

DC Wrap: House Dems applaud as package of gun legislation aimed at preventing mass shooting passes amid Republican criticism

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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

"Week after week we hear about violent criminals re-victimizing communities without being held accountable. The people furthering these policies and making our communities less safe are the same people who are fervently arguing to disarm Americans and defund the police."

- U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua, in a floor speech leading up to the House's passage of a package of gun-related bills. See more on the package below.

"This past month has been particularly deadly: Our hearts broke for cities including Buffalo, Uvalde, and Tulsa whose communities have been mourning after tragedies. Racine, my own birthplace, made headlines after there was a shooting at a funeral. A funeral!"

- U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, in a press release praising passage of the gun bill package called the Protecting Our Children Act.

This week's news

— U.S. Rep Gwen Moore applauded last night as legislation to create red flag laws, increase the minimum age to buy a semi-automatic gun and ban high-capacity magazines cleared the House.

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Wisconsin's delegation voted along party lines as part of the 223-204 final tally. The package, which would also create requirements for safe gun storage and criminal penalties for those who violate safe storage laws, now faces the Senate's 60-vote filibuster rule. Moore, D-Milwaukee, in a release said it's past time for legislation to curb shootings in her district and referenced a shooting last week that left five wounded at a funeral in Racine, her birthplace.

"Every day, we see gun violence being all too common in Milwaukee. We are all tied to the souls we have lost in these tragedies," she said. "Each loss means a family and community left to grieve and pick up the pieces. This epidemic is taking away fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, and our precious babies."

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, said gun violence is a uniquely American problem that will take action to solve.

"Thoughts and prayers mean nothing if we don't take steps to prevent future tragedies," he said. "Our children are watching. Will my colleagues in the Senate stand by while kids live in fear, or will they have the strength to finally act?"

While U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, has signaled at least some bipartisan support for expanding background checks and incentivizing states to pass red flag laws, she said no major bans are likely to pass the split Senate.

See more on what Baldwin said at this week's WisPolitics.com DC breakfast event below.

[See the roll call.](#)

[See Pocan's release.](#)

[See Moore's release.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind was the only Dem to vote against the high-capacity magazine ban provision during procedural votes leading up to the final vote.

The La Crosse Dem's vote against the measure that would limit magazine capacities to 15 was the only vote to break the Wisconsin delegation's party ranks in seven votes on each of the major provisions in the Protecting Our Children Act. Minority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., last week told House members they would be allowed to vote on each provision in the package "to place Republicans on record on each of these issues relating to gun safety."

[See the roll call.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany in a floor speech on the gun bill package aimed at preventing mass shootings slammed Dems for what he called an attempt to take away gun rights as violent crime increases in Milwaukee.

The Minocqua Republican charged Dems are responsible for the rising violent crime because they are in charge in liberal cities such as Milwaukee. He added they are also trying to repeal the Second Amendment, defund police and weaponize the FBI against their political opponents.

"As some members of this body have said in the last few weeks, this is just the beginning. We will not stop," he said. "They will continue to erode our rights because they believe in a nanny-state government, not a government of the people. What Americans need

— Baldwin says there is at least some federal legislation aimed at preventing mass shootings with enough bipartisan support to move forward. But she added the final product won't "be particularly ambitious."

"Why would this time be different? It's just unspeakable to think about children being gunned down," she said. "It's unspeakable to think about a white nationalist going to a grocery store in Buffalo and gunning people down."

Baldwin at a WisPolitics.com D.C. breakfast said those tragedies are pushing a bipartisan group of senators to negotiate. She said she suspects the resulting legislation will require more gun buyers to pass background checks and incentivize states to pass red-flag laws. But there will be no wide-sweeping bans, she added.

[See more here.](#)

— Baldwin also said she thinks senators will pass legislation aimed at

protecting the nation's supply chain resiliency before its July 4 recess.

“That’s going to be a challenge, but I think we can do it,” she said at the breakfast event.

The Madison Dem said she sees a path forward for a bill meant to address many of the supply chain issues Wisconsin faced as the pandemic took hold. She mentioned dairy farmers who had to dump their milk, food shortages, microchip shortages that lead to automotive, computer and other manufacturing issues.

She said this is one of her few ventures into legislation primarily involving the private sector because the pandemic made clear the importance of resilient supply chains.

“I think it is so appropriate, and part of what this bill does, is map out supply chains,” she said. “It tasks the Department of Commerce to look at what are critical things that involve security, that involve safety, that involve public health; those things we need to be able to make sure that we can produce for the nation.”

[Listen to the event.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald praised passage of the Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act.

The Juneau Republican in a release said he was proud to have been one of its original supporters as many Wisconsin businesses struggle to find workers. The legislation approved 368-52 would allow Small Business Administration Small Business Development Centers to assist small businesses with establishing and improving apprenticeship programs, and other job training programs.

“In Wisconsin and across the country, small businesses are struggling to recruit skilled employees, particularly in the manufacturing sector,” he said. “In order bolster our supply chains, and reinvigorate the American economy, we must connect our skilled labor market with real-world workforce development that does not require thousands of dollars in student loan debt.”

[See the release.](#)

[See the roll call.](#)

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson is again raising concerns about the FDA's approval of COVID-19 vaccines for children.

The Oshkosh Republican in a joint letter with at least 20 GOP colleagues demanded the FDA answer questions about its consideration to approve vaccines for children ages 5 and under. Many of those questions focus on balancing potential harm to those who take the vaccine with the risks of not taking the vaccine and contracting the coronavirus.

These mRNA vaccines lack long-term safety studies and may carry unknown long-term risks," the letter reads. "Even with respect to near-term acute adverse reactions, the study populations for these vaccines are very small, as it was only with mass vaccinations that the FDA was able to detect serious adverse reactions, particularly among young males.

Johnson throughout the pandemic has raised concerns about vaccines causing harm and has suggested alternative treatments.

[See the letter.](#)

— Baldwin urged President Biden to defend the right to abortion access and offered her support for a measure that would increase access to affordable birth control.

The Madison Dem in a letter signed by more than 20 other senators asked Biden to issue an executive order to instruct federal agencies to submit plans on how to protect the right to abortion access.

Baldwin also voiced support for a bill that would require insurance companies cover over the counter birth control pills approved by the FDA. The Affordability is Access Act would also ban retailers from requiring a prescription for those looking to buy FDA-approved birth control pills.

"Women in Wisconsin do not want politicians making decisions about their own reproductive health care, and they don't need political interference making it harder to get birth control," the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee member said in a press release.

Lawmakers in the letter to Biden called on him to provide more protections for abortion access as the U.S. Supreme Court's draft opinion to overturn Roe v. Wade

was leaked earlier this year.

The letter calls for Biden to consider:

- *Increasing access to medication abortion;
- *Providing resources for individuals seeking abortion care in other states;
- *Establishing a reproductive health ombudsman at the Department of Health and Humans Services;
- *Enforcing “Free Choice of Provider” requirements;
- *Clarifying protections for sensitive health and location data; and
- *Using federal property and resources to increase access to abortion.

[See the Affordability is Access Act release.](#)

[See the letter to Biden.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher introduced the Drone Act to ban dangerous uses of drones, including attaching weapons to drones.

The Allouez Republican in a press release said the measure would ensure the emerging technology is used responsibly and bad actors are held accountable. Gallagher, ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, said in the wrong hands drones can pose a serious threat.

“Drones can be useful pieces of technology for commerce and recreation, but in the hands of terrorist organizations, drug traffickers, or irresponsible operators, can be a threat to our homeland security,” said Gallagher.

The bill would also:

- *Prohibit the willful removal of drone identification numbers and the disabling of their transmissions and anti-collision lights;
- *Prohibit, with up to a two-year prison sentence, the reckless or knowing interference of another emergency-response activity, law-enforcement activity, or military operation;
- *Subject anyone trying to get a prohibited object into a prison by way of a drone with a 10-year prison sentence; and
- *Apply the same penalties to drone operators who knowingly or recklessly interfere with motor vehicles, boats, and spacecraft, as those who knowingly or recklessly interfere with airplanes and runways.

[See the release.](#)

— A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit seeking to keep Johnson, Fitzgerald and Tiffany off the ballot this fall, ruling it was procedurally improper.

Ten plaintiffs accused the three Republicans of participating in an insurrection for their conduct between the November 2020 presidential election and Jan. 6, 2021, when Fitzgerald and Tiffany voted to object to counting the electoral votes of some states.

U.S. Judge Lynn Adelman, a former Dem lawmaker, ruled if there is any challenge to whether the three should be on the ballot this fall, the issue belongs before the state Elections Commission, not a federal court. Adelman wrote in Friday's ruling the parties were trying an "end-run around the state administrative process" to open the door to things like discovery that aren't available to them under proceedings before the state agency.

Adelman dismissed the complaint on procedural grounds and didn't address the merits of the arguments.

[See more here.](#)

— The White House announced President Biden has nominated a federal prosecutor and an attorney in private practice to become the next U.S. attorneys for the Eastern and Western districts of Wisconsin.

Greg Haanstad, who has served as an assistant U.S. attorney since 2002, was nominated to lead the Eastern District of Wisconsin. He previously served as the U.S. attorney for that office from 2016-18 and was the acting U.S. attorney from 2015-16.

Meanwhile, Sopen Shah, an attorney at Perkins Coie LLP, has been nominated to become the U.S. attorney for the Western District. Shah previously served as the deputy solicitor general of Wisconsin from 2017-19. She also represented the state and national Dem parties in a 2020 lawsuit over Wisconsin's spring primary that reached the U.S. Supreme Court.

The nominations are subject to confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

[See more here.](#)

— The NRCC has reserved just over \$2 million in ads for this fall, the latest spending commitment in western Wisconsin's 3rd CD.

The seat, held by retiring Dem Ron Kind, of La Crosse, since 1997, is rated among the most likely in the country to flip party control this fall. The National Republican Congressional Committee's announcement is the latest spending commitment to the race.

The NRCC said it reserved just shy of \$1.2 million in the Wausau market and \$990,000 in La Crosse. The commitment is part of an initial \$52 million buy nationally as Republicans look to flip control of the chamber.

Meanwhile, the Dem-aligned House Majority PAC said in March it reserved \$900,000 on TV and digital in Wausau and \$780,000 in La Crosse. It's part of a \$100 million national buy.

[See the NRCC release.](#)

[See the CLF release from April.](#)

[See the House Majority PAC release from March.](#)

[See more here.](#)

Posts of the week

<https://twitter.com/SenRonJohnson/status/1533838633064595456>

<https://twitter.com/SenatorBaldwin/status/1533809846285479936>

<https://twitter.com/repmarkpocan/status/1533803394787250177>

<https://twitter.com/RepGrothman/status/1533533748918202368>

<https://twitter.com/RepGallagher/status/1534351886974914560>

<https://twitter.com/RepRonKind/status/1533875870460432385>

<https://twitter.com/RepTiffany/status/1534564741720457216>

ICYMI

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[No Democrats filed to run against Wisconsin US Reps. Gallagher, Grothman](#)

[Wisconsin Republicans are running for office at the gas pump](#)

[PolitiFact: Yes, a tax break Ron Johnson pushed for in 2017 has benefited America's wealthiest more](#)

[Wisconsin lawmakers discuss opposition to gun reform legislation](#)