

DC Wrap: PFAS legislation clears House with bipartisan support

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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:

<https://forms.gle/YLYZtjWHPSt24HhZ7>

Quotes of the week

"When official election organizations fail to operate free from outside influence, Americans lose faith in the integrity of our system."

- U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, on his cosponsorship of legislation that would prohibit 501(c)(3) tax exempt organizations from directly funneling money into official election organizations.

"This lifeline for so many is rapidly running out of funds and now we have taken action to replenish it, so people can continue accessing these critical resources."

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, on the Senate's passage of her bill to create a new source of revenue for the Crime Victims Fund.

This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher was the only GOP member of Wisconsin's delegation to join all Dems in passing a measure to limit the use of PFAS pollutants.

The Allouez Republican joined all 218 House Dems in a 241-183 vote that sent the PFAS Action Act to the Senate for consideration. While only one of Wisconsin's Republicans supported the measure, 22 Republicans from other states joined him.

The measure would set regulations on the use of PFAS chemicals and direct the EPA to list PFAS chemicals as hazardous substances. The EPA would also have to determine if these forever chemicals qualify as toxic pollutants under the Clean Water Act and set a national standard for the amount of PFAS chemicals allowed in drinking water.

PFAS chemicals are manufactured chemicals found in various everyday items such as food packaging, non-stick cookware, cosmetics and firefighting foams. Gallagher's northeastern Wisconsin district is one of the state's hotspots.

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan in a press conference said the pollutant is a major concern for Wisconsinites.

"In Madison, Wisconsin we have a National Guard facility that has put PFAS into our community," said the Madison-area Dem. "Every single one of our drinking wells in Madison has traces of PFAS and some of the fish in our lakes have traces of PFAS."

Earlier this year the Department of Natural Resources issued advisories for fish consumption from the Yahara chain of lakes due to the levels of PFAS found in various fish species.

The DNR has also been seeking public comments on its Safe Drinking Water program across the state to help improve water quality.

Pocan said it's a big problem for water quality in the area he lives in, "specifically water that is specifically our problem in our community."

U.S. Reps. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, and Gallagher introduced legislation that would provide resources for people with a private well to test their drinking water for PFAS.

"PFAS contamination is a serious threat to public health, and an issue far too many communities across Wisconsin are currently dealing with," said Kind in a press release. "Making sure well owners have an easy way to test and treat their drinking water to protect against PFAS is vital, and I'm proud to introduce this commonsense legislation with colleagues on both sides of the aisle."

Gallagher tweeted that people should be able to know if their water is affected.

"People deserve to know whether or not their water is contaminated by chemicals like PFAS. Today I introduced a bipartisan bill with @RepDanKildee and others that makes it easier for individuals to test their water to ensure it's safe," said Gallagher..

Wisconsin's Assembly passed a bill in June that would create a \$10 million grant program to help communities reduce and clean up PFAS contamination. The bill

would also block cities and towns from suing companies who polluted.

See the [roll call](#).

See the Gallagher [tweet](#).

See Kind and Gallagher [release](#).

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin introduced a bill to create a new source of revenue for the Crime Victims Fund.

The VOCA Fix Act, which directs revenues collected from deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements to be deposited into the Crime Victims Fund, unanimously passed the Senate. The measure now heads to President Biden's desk.

The Madison Dem said it would provide needed compensation for survivors of crimes.

"This innovative solution uses no new taxpayer dollars and now we have gotten the job done so that crime victims - including those who've suffered from domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual violence, and elder fraud and abuse, among others, continue to receive the services and assistance they need," she said.

See the [release](#).

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil announced he will serve as ranking member of the Select Committee on Economic Disparity and Fairness in Growth.

In a statement, Steil said family-supporting jobs can be created by "prioritizing our workforce and getting government out of the way."

"I will advocate for policies to ensure everyone can sit down at the dinner table feeling financially secure," he said.

Steil, R-Janesville, also serves on the House Financial Services Committee and the

Committee on House Administration.

See the [release](#).

— Gallagher says he will soon announce legislation to accompany a new report he authored on reforming the Wisconsin education system.

The Allouez Republican in a report said elevating Wisconsin schools to the high level they once achieved would require bringing back phonics-based reading instruction, expanding school choice, making the state superintendent a governor-appointed position and creating more flexible technical college programs, among other things.

“Wisconsin was once an education powerhouse,” he said.

While the report is not legally binding, Gallagher said Wisconsin and other states could use it to outline what he says are key areas to reform.

“We can turn things around, but it’s going to require us to act with a sense of urgency,” he said. “I hope this paper can, at a minimum, start a discussion, bring the best and brightest to the table, and inspire lawmakers at all levels of government to take action to save our state within the decade.”

See the [release and report](#).

— Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes tells WisPolitics.com he stands out from his eight fellow Dem U.S. Senate candidates because of his experience holding statewide office and his travels to all parts of Wisconsin.

Barnes said he’s been to all of the state’s 72 counties and was “not just stopping at a gas station” in doing so.

Barnes, in an interview after his formal campaign announcement, said he has traveled the state talking to classrooms and small businesses on a host of issues important to people. He said that includes the cost of education and health care, racial justice and climate change.

He also said his campaign won't be impacted by whether U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, decides to seek a third term.

See more [here](#).

— The Progressive Change Campaign Committee, which had already endorsed state Sen. Chris Larson for U.S. Senate, is now backing Barnes, as well.

In announcing the decision to endorse both Dems, the group said Barnes and Larson have been longtime allies of the organization.

See the [release](#).

— Milwaukee Ald. Chantia Lewis formally announced her campaign for U.S. Senate, becoming the ninth Dem to declare for the race.

In her rollout video, Lewis says Wisconsin can do better than GOP U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, who has yet to announce whether he will seek a third term.

She says Wisconsin needs someone who will “protect our democracy,” fight for working families and value all people. Lewis said that person is “perhaps a woman like me,” noting she’s a mom, a veteran and a fighter.

“I’m fighting for everyone who’s been told they can’t, those who have been shut out from obtaining the American dream,” she says.

See more [here](#).

— State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski, now a candidate for U.S. Senate, paid a \$500 penalty for failing to quickly resolve a discrepancy in her state campaign finance report filings, according to a settlement obtained by WisPolitics.com.

The settlement, paid March 17 to the Wisconsin Ethics Commission, was disclosed in Godlewski's latest campaign finance report. WisPolitics.com then requested the settlement agreement from the Ethics Commission.

The agreement shows there was a discrepancy of \$11,027 between what Godlewski reported for her ending balance on the January 2019 report and what she listed as her opening balance for her July 2019 report. The Ethics Commission notified Godlewski of the discrepancy Oct. 18, 2019, and she was given 30 days to resolve the issue.

See more [here](#).

— Three GOP lawmakers are circulating a resolution calling for an Article 5 convention to approve an amendment limiting the U.S. Supreme Court to nine justices.

The resolution comes as some Dems have called for adding additional justices to the court. Currently, the Constitution grants Congress the power to determine the size of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Assembly this session approved a resolution calling for a convention to place fiscal restraints on the federal government and impose term limits on Congress. It has cleared a Senate committee, but hasn't been taken up by the full chamber. Another resolution that's cleared committee in both houses would only impose term limits on members of Congress.

See the new [resolution](#).

— U.S. Reps. Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, and Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, penned a rare bipartisan letter to the Treasury Department requesting more guidance on spending federal COVID-19 relief.

The two joined forces asking U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and her department to issue more guidance to clarify how state and local governments can spend the federal funds without violating restrictions. Specifically, the bipartisan pair wants the guidance to make clear that purchasing government vehicles such as

ambulances is within the federal fund spending restrictions.

The freshman Republican congressman tweeted that the move would help keep Wisconsinites safe.

“This will help #WI companies supply first responders w/ vehicles they need to safeguard our communities,” Fitzgerald said.

See the [tweet](#).

See the [letter](#).

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson and his GOP colleagues blocked the Senate from beginning debate on a bipartisan infrastructure plan that would put roughly \$600 billion in new funds for roads, bridges, rail and transit, among other things.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., forced the vote as a bipartisan group of senators continued to work on final language. Sixty votes were needed to proceed after after all 50 Dems initially voted to begin debate, Schumer switched his vote to a no in a procedural move that allows him to bring the issue up again. The cloture motion ultimately failed 51-49.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, voted to move forward with the debate.

See the Senate [roll call](#).

— A new ad blasts U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson for opposing the congressional commission to investigate the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

The ad from two dozen Democracy for All 2021 Action coalition groups also targets the Oshkosh Republican over his opposition to the For the People Act voting bill, among other things.

The 30-second ad will air on 10 Wisconsin news sites and TV channels through an \$800,000 buy. It slams Johnson, up for reelection next year, for being “more

committed to the lie and rigging the system to retain power” than protecting Wisconsinites.

“The challenges facing our democracy aren’t partisan,” the ad narrator says. “It’s time Senator Johnson puts country over party.”

Watch the [ad](#).

Posts of the week

Glioblastoma is an aggressive and difficult to treat disease that results in the death of nearly 10,000 Americans each year. Today, on Glioblastoma Awareness Day, I hope you'll join me in raising awareness about this horrible cancer. [#GBMawarenessday pic.twitter.com/DZsNk4LufN](#)

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [July 21, 2021](#)

C'mon [@Bucks](#) let's bring it home tonight! [#FearTheDeer](#) [#NBAFinals](#)
<https://t.co/wUD1q41h0j>

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [July 20, 2021](#)

Bucks in Six!!
Congratulations to NBA Champions [@Bucks](#)!!

First [#NBAFinals](#) championship in 50 years for Milwaukee and first time at home. <pic.twitter.com/ITwJM6vUkV>

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [July 21, 2021](#)

□ Congratulations to the winners of my office's annual Congressional Art Competition! □

First place goes to [@MCDSPrairieHawk](#) student, Grace Sherill. Grace's work, "Lofty Prairie," will be displayed in the Capitol.
pic.twitter.com/H9YHSISDyE

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [July 20, 2021](#)

I spoke with local [#Wisconsin](#) members of [@MASFAAweb](#) about why it's so important that high school students realize the responsibility that comes with taking on student loan debt prior to committing to such a significant financial obligation. pic.twitter.com/lo7s1Cp0N6

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [July 20, 2021](#)

One year ago, our nation lost a giant. John Lewis epitomized moral courage and shed blood for the right to vote. He was never afraid to get in the way to fight for equality.

We owe it to him to guarantee every American has equal access to the ballot box by making H.R. 4 law. pic.twitter.com/83M3YLwtSY

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [July 17, 2021](#)

Enjoyed stopping by Forward Janesville's Business After Five event this week. pic.twitter.com/1YeTYq9vme

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [July 17, 2021](#)

ICYMI

[Rep. Bryan Steil signals he's ready for 2022 campaign season](#)

[Senator Baldwin reintroduces bipartisan bill to improve veterans access to benefits](#)

[Capitol Notes: Incumbent Sen. Ron Johnson, Potential Challenger Alex Lasry Raise The Most Money In Second Quarter](#)

[Dems flood primary to face Ron Johnson in Wisconsin](#)

[Tai visits Wisconsin farm with Kind](#)

[Prof. Bansal interviewed by the Office of the U.S. Congressman Scott Fitzgerald \(WI-5\)](#)

[360: Understanding the pros and cons of the expanded Child Tax Credit](#)