



STATE CAPITOL UPDATE

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Governor Begins to Sign Legislation, Begins with Two Major Bipartisan Accomplishments

Governor Tony Evers signed two significant pieces of bipartisan legislation this week aimed at improving women's health outcomes and expanding access to care for new mothers across the state. These two proposals have been debated over the past several state legislative sessions.

One of the measures, commonly known as [Gail's Law – 2025 Act 103](#), requires health insurance plans to cover supplemental breast cancer screenings for women who are at higher risk, including those with dense breast tissue. The law is named in honor of Gail Zeamer, a Neenah mother and advocate who pushed for expanded screening after her own late-stage diagnosis. Lawmakers in both parties rallied around the proposal, which passed unanimously in the Legislature, reflecting a shared recognition of the importance of early detection in saving lives.

In addition to Gail's Law, Evers also signed [legislation – 2025 Act 102](#) - postpartum Medicaid coverage for new mothers from 60 days to a full year. The change means thousands of Wisconsin women enrolled in BadgerCare Plus will now have continued access to critical health services during the first 12 months after childbirth, a period when many pregnancy related complications and mental health challenges can emerge.

Health experts and advocates have long argued that extending postpartum coverage can reduce maternal mortality, improve treatment for conditions such as postpartum depression, and provide more consistent care for chronic health issues that develop after pregnancy. Wisconsin had previously been one of the last states in the nation without a full year of postpartum coverage.

Together, the passage of Gail's Law and the postpartum Medicaid extension mark a notable moment of bipartisan cooperation in the 2025 to 2026 legislative session, according to many Capitol followers. The new laws are expected to take effect later in 2026, expanding preventive care and strengthening support for mothers and families across Wisconsin.

State Senate Finishes Legislative Work, Sends PFAs, NIL, and On-line Gaming Measures, and Dozens of Others to Governor

The Republican-led Wisconsin State Senate closed its final scheduled floor session of the year with the passage of a packed slate of legislation now headed to Governor Tony Evers for consideration. Lawmakers approved several high-profile bills addressing online sports betting, college athlete name image and likeness (NIL) policies, PFAS contamination cleanup, SNAP benefits, and dozens more as they wrapped up the 2025-26 legislative term.

Among the highest profile measures was the [legalization of online sports betting](#). The bill allows Wisconsin residents to place mobile wagers from anywhere in the state so long as the bets are

processed through servers located on federally recognized tribal lands. Supporters said the plan would allow Wisconsin tribes to remain competitive with neighboring states while generating additional state revenue estimated to be between \$6 to 12 million annually. Opponents from both parties warned of the social and financial risks of widespread online gambling. The bill passed the Senate 21-12 on a bipartisan vote after contentious debate and will now move to Evers' desk for his consideration.

The Senate also advanced by a slim 17-16 margin a measure formalizing how University of Wisconsin athletes can profit from their name, image and likeness. The [legislation sets standards for NIL contracts and provides additional funding](#) to offset costs faced by UW-Madison's athletic department. Supporters argued that clear guidelines would protect student-athletes and give the state's flagship university a fair footing in collegiate sports, while critics questioned directing state money toward athletics during a tight budget cycle.

With broad bipartisan agreement, lawmakers [passed a \\$133 million plan to combat contamination from PFAS chemicals across the state](#). The package creates a mitigation fund and updates the state's spills law to hold polluters accountable. Evers has already indicated he intends to sign the PFAS legislation, calling the compromise a long-awaited breakthrough for communities dealing with tainted water supplies.

With dozens of bills now awaiting gubernatorial action, this session marked the Senate's final floor votes before the fall elections. While legislators could return later for a special or extraordinary session, most expect that this week's votes conclude regular business until the next legislative term.

Senate Majority Leader Not Running for Re-election, Joins Governor and Assembly Speaker in Retiring

State Capitol followers saw another major leader announce his retirement from the state legislature with the announcement of state Senator Devin LeMahieu (R-Oostburg) saying that he would not be running for re-election in 2026. LeMahieu has served as the upper chamber's majority leader since 2021 and was first elected to the Senate in 2014.

In his [retirement announcement](#), LeMahieu said, "The time has come for a new chapter in my life," LeMahieu said in a statement announcing his decision. He did not say what he planned to do next. LeMahieu was first elected in 2014 and was chosen as Republican leader of the Senate in 2020."

LeMahieu's retirement follows both [Governor Tony Evers](#) and [Assembly Speaker Robin Vos](#) (R-Rochester), who both announced previously that they were not running for re-election in 2026, meaning that come the 2026-27 legislative session, the state Capitol will have three new faces – Governor, Speaker, and Majority Leader – serving in the highest positions of power.