. Angelica is an incredible advocate for the LGBTQ community, who founded TransTech Social Enterprises, which equips trans and gender non-conforming people w/job training skills.

[#PrideMonth pic.twitter.com/KLTr0meVVc](#)

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [June 30, 2020](#)

Abortion is a constitutional right.

Abortion is healthcare.

Everybody should have the freedom to make their own decisions about their healthcare, their families, their lives, and their futures.

<https://t.co/RAJ0yaXz1A>

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [June 29, 2020](#)

I know you're golfing [@realDonaldTrump](#) but reports show American intelligence found Russia offered \$\$ to the Taliban to kill US troops and for 3 months you haven't done anything but treat Putin like a friend. Our military and their families should know why you have failed to act.

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [June 28, 2020](#)

ICYMI

[Wisconsin voters, like their representatives, are split by party on police overhaul](#)

[Congressman questions lack of info on Russia allegations](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson says Wisconsin might need to focus on bars to control coronavirus spread; calls for schools to completely open](#)

[Rep. Mike Gallagher becomes a father](#)

[Tammy Baldwin leads Joe Biden's Wisconsin pride celebration as running mate talk continues to swirl](#)

[Rep. Bryan Steil Talks Coronavirus, Police Reform During Virtual Luncheon](#)