

# DC Wrap: Baldwin praises latest \$3.5T federal spending proposal as way to improve Wisconsin

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## **Quotes of the week**

We need to secure the southern border. We need to crack down on the cartels that are trafficking drugs and weapons into our country and destroying communities.

*-U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Allouez, talking with law enforcement officers and state lawmakers about the situation at the U.S. southern border.*

With this environmental justice grant for the City of Milwaukee's Healthy People, Homes and Neighborhoods program, we can empower residents with the tools and knowledge to keep their communities healthy and safe and protect their homes from environmental hazards.

*-U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, on the EPA announcing \$400,000 for Milwaukee and Madison to fund environmental justice initiatives.*

## **This week's news**

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin joined her Senate colleagues in praising the Democratic-crafted \$3.5 trillion reconciliation agreement as the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan 'hard' infrastructure budget package remains unfinished.

The reconciliation plan prioritizes President Biden's infrastructure goals, including funds for education, health care and climate change. Biden argues those priorities fall under a wider infrastructure umbrella.

The Madison Dem told WisPolitics.com the measure would move Wisconsin in the right direction.

“The budget legislation we are putting together will support working families and move our Build Back Better economy forward in Wisconsin,” she said in an email.

The package, supported by all 11 Democrats on the Senate’s budget committee, can pass without any Republican support since it only requires a simple majority to advance in the 50-50 Senate, but would fail if any Democrats abandon it. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has insisted the party-line reconciliation package must clear the Senate before the House votes on an unfinished bill prioritizing water systems, roads and broadband by a bipartisan group of senators who reached an agreement with Biden.

And while her Republican colleague U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson signaled Dems will likely pass a bipartisan infrastructure package they have been working on by the end of this month, he warned bipartisanship usually means big spending.

“People like to spend money,” he said in a Fox News interview, referring to the smaller \$1.2 trillion infrastructure budget package.

The Oshkosh Republican also said the infrastructure measure Dems are pushing ahead of the reconciliation package will only “ratchet up” spending long term.

“Democrats realize that the government only works in only one direction, and that’s up,” he said.

Johnson also said Dems are pushing for the extra spending because they are trying to increase government entitlements for Americans. He said their proposed spending asks will at first last only a few years, but Dems will just extend those expenses down the road.

“That’s the game that the Democrats are playing right now,” he said. “That’s the wool they’re going to try to pull over the American people’s eyes.”

See the Johnson [release](#).

— Details of the Wisconsin National Guard mission to assist U.S. Border Patrol agents at the southern border are still unclear, but the Guard’s last deployment to the area involved no direct interaction with those crossing the border.

Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs Deputy Director Major Joe Trovato told WisPolitics.com specific assignments for the roughly 125 Wisconsin troops headed to the border in fall are to be determined. However, their last mission to the border involved mostly administration and logistics work such as moving supplies and they never interacted with people crossing the border.

Those troops come from the 229th Engineer Company from Prairie du Chien and Richland Center. They will be assisting U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers in a non-law-enforcement role, according to a Department of Military Affairs release.

He said some past deployments to the southern border involved working checkpoints, but the majority of the work did not involve interacting with those looking to enter the United States.

“In a lot of cases it’s really just lending a helping hand,” he said. “Working in command centers, constructing different facilities, things along those lines. It really runs the gamut in terms of a lot of different jobs because we can really plug in wherever we’re needed.”

“Really whatever duties were needed to help assist and make this a seamless process,” he added.

The Wisconsin troops headed to the border were ordered earlier this year by President Biden to mobilize in fall. They will be commanded and funded by the federal government while deployed to the border.

Trovato noted Wisconsin Guard troops are deployed around the world, including Poland, Iraq and Kuwait. He added more than 1,200 troops have either deployed or returned from deployments to Afghanistan, South Africa and Ukraine since 2019.

Watch the [interview](#).

— U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, and U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, are also at the southern border for an update.

Fitzgerald in a tweet while on his way to the border slammed President Biden, claiming Biden’s lack of action has spurred drug abuse.

“By failing to address the surge of drug trafficking at the southern border, President Biden is turning a blind eye to the biggest supply of fentanyl into communities across the U.S.,” he said. “The cost of lives lost to the opioid epidemic is beyond measure.”

The deployment comes as the rest of their Republican colleagues from Wisconsin call for more action to address what they call a crisis at the border with Mexico.

U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, of Allouez, in a press conference with the Oconto County Sheriff’s officials and state lawmakers, said the U.S. needs to crack down on the border to fight drug cartels and help keep Wisconsin safe.

“We might like to fool ourselves into thinking, because we’re not a southern border state in Wisconsin, that we don’t actually have impacts from that problem, but as we saw right here in Oconto County, people can die, right here in our backyard, if we allow that problem to persist,” he said.

— U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua, says local governments are failing to train their police forces to properly use facial recognition and other modern digital surveillance technology.

In a Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security virtual hearing, Tiffany compared the failure at the local level to what he said was a failure by Minneapolis local government officials to stop violent riots in the city after George Floyd, a Black man, was killed by a white Minneapolis police officer last summer. He said regulation must be created to prevent abuse of surveillance technology and allow law enforcement to use it as a tool to fight crime.

“We saw a real failure on the part of, in particular, the Minneapolis mayor and the city council in addressing the riots that overwhelmed the City of Minneapolis last year, and a lot of it is because they didn’t take control of their police department,” he said. “There were a few bad cops in that police department, and they needed to take care of them. They did not do it.”

Tiffany added the responsibility to regulate police use of facial recognition and other new technologies should also fall on local governments.

“This is the same thing,” he said. “They need to address the technology. And it isn’t

just the city of Minneapolis; it's cities across the country as well as states. They have the purview; they have the obligation to oversee their police departments. And they should do that, including in regards to using this type of technology."

Without regulation, Tiffany said his constituents are worried about the future.

"Some of my constituents believe we are a short leap to the Communist Chinese Party's use of technology where they've created their social credit system," he said.

U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, also on the call, questioned how regulation could be drafted to ensure private companies only use facial recognition for verification purposes, such as when going through security at work, instead of identification purposes.

Fitzgerald also raised concerns about local governments pushing to outright ban use of facial recognition technology. He questioned whether that would be possible considering the technology is used for a variety of purposes, such as unlocking an iPhone and investigating crimes.

"Is that practical at this point? It doesn't seem like it is to me at this point," he said.

Watch the [hearing](#).

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin introduced a bill that would expand Medicaid in Wisconsin in an effort to close health insurance coverage gaps.

The new Medicaid Saves Lives Act would expand access to Medicaid coverage to Wisconsinites and residents in 11 other states that have refused the federal government's recent sweetener to expand Medicaid coverage. The new measure would give Medicaid coverage to those who make 138 percent of the federal poverty level or less and do not qualify for Badgercare or other states' coverage plans.

She slammed Wisconsin Republicans for failing to accept past Medicaid expansion deals, but said this bill presents "a strong incentive for Wisconsin Republicans to finally do the right thing and accept a federal investment that will save taxpayers money, expand coverage, and improve health outcomes in Wisconsin."

“Right now, they are denying the quality coverage that BadgerCare provides to someone working and only making \$13,000 a year,” she said. “That’s just wrong.”

See the [release](#).

— U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore praised the EPA for allocating \$400,000 in American Rescue Plan funds to environmental justice initiatives in Milwaukee and Madison.

“Communities of color in Milwaukee have experienced health, education, and economic disparities that were only magnified during the pandemic,” Moore said. “Now, we must make conscious efforts to fight these inequities and secure equity for our residents.”

Milwaukee’s \$200,000 in allocated funding will go toward outreach and education about indoor air quality through a Healthy People, Homes and Neighborhood campaign to predominately African American and Latinx neighborhoods. Moore said the program “can empower residents with the tools and knowledge to keep their communities healthy and safe and protect their homes from environmental hazards.”

See the [release](#).

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay, reported \$508,729 in receipts during the second quarter through his personal campaign account, according to his FEC report.

Gallagher spent \$155,897 between April 1 and June 30 and had nearly \$2.3 million in the bank to close the reporting period, according to his filing.

The haul included \$169,650 from PACs. He also transferred \$204,260 to his campaign account from his joint fundraising agreement.

See more [here](#).

— GOP 3rd CD candidate Derrick Van Orden raised \$750,000 during the second quarter, his campaign said.

The campaign didn't release other details of his fundraising, including how much cash on hand he had on June 30, the end of the reporting period.

Van Orden announced in April that he would seek a rematch with U.S. Rep. Ron Kind after losing to the LaCrosse Dem by 2.7 percentage points last fall. Former President Trump won the western Wisconsin seat by 4.7 percentage points in November, though the district could see big changes after new lines are drawn in the upcoming redistricting process.

See more [here](#).

— Dem Alex Lasry announced he raised \$1 million for his U.S. Senate bid during the second three months of the year.

That comes after Lasry raised \$1 million during his initial reporting period. Lasry, whose campaign said he didn't put any personal money into the campaign during the three-month period, finished with just more than \$1 million cash on hand.

Lasry finished March with \$773,193 in the bank, according to his first quarter filing with the FEC. That means he banked about \$233,500 of the more than \$1 million he raised in the second quarter.

Reports are due to the FEC today. Lasry and a host of other Dems are seeking GOP U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson's seat next year.

See the [release](#).

— Downtown Janesville Inc. President Ann Roe, a Democrat, announced a challenge to incumbent U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil in the 1st CD next year.

Roe is a former UW-Whitewater lecturer who owns Custom College Solutions, a company that assists high school students in preparing for college.

“I’ve been a part of this community for 25 years,” Roe said. “I’ve raised my children here, I’ve run a small business here and I’ve helped other small businesses succeed here.”

New lines for the district won’t be drawn until after final census data is available. That’s expected to be sometime after mid-August. If the new lines leave Roe out of the district, she will “assess the future political landscape if and when it becomes a reality,” said a campaign spokesperson.

See more [here](#).

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

<https://twitter.com/RepGrothman/status/1415344123184394245?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/RepRonKind/status/1415065497423515648?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/repmarkpocan/status/1414586305913180169?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/SenatorBaldwin/status/1414431040328904705?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/SenRonJohnson/status/1414429404881686529?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/MikeforWI/status/1414339659316989957?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/TomTiffanyWI/status/1414044190175121408?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/RepBryanSteil/status/1413656748121075715?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/RepFitzgerald/status/1415363146190049282>

<https://twitter.com/RepGwenMoore/status/1415072615471910912>

### ***ICYMI***

[‘He is very much up in the air’: U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson keeps holding off on decision about political future](#)

[U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin pushing for high-speed broadband expansion](#)

[Congressman Steil announces youth app contest; Nov. 1 entry deadline](#)

[Kind, parents advocate for child tax credit payments starting this week](#)