

DC Wrap: Baldwin says she needs five more GOP votes for Respect for Marriage Act

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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

"The first step in solving any problem is admitting you have one. Redefining recession won't make the reality go away. Biden and his enablers in Congress are incapable of fixing the problem they caused. Can't expect the arsonists to put out the fire."

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, in a [tweet](#) blasting President Joe Biden and his supporters as the Federal Reserve yesterday raised interest rates again this year to fight inflation.

"#BigPharma has profited off of rising prescription drug prices. I support passing budget legislation that lowers costs so American families can have some much needed relief. Republicans should join @SenateDems in passing legislation that delivers results."

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, in a [tweet](#) urging Republicans to work with Dems as they try to pass a bill that would allow Medicare to negotiate lower prices for some prescription drugs for the first time.

This week's news

— U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson were on opposite sides of a bipartisan vote that advanced a \$280 billion bill to boost American semiconductor production and foster scientific innovation.

Baldwin, D-Madison, in a 64-33 vote joined the majority in sending the CHIPS Act to the House for consideration. The bill would provide \$52 billion in subsidies for

domestic production and research. The goal is to improve U.S. production and supply chain resilience while decreasing the country's reliance on semiconductors made in countries such as China and Taiwan. Johnson, R-Oshkosh, voted against the bill.

The bill now goes to the House.

The bill would also create a National Semiconductor Technology Center. Baldwin, who was part of the conference committee that worked to pass the measure, in a press release touted Wisconsin as a possible "growth center."

"We are leaders in bioenergy research and water technology, so Wisconsin is well positioned for growth in emerging industries," she said. "Passing this legislation can really help support the STEM education we are providing and the R&D we are doing to create job growth for our state."

Johnson in a press release slammed the bill as "corporate welfare for the semiconductor industry."

"Since there is plenty of capital to fund its expansion, there is no need to provide corporate welfare to the semiconductor industry," he said. "This CHIPS bill is an example of Washington's typical solution to any problem, throw money at it, so I opposed it."

The measure also would help research at major academic institutions in the state.

"There absolutely are many opportunities in this measure that will, I expect, benefit the University of Wisconsin and all of our research universities and our university systems," Baldwin told Spectrum News 1.

"The research enterprise between the universities in Wisconsin that get NSF grants or NIH grants, all of those will be supported. And there's an element of the bill that kind of creates hubs or clusters, where these institutions will work together on specific issues to try to solve problems and rise to new challenges," she added.

The bill also supports the Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center on UW-Madison's campus with around \$5 - 6 million per year in funding. That funding comes from \$30 million per year for Bioenergy Research Centers.

[See the roll call.](#)

[See the Baldwin release.](#)

[See the Johnson release.](#)

— Johnson last night joined the majority of Senate Republicans in voting down a bill that would improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic chemicals.

The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act in a 55-42 vote failed to break through the Senate's filibuster rules. The Oshkosh Republican in a press release said he voted against the procedural motion on the PACT Act because he wants a chance to remove a provision he says would increase spending unrelated to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"I support providing coverage to service members affected by burn pit exposure. Unfortunately, the bill as written includes an unnecessary provision that opens the door for more reckless government spending, unrelated to the VA," he said.

Baldwin voted in favor of the motion, which would add a House amendment to the Senate's original version.

The House amended the bill, and earlier this month in a 342-88 vote with all of Wisconsin's House members except U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua, on board sent the measure to the Senate.

The Senate in an 84-14 vote in June approved the original version of the bill.

[See Johnson's release.](#)

[See last night's Senate roll call.](#)

— Baldwin said she still needs five more Republican votes for the Senate to overcome the filibuster and vote on legislation to codify the right to same-sex and interracial marriage.

Sixty votes are needed to move the Respect for Marriage Act forward. The Madison Dem, who is the first openly gay U.S. senator, is a cosponsor of the bill. Johnson has called the legislation "unnecessary" but said he sees no reason to oppose it.

“We’re working really hard to get five more votes, so you can call your senators and tell them that you support the Respect for Marriage Act and help us bring this across the finish line,” Baldwin said in a video on Twitter.

The measure would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, under which same-sex couples couldn’t receive many of the same benefits as straight couples. The law is no longer in effect after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional.

The bill aims to protect both same-sex and interracial couples by considering them to be married if their marriage was valid in the state it was performed in and adding additional legal protections.

[See Baldwin’s video message.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil this week introduced legislation aiming to boost voters’ trust in the election process.

The Janesville Republican introduced the bill along with U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Ill.

The American Confidence in Elections Act would prohibit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations giving money to election organizations. Some Republicans have knocked the use of private money from the Center for Tech and Civic Life during the 2020 presidential election in Wisconsin.

Some 200 communities in the state received aid from the group, largely funded by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. But the majority of the \$8.8 million went to five cities: Green Bay, Kenosha, Madison, Milwaukee and Racine.

The legislation would require voter identification to be printed with the word “citizen” when applicable on IDs issued starting in January 2026. The bill also aims to limit “ballot harvesting,” a term critics use to describe when someone collects absentee ballots for others and puts them in the mail, among other measures.

“Americans deserve confidence in our elections. We must ensure that every eligible voter is able to vote, and that every lawful vote is counted,” Steil said. “The ACE Act is an important step forward in inspiring voter confidence and protecting election integrity.”

Steil is ranking member of the House Administration Subcommittee on Elections.

[See the release.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher in a selfie Twitter video blasted Milwaukee Public Schools leaders as they consider a new policy that would require staff and students to wear facemasks under certain circumstances.

MPS Superintendent Keith Posley will present a policy to the school board that would require staff and students to wear masks if 10 percent or more of COVID tests, excluding at-home tests, in the city come back positive in a week. Milwaukee Health Commissioner Kirsten Johnson has said the policy should not be based on positivity rates, and instead MPS should use the same metrics the Centers for Disease Control uses.

Gallagher, R-Allouez, in the video said if the board approves Posley's move, it would be "so stupid, it's hard to put into words."

"There is no justification for forcing kids to wear masks given where we are with this virus right now," he added.

He also called on Dem Gov. Tony Evers to act.

"Where's the governor - who fashions himself an educator who cares about the kids - in advocating against this?"

See more on the mask policy in ICYMI below.

[See the tweet.](#)

— The House next week will begin its August recess period, when members will be away from D.C. for a district work period.

The Senate will begin its August recess period the week after.

Lawmakers will return to the nation's Capitol after Labor Day.

[See the House calendar.](#)

[See the Senate calendar.](#)

Posts of the week

Congratulations to [#WI06](#)'s Gabriel Dykstra and Jaziel Torres for earning the rank of Eagle Scout! It was a pleasure to attend your Court of Honor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in [#Waupun](#). pic.twitter.com/CGSL9H8tXX

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [July 24, 2022](#)

Good morning and happy [#MagicMonday](#)! Drafting legislation might seem dry, but in reality it's often powered by creativity — just like this throwback trick with [@RepDebDingell](#). <https://t.co/0DC4zXDObe>

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [July 25, 2022](#)

Watched the Blue Angles flying over Milwaukee today. They are back in the air tomorrow at 3pm.

The roar as they pass is the sound of freedom! pic.twitter.com/DIK8fcrbqG

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [July 23, 2022](#)

ICYMI

[Trump to hold Wisconsin rally in August](#)

[The Midwestern pioneer lobbying Republicans on same-sex marriage](#)

[Worry over polygamy led Mike Gallagher to vote against same-sex marriage bill](#)

[MPS superintendent goes against Milwaukee health commissioner in mask proposal](#)

[for next school year](#)

[Wisconsin Family Action pushes back against Ron Johnson on Respect for Marriage Act](#)