

DC Wrap: Wisconsin lawmakers split on GOP bill to require proof of citizenship to register to 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.](#)

Quotes of the week

Why would they want to remove their masks? Because they want these officers exposed, they want them afraid; they don't want them to carry out their enforcement actions. They want judicial warrants, again, which would completely neuter ICE's ability to apprehend the 650,000 criminals that Biden let into this country.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, on Dems' calls for ICE agents to be unmasked and use judicial warrants.

Senator, may I suggest you read the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. It is not what we want, but what is required by the supreme law of the land.

- U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Madison, in [response](#) to Johnson's comments.

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This week's news

— Wisconsin's members of Congress split along party lines over a controversial bill that would add new voting restrictions and requirements

ahead of the midterm elections.

The revised SAVE America Act, which would impose a host of new identification verification requirements upon federal elections, passed the House on a [218-213 vote](#) late yesterday afternoon.

The bill, which now goes to the Senate, would require voters to:

- Provide proof of citizenship to register to vote, such as a passport or a birth certificate and photo ID;
- Present at the time of voting certain photo IDs, including a driver's license, state ID, or tribal identification card; or
- Submit a copy of a photo ID when both requesting and submitting an absentee ballot.

The bill would also require states to submit their voter rolls to the Department of Homeland Security on a quarterly basis for the agency to cross-reference with its citizenship database, and it would impose additional identification requirements on voters in noncompliant states.

— Speaking on the floor ahead of the vote, U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, called the bill a “common-sense” measure that would “reinstall integrity” in elections.

“One citizen who is ineligible to vote is one too many, because it casts out the vote of a legal United States citizen,” he said.

He was also among the GOP lawmakers who charged that Democrats supported noncitizen voting, citing laws that allow noncitizens to vote in Washington, D.C.'s, municipal elections.

“We know what the Democratic playbook is, and we only have to look here at our nation's capital,” Steil said. “We know our Democratic colleagues want non-citizens to vote in U.S. elections.”

Republican U.S. Reps. Tony Wied of De Pere and Derrick Van Orden of Prairie du Chien also made statements supporting the SAVE America Act ahead of its passage.

Wied reposted with his message testimony from Scott Presler, a conservative activist who has promoted false claims of widespread election fraud in the 2020

election; Van Orden posed for a photo with Presler.

Democrats, including U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore of Milwaukee, sharply criticized the bill ahead of the vote.

Speaking on the floor, Moore charged the bill was a GOP-abetted effort by President Donald Trump to take over federal elections.

“Donald Trump lost the 2020 election. He’s aggrieved about that. So now he’s peddling claims of fraud as a pretext to take over our elections and disenfranchise millions,” Moore said.

The Brennan Center for Justice in 2024 estimated that 21.3 million Americans, more than nine percent of the U.S. voting-age population, lacked documentation proving their citizenship readily available.

She cited perceived instances of federal overreach, including U.S. Justice Department lawsuits against Wisconsin and other states for refusing to turn over confidential voter information.

— Wisconsin Elections Commission Chair Ann Jacobs, a Democratic appointee, also criticized the SAVE America Act.

She was particularly critical of the impact the bill could have on students, whose university IDs would not be eligible identification, and married women, saying the bill could pose a “real burden” to women who had changed their name without updating their birth certificates or passports.

Steil and other Republicans have disputed that this burden would be substantial for married women.

Jacobs cited a Brennan Center study of 42 jurisdictions in the 2016 general election that found only 30 instances of suspected noncitizen voting out of some 23.5 million votes cast.

“What do you say to the people who are going to be disenfranchised who have been voting their whole lives?” she said. “It’s throwing out the votes of so many people to worry about the 30 people documented as non-citizens, and that’s unfortunate.”

— Danielle Friedman, legal director at the University of Wisconsin Law

School's State Democracy Research Institute, highlighted several ways the bill would affect voting in Wisconsin:

- As with other states, the proof of citizenship requirement would newly mandate Wisconsin voters to present citizenship documents to election officials in person, at either the election officials' office or at a polling place on Election Day.
- State residents would be required for the first time to provide a copy of a photo ID to request and send in an absentee ballot.
- While Wisconsin is among the states that already require photo ID to vote, students would not be allowed to use their university IDs as eligible documentation.
- Election officials would also be subject to new criminal penalties if they assist a noncitizen in attempting to register to vote or register an individual who does not present documentary proof of citizenship.

— One Wisconsin Republican is pushing voting legislation that would impose further restrictions on absentee voting.

The Make Elections Great Again Act, authored by U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, shares the SAVE Act's provisions requiring proof of citizenship to register and photo ID to vote, along with mandating states to check voting rolls for non-citizens.

It would also bar states from automatically mailing ballots to voters, prohibit states from accepting mail-in ballots that arrive after Election Day, and require states to enter into an information-sharing agreement with the U.S. attorney general to receive federal funding for election administration.

Speaking at a Tuesday hearing of the House Administration Committee, Steil framed his bill, like the SAVE America Act, as an antidote for declining public trust in elections.

"These common-sense reforms House Republicans are proposing today will ensure that it remains easy to vote but hard to cheat," Steil said.

And like the SAVE America Act, the bill received similar blowback from committee Democrats, who charged the bill was an act of voter suppression by Trump and congressional Republicans.

Ranking Democratic U.S. Rep. Joe Morelle of New York attacked MEGA Act provisions requiring states to collaborate with DHS and the attorney general, citing in particular Pam Bondi's letter to Minnesota officials demanding the state's voter rolls in order to "restore the rule of law" amid an ongoing immigration enforcement operation.

"I ask the American people this: do you want Donald Trump running your elections? Do you want Pam Bondi or Kristi Noem running your elections?" Morelle said.

— Wisconsin's GOP House members voted against a Dem resolution to repeal President Donald Trump's Canadian tariffs.

Following the vote, Dems targeting U.S. Reps. Tom Tiffany and Derrick Van Orden politically this fall took shots at the GOP lawmakers for their vote.

The House signed off on the resolution [219-211](#), with six Republicans backing the measure. Dem U.S. Rep. Jared Golden of Maine, voted against it.

Ahead of the House vote, Trump posted a [warning](#) on Truth Social that any GOP member of the House or Senate that "votes against TARIFFS will seriously suffer the consequences come Election time, and that includes Primaries!"

Tiffany, who's running for governor this fall, and Van Orden, who's seeking reelection to western Wisconsin's 3rd CD, didn't immediately respond to requests for comment late yesterday. Neither posted comments to social media on their votes.

The Democratic Governors Association slammed Tiffany and five other House Republicans running to be the top executive in their states, saying their votes "only worsens the pain American families and businesses are already feeling and helps ensure the headwinds facing Republicans are going to be even worse in governors' races across the country in 2026."

A spokesperson for the DCCC knocked Van Orden, R-Prairie du Chien, and U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, saying "they will continue rolling over for their party bosses and force Wisconsin farmers and working families to pick up the bill."

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is [cosponsoring](#) a bill that would divert nearly \$75 billion in already-approved ICE funding to support local police.

The funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement was approved in Republicans' One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The Dem proposal comes as lawmakers face a Friday deadline to agree on funding for the Department of Health Services amid backlash over the agency's national immigration crackdown.

"Under Donald Trump and Kristi Noem's leadership, masked, armed, and untrained agents have flooded into communities, making our streets less safe. It's clear that Donald Trump's ICE is out of control and I'm fighting to rein in the chaos and violence we're seeing before more of our neighbors get hurt," Baldwin, D-Madison, said. "ICE does not need this blank check and we should instead double down on what we know actually keeps people safe - and that is investing in our local police."

Dems have sought to rein in ICE following the shooting of two American citizens by immigration officers in Minnesota last month, Alex Pretti and Renée Good.

The Providing Useful Budgets for Localities to Invest in Cops by Substituting Appropriations from Federal Enforcement To Yield Results — or PUBLIC SAFETY Act — would redirect \$29.85 billion in ICE operations and personnel funding to the COPS Hiring Program to support hiring police officers nationwide and waive the program's matching requirements for small jurisdictions.

It would also redirect \$45 billion from ICE detention funding to the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance program, which helps fund state and local public safety initiatives.

— The House Education and Workforce Committee will hold a [field hearing](#) about disability employment at Green Valley Enterprises in Beaver Dam on Friday.

The hearing, titled "Work, Dignity, and Choice in Disability Employment," will focus on facilities like Green Valley Enterprises that employ people with disabilities, according to U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman's office.

Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, serves on the committee and has advocated for the continued use of 14(c) certificates allowing employers, such as community rehabilitation providers that work with people in the disabled community, to pay them an hourly wage based on productivity.

Posts of the week

My dad was a proud member of the UAW, and it's always an honor to meet with UAW Region 4 representatives! We discussed trade and healthcare priorities, and I'm proud to be [#UnionStrong](#).

pic.twitter.com/c2CWlaNKz0

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [February 10, 2026](#)

A stronger America starts at home.

Make America Healthy Again ☐☐ [@SecKennedy](#)

pic.twitter.com/xWkVCopGFL

— Rep. Derrick Van Orden (@RepVanOrden) [February 10, 2026](#)

Happy birthday, [@SenatorBaldwin!](#)

Tammy is the same smart, compassionate, hardworking person in the U.S. Senate as she was when we served together on the Dane County Board of Supervisors 30 years ago! pic.twitter.com/xQQDSqMgmc

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [February 11, 2026](#)

I enjoyed visiting the Green Bay YMCA this past week. It was awesome to learn about the incredible work they do for our communities—specifically how they support our youth through programs like summer camp, Youth in Government, after school programs, and so much more.

pic.twitter.com/Q8xQqyE3f7

— Rep. Tony Wied (@RepTonyWied) [February 11, 2026](#)

ICYMI

The Hill: [GOP lawmaker says those without an ID 'need' to be able to get one free of charge to vote](#)

Wisconsin Public Radio: [Wisconsin US Sen. Tammy Baldwin speaks out against GOP bill to restrict voting](#)

Gazette Xtra: [Rep. Van Orden speaks with Western Wisconsin faith groups](#)

WEAU: [Wisconsin delegation divided on DHS funding push](#)

The Hill: [Senate Republican on Pretti, Good deaths: Democrats 'got their martyrs'](#)

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [Wisconsin Democrats seek to flip script on gun rights, target GOP's Tiffany](#)

PBS Wisconsin: [Gwen Moore on ICE and funding levels for Homeland Security](#)