

DC Wrap: Labor union groups praise PRO Act as it awaits Senate fate amid criticism from others

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<https://forms.gle/YLYZtjWHPSt24HhZ7>

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Quotes of the week

“The science tells us that vaccines are 95 percent effective. So, if you have a vaccine, quite honestly, what do you care if your neighbor has one or not? What is it to you? You have got a vaccine, and science is telling you it's very, very effective. So, why is this big push to make sure everybody gets a vaccine?”

-U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson on the Vicki McKenna's show. See reaction in an item below.

“Interrupting Rick Santorum's erasure of Native people and revisionist history to remind him that America was built by slaves on stolen land.”

- U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore slams former U.S. Sen. Santorum for saying the U.S. was created from nothing and there is not much Native American culture in modern American culture.

This week's news

— Labor union groups and U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, praised the PRO Act as it awaits a Senate committee hearing date.

AFL-CIO leaders in a Tuesday press conference said the Protect the Right to Organize Act would help employees organize unions more easily, which they say would help them fight for better working conditions. Baldwin earlier this year demanded House members pass the act ahead of their 225-206 vote that sent it

forward to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

However, the act is taking flak from her Oshkosh colleague, Ron Johnson.

“I have never understood why anyone would want to force individual employees to join unions or use their hard-earned wages to pay dues,” the Republican told WisPolitics.com. “The federal government should not be involved in doing so, and should respect the appropriate role of states and the rights of individual Americans.”

And Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin argues the act would be a disaster for the construction industry in Wisconsin.

ABC President John Mielke told WisPolitics.com one of the biggest issues with the act would be with neutral employers that hire union and non-union labor. He said construction job sites where union workers decide to picket would have to shut down completely, instead of being able to remain at least partially operational as they can under current law.

Mielke added those neutral employers make up about 80 percent of the construction industry in Wisconsin.

“This is really just a big payoff for labor unions,” he said.

Baldwin said the legislation takes bold action for workers’ rights to fair pay, a safe workplace, quality health care and a secure retirement.

“In Wisconsin and across the country we have seen powerful, corporate special interests, and the politicians that they fund, attack workers’ rights and undermine our labor laws,” Baldwin said. “The result has been a shrinking middle class, rising income inequality, and more economic insecurity for working families.”

The legislation would expand protections for workers seeking to form or join unions and collectively bargain in the workplace. It would make it illegal for employers to punish employees for joining unions and participating in strikes. And it would make it illegal for employers to coerce or force employees to attend meetings that discourage union membership.

Among other things, the legislation would also allow collective bargaining agreements that require all employees represented by the bargaining unit to pay

union fees, unless state law conflicts.

See more on the bill: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/842>

— Wisconsin has held onto its eight congressional seats, according to new U.S. Census Bureau reapportionment data.

The state's population grew 3.6 percent over the past decade to nearly 5.9 million people. That growth rate exceeded the average for the Midwest of 3.1 percent.

But it was well behind the 7.4 percent growth the nation saw as a whole as the U.S. population neared 331.5 million.

It's also a significant drop from the 6 percent growth Wisconsin saw between 2000 and 2010.

See more [here](#).

— District-level data to draw new lines won't be available until September.

But comparing the new population number to past estimates by congressional district suggests which ones will have to change the most in the upcoming redistricting process.

The Census count means each of the eight congressional districts will include around 737,000 residents.

The 2019 population estimate for the 2nd CD in south-central Wisconsin was nearly 774,000. That means the Dane County-dominated district, now represented by Dem Mark Pocan, will have to shed residents.

See more [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson came under fire as doctors criticized his recent

calls to slow the push to vaccinate.

Committee to Protect Medicare members during a virtual press event said the Oshkosh Republican's comments spread dangerous misinformation, putting his fellow Wisconsinites at risk.

Johnson on the Vicki McKenna radio show Friday said the government should not be pushing vaccines on younger people, who face a lower risk of severe illness. He also questioned why people should care if their neighbors are getting vaccinated.

See more [here](#).

— Baldwin re-introduced legislation that would waive tuition for students going to two-year community colleges and technical schools.

The America's Promise Act would create a new federal-state program to fund a new grant program that would help students at historically Black colleges and universities, or minority-serving institutions.

"Everyone should have the opportunity to gain the education and skills they need to succeed without drowning in student debt," said Baldwin. "Unfortunately, right now college costs and student loan debt are holding people back and creating a drag on economic growth for our country."

The proposed legislation would encourage continued state funding of higher education through an investment match program. For each dollar invested by state governments, the federal government would invest \$3.

See Baldwin's release:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2021/u-s-sens-baldwin-levin-murray-scott-reintroduce-legislation-to-provide-two-free-years-of-community-college/>

— Endless Frontier Act investments could help the U.S. beat China in tech, and existing tariffs could give the U.S. negotiating power in China trade deals.

That's according to panelists who were part of a virtual WisBusiness.com-Wisconsin Technology Council luncheon on "Dealing with China."

The bipartisan bill, co-sponsored by GOP U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, calls for \$100 billion to build resources in advancing science and technology research and development nationwide. It also proposes expansion of the National Science Foundation and \$10 billion for regional technology hubs. Those hubs would help to launch companies, revive U.S. manufacturing and create jobs that jump-start communities.

"The goal of the Endless Frontier Act is really to win the technological competition both when it comes to environmental technology, whether it's carbon capture, whether it's nuclear bioreactor technology or chips manufacturing," he said. "In order to win the new Cold War, I believe we need to increase our investments in research and development from the federal level."

See more [here](#).

— The NRCC is running a new digital ad seeking to tie U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, to controversial comments made by some of his Dem colleagues.

Kind is one of five House Dems the National Republican Congressional Committee is targeting with the ad campaign. A spokesman said the overall campaign is a five-figure buy, but didn't provide specifics on the Kind spot.

After police in a Minneapolis suburb shot a Black man to death, U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., tweeted, "No more policing, incarceration, and militarization. It can't be reformed."

See more [here](#).

— A former Trump campaign attorney told an Assembly committee the U.S. Constitution allows state legislatures to pass presidential election laws without input from the governor.

A Leg Council attorney, however, told the committee all bills Wisconsin lawmakers pass are subject to gubernatorial review.

Thomas Sylke, an attorney who worked for the Trump campaign during the Milwaukee recount, suggested the language of the Constitution saying how states may pick presidential electors means state lawmakers have sole discretion on how to conduct presidential elections within state boundaries. He spoke during an Assembly Campaigns and Elections Committee public hearing.

See more [here](#).

— Former President Trump's attorneys in his failed federal lawsuit that tried to overturn Wisconsin's November results will now have until June to respond to a request from Gov. Tony Evers and several municipalities that they cover their legal costs in the case.

Evers and the municipalities that were named in the suit have collectively asked for the former president and his attorneys to pay more than \$253,000 in legal fees stemming from the suit. A federal judge in Milwaukee and the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals both rejected the suit in December, and the U.S. Supreme Court refused earlier this year to hear the case.

The three Indiana attorneys — William Bock III, James Knauer and Kevin Koons — filed a motion this month seeking more time to respond to the request. They cited upcoming deadlines in other cases along with work and family commitments that will take them out of state in the coming weeks.

See more [here](#).

— Two Wisconsinites were among the virtual guests first lady Jill Biden invited to the president's address.

One advocates for more steps to control gun violence, and the other backs expand broadband.

Traditionally, first ladies host guests in their viewing box for presidential speeches.

But with limited seating for tonight's address due to COVID-19 measures, Jill Biden had a virtual call with the guests this afternoon ahead of the speech.

See more [here](#).

Posts of the week

I am proud to cosponsor the bipartisan [#Dairy](#) Pride Act, which will help protect [#WI](#) dairy farmers by stopping producers of non-dairy products, like plant and nut-based drinks, from labeling them as "milk".

<https://t.co/3akSudNrem>

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [April 28, 2021](#)

This [#WorkersMemorialDay](#), we remember all the workers we lost at the hands of inadequate workplace protections & corporate greed.

Every worker deserves to feel safe in their workplace.

Every worker deserves a union.

Every worker deserves the [#PROAct](#).

<pic.twitter.com/wbWdHwzZEX>

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [April 28, 2021](#)

Great to see Luxemburg-Casco partnering with NWTC and local businesses to create the first diesel mechanic training program in Wisconsin. These kinds of programs provide kids with practical skills to ensure they find good-paying jobs right here in

NEW. <https://t.co/Gl0Hr7FY8z>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [April 28, 2021](#)

Thank you Learn Build Fly at the Wausau airport for the tour. They are inspiring the next generation in American manufacturing. Keep up the good work! pic.twitter.com/uIXT8JZPC3

— Tom Tiffany (@TomTiffanyWI) [April 28, 2021](#)

!! ATTN [#WI03](#) Restaurant Owners: Mark your calendars! Registration for the Restaurant Revitalization Fund will begin this Friday and the application period will start on Monday, May 3. See below for more details from [@SBAGov](#): <https://t.co/Rqw6IHbgW9>

— Archive: Rep. Ron Kind (@RepRonKind) [April 27, 2021](#)

Pastor Jerome Smith has been called home by his Heavenly Father. So many lives, including mine, were enriched by knowing and loving such a good person. He will be sorely missed by his family and friends. Please provide them comfort with your prayers. pic.twitter.com/1XnxV3NGIO

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [April 27, 2021](#)

Thank you to the [#WI](#) Restaurant Association ([@theRealWRA](#)) for the great meeting! I'm looking forward to continuing our work together to help our independent restaurants and their workers move past this pandemic. pic.twitter.com/gSwLYrtzAI

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [April 23, 2021](#)

Happy [#EarthDay!](#)

Milwaukee is such a beautiful city.

We must take meaningful action to protect our planet.

□ [@Danielle_Melfi pic.twitter.com/RS5YvfLsvX](#)

— Gwen S. Moore (@Gwen4Congress) [April 22, 2021](#)

ICYMI

[Sen. Baldwin reintroduces bill restricting the use of dairy terms on plant-based products](#)

[Sen. Johnson may offer insight into GOP's 2022 positioning](#)

[Wisconsin lawmakers clash on infrastructure ahead of joint session speech](#)

[BBA Salutes Black Women, Honors Gwen Moore](#)

[Report: Wisconsin's Federal Coronavirus Funds More Than Twice As Large As 2009 Stimulus Funding](#)

[Wisconsin to keep eight U.S. House seats after latest census](#)