

DC Wrap: House Dems are pushing Republicans for new gun legislation; Johnson slams Schumer over blocking vote

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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

I'm a mother, a grandmother, and a great-grandmother. Our babies deserve better; they should be able to learn and grow without the threat of gun violence at their school, church, or grocery store. It's time for my GOP colleagues to put our babies first and support gun reform!

- U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, in a [tweet](#) urging legislative action after a mass shooting at a Texas elementary school this week.

This is an unspeakable tragedy and my heart breaks for the students, faculty, and families of those at Robb Elementary School. Today, the entire nation mourns with the Uvalde community and is grateful for the law enforcement officers who responded to this senseless act of evil.

- U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Allouez, in a [statement](#).

This week's news

— Wisconsin Dems in Washington, D.C. are pressuring their GOP colleagues to get on board with gun control measures after news of a mass shooting at a Texas elementary school that left 19 children and two adults dead.

Law enforcement officers killed the 18-year-old gunman who opened fire at Robb Elementary on Tuesday.

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan [suggested](#) GOP lawmakers have a conflict of interest with the National Rifle Association.

“Six years ago I joined a sit-in on the House floor to urge action on gun violence prevention,” the Town of Vermont Dem said in a tweet. “Imagine how many lives that might have been saved if the NRA didn’t have such a grip on the GOP.”

U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore on [Twitter](#) reacted to a video of U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, not responding to a question from CNN reporter Manu Raju about whether he supports expanding background checks for firearms purchases.

“@NRA got your tongue, @SenRonJohnson? We know they have your vote,” the Milwaukee Dem said.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, also in [reaction](#) to the video of Johnson, called for universal background checks.

“We cannot accept doing nothing every time this happens,” Baldwin said.

Johnson [called](#) the shooting “horrific.”

“There are no adequate words to express the horror at Robb Elementary. My sincere condolences to these families,” the Oshkosh Republican said in a tweet.

U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua, U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, and U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, have not released statements in response to the mass shooting.

Ann Roe, a Dem running for Steil’s 1st CD seat, [criticized](#) the incumbent for not publicly responding to the shooting.

“[Steil] continues to be a political coward, more concerned with maintaining his position within the Republican Party than advocating for the safety of our children,” Roe said.

— Johnson slammed Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer for blocking his proposal to move forward with his legislation to create a clearinghouse for best school safety practices.

The Oshkosh Republican in a floor speech asking for unanimous consent to pass the

Luke and Alex School Safety Act said he doesn't want to politicize the Texas school shooting and noted the bill has bipartisan support. But after Schumer, D-New York, blocked his move and said they could consider legislation if Republicans agree to debate on domestic terrorism. Johnson called Schumer's move "sad."

"It is just sad that this body can't pass this bill when about a month ago, they passed an identical bill that applied to churches," Johnson said. "This one applies to schools, and yet it's inappropriate, according to the majority leader, to pass this non-partisan bill by unanimous consent."

[See Johnson's release and video of the speech.](#)

— Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson said Johnson has blood on his hands for failing to push forward gun legislation Nelson says would have helped prevent the Uvalde shooting where 21 were killed.

The former 5th AD representative told WisPolitics.com after his roundtable event the Oshkosh Republican's failure to respond to CNN's Manu Raju on expanding background checks for gun buyers was unacceptable behavior. Nelson added Johnson's actions made it clear he is out of touch with his constituents on gun issues.

"Quite frankly I think he needs to take some responsibility for what happened yesterday, and before that in Buffalo and too many times before that," he said. "He has had 11 years to do something about gun violence in this country and he has done nothing. Blood is on his hands."

[See more here.](#)

— The U.S. Senate plans to to vote this week on legislation to address the threat of domestic terrorism.

Baldwin said she will vote to pass the bill.

The so-called Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act would require federal law enforcement agencies to evaluate and address the threat posed by white supremacists and other violent extremists. The bill would also allow dedicated offices in those agencies to "analyze, investigate and prosecute" domestic terrorism and require them to issue joint annual reports on domestic terrorism, among other things.

Baldwin and U.S. Reps. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, and Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, are all co-sponsors.

[See Baldwin's release.](#)

[See the domestic terrorism bill.](#)

— Grothman joined a letter with fellow Republican lawmakers decrying the World Health Organization's guidelines on abortion.

The guidelines, released in March, contain recommendations and best practices to aid in abortion-related health care decisions. In the letter, the lawmakers said the organization was falsely labeling abortion a human right and that health care providers would be forced to choose between performing abortions or unemployment.

"Instead of advocating for greater access to abortion, the WHO should instead seek to address the root causes that motivate women to seek illegal abortions," the lawmakers wrote.

[See the letter.](#)

— Jake Wilkins resigned as communications director for U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson's reelection campaign.

Though Wilkins declined comment on his departure beyond confirming he left, he liked several tweets on Friday suggesting he might not agree with the Oshkosh Republican on a number of issues.

One of the tweets Wilkins liked was from Brad Bainum, Senate campaigns communications director for American Bridge 21st Century, in reaction to the news:

"strong modeling for the other gop flacks out there: you don't have to keep defending your boss who spreads virulent racism and covid misinformation, wants to outlaw abortion, and doesn't seem to care about anything except slashing his biggest donors' taxes; you can simply quit," Bainum wrote.

The progressive outlet Heartland Signal, which first reported on the departure, noted Wilkins in recent weeks had begun liking tweets on social media that were pro-abortion rights and anti-Trump.

After the leak of a draft U.S. Supreme Court ruling that would overturn the 1973 decision guaranteeing the right to an abortion, Johnson said it would be the “correct decision” to overturn it.

[See Bainum’s tweet.](#)

— National opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court has dropped 10 points over the last two months, according to a new Marquette University Law School poll conducted a week after a draft decision to overturn the right to an abortion was leaked.

The new poll of adults found 44 percent approved of the job the court is doing, while 55 percent disapproved.

That’s down from a 54-45 split in March. In September 2020, 66 percent approved of the job the court was doing, while 33 percent disapproved. Court approval first took a significant dip in September 2021 after it rejected a request to block enforcement of a Texas law that sought to ban most abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy. It dipped to a 49-50 split before ticking up to 54-46 two months later.

[See more here.](#)

[See the MU Law School press release.](#)

— Polling conducted for Dem Brad Pfaff’s congressional bid shows he has a significant lead on the primary field, though a large swath of voters was undecided.

The poll found 28 percent back Pfaff, a state senator from Onalaska. Meanwhile, 8 percent supported Eau Claire businesswoman Rebecca Cooke, 7 percent supported retired CIA and Army officer Deb McGrath and 5 percent backed La Crosse Ald. Mark Neumann.

That leaves more than half of likely Dem primary voters surveyed uncommitted to the four announced candidates.

[See the release.](#)

[See the polling memo](#)

— Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson at a student roundtable event said lawmakers must address the student debt crisis for the betterment of the state's economy.

The Dem U.S. Senate candidate at UW-Madison said the country needs to focus on making sure quality higher education is still affordable. Solving the student debt crisis for current and future generations is crucial for the economic wellbeing of Wisconsin and the rest of the country, he added.

“We’re at a tipping point now where we have to address the student debt crisis,” he said.

[See more here.](#)

Posts of the week

Congratulations Samantha Kerkman on being sworn in as [@KenoshaCounty](#) Executive! pic.twitter.com/ucPH8HLnUH

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [May 25, 2022](#)

Today we remember George Floyd and hold on to our resolve to honor his life, working for racial justice in America. pic.twitter.com/Vao8Kjzde7

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [May 25, 2022](#)

It was an honor to celebrate the retirement of [#Neenah](#) Mayor Dean Kaufert. Thank you for your nearly 40 years of dedication to the health and safety of Neenah! [#WI06](#) pic.twitter.com/4b3P5TaSCx

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [May 22, 2022](#)

Three cheers for the workers at Raven Software on their vote to form the Game Workers Alliance union! This new generation of workers are an inspiration to us all! [#1u](#) <https://t.co/cx6P792d7n>

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [May 23, 2022](#)

ICYMI

[Ron Johnson calls media his 'opponent' in speech to annual GOP convention](#)

[Wisconsin leaders react to mass shooting at Texas elementary school](#)

[Fitzgerald, Evers offer remarks on abortion](#)

[Liberal groups call on Milwaukee leaders to reject 2024 Republican National Convention](#)