

United States Senator Ron Johnson



First Year Report

2011

Prior to being sworn in to the U.S. Senate in 2011, Ron Johnson spent 31 years raising his family and building a successful manufacturing business in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. From operating the equipment, to keeping the company books and selling its products, he has been involved in every function of the business. Although engaged in local community and charity organizations prior to his election in 2010, Ron Johnson had never sought public office.

Senator Johnson (R-WI) decided to leave the private sector because our nation faces an economic crisis that is rooted in a federal government that is too large, too expensive, and which is bankrupting the nation. Senator Johnson's manufacturing background has taught him to attack the root cause of a problem, not merely the symptoms. He believes that resolving woeful economic growth, high unemployment and securing a bright economic future can only be accomplished by reversing the ever-expanding size, scope and cost of government in Washington, D.C.

This report covers the first session of the 112th Congress. Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) served as Majority Leader, setting the agenda and determining the legislation that the Senate would consider. Senator Johnson was a member of the minority party, and was 95th out of 100 Senators in seniority. Nevertheless, he earned significant committee assignments, including serving as the senior Republican member of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia.

Additional committee assignments include:

- Committee on the Budget (no subcommittees)
- Committee on Appropriations
 - Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
 - Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
 - Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
 - Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
 - Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
- Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
 - Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia (Ranking Republican)
 - Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security
 - Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery and Intergovernmental Affairs
- Special Committee on Aging (no subcommittees)

Below is a summary of accomplishments during Senator Johnson's first year in the Senate:

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Voting

100% voting attendance record

235 floor roll call votes cast

Legislation Introduced

- S. 1936: **Implementation of Simpson-Bowles Spending Reductions Act of 2011**
(Introduced Dec. 1, 2011)
Adopts seven immediate discretionary spending reforms recommended by the bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, which would save \$655 billion over ten years.
- S. Res. 306: **Supporting the goals and ideals of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month**
(Introduced Oct. 20, 2011; Passed Senate Oct. 21, 2011)
Bipartisan resolution that encourages private sector and government efforts to improve security and reliability of E-commerce.
House companion is H. Res. 446, introduced by Rep. Langevin (D-RI).
- S. 1611: **Reducing the Size of the Federal Government Through Attrition Act of 2011**
(Introduced Sept. 22, 2011)
Reverses the expansion of the federal workforce through attrition by hiring one new employee for every three that retire.
House companion is H.R. 3029, introduced by Rep. Mulvaney (R-SC).
- S. 1438: **Regulation Moratorium and Jobs Preservation Act of 2011**
(Introduced July 28, 2011)
To provide that no agency may implement any regulation with an annual effect on the economy of \$100,000,000 or more, or which adversely impacts the economy, until the unemployment rate falls below 7.8 percent.
House companion is H.R. 2898, introduced by Rep. Ribble (R-WI).

73 Bills Cosponsored

Bills Benefiting Wisconsin Consumers and Businesses

- S. 156: **Water Heater Rating Improvement Act of 2011**, Sen. Kohl (D-WI)
This bill provides clarity for businesses by establishing an improved energy efficiency test procedure and uniform descriptor for water heaters.
- S. 192: **Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act**, Sen. DeMint (R-SC)
This legislation repeals The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA).
- S. 281: **Save Our States Act**, Sen. Hutchison (R-TX)
Delays the effective date of PPACA until all current legal challenges are decided.
- S. 746: **Dodd-Frank Repeal Act of 2011**, Sen. Shelby (R-AL)
Reduces the regulatory burden by repealing the Dodd-Frank Act.
- S. 1134: **St. Croix River Crossing Project Authorization Act**, Sen. Klobuchar (D-MN)
Provides an exemption from the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act so that a new four-lane bridge can replace the 80-year-old, unsafe Stillwater Lift Bridge. Senator Johnson testified in support of this bi-partisan legislation in front of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks. In November, Senator Johnson and a bi-partisan group of Minnesota and Wisconsin legislators met with Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to advocate for federal assistance in replacing the existing bridge. (More information on page 3)
- S. 1340: **Cut, Cap, and Balance Act of 2011**, Sen. Lee (R-UT)
Cuts spending for fiscal year 2012, caps spending over the next ten years and increases the debt ceiling contingent upon passage of a balanced budget amendment.

- S. 1392: **EPA Regulatory Relief Act of 2011**, Sen. Collins (R-ME)
 Delays costly and burdensome boiler regulations coming out of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and requires the EPA to consider compliance dates, feasibility of implementation, job impact, and other factors while crafting a more realistic rule.
- S. 1528: **Farm Dust Regulation Prevention Act of 2011**, Sen. Johanns (R-NE)
 Blocks implementation of rules requiring farms to control windblown dust.

S. 1134: St. Croix River Crossing Project Authorization Act, Sen. Klobuchar (D-MN)

Senator Johnson has said that “the St. Croix River Crossing Project is critical for western Wisconsin. It’s important both for drivers who use the bridge on a day-to-day basis and for the regional economy.” The existing lift bridge from Wisconsin to Stillwater, Minnesota should be replaced, but federal action is needed. This bill permits the head of any federal agency to authorize and assist in the construction of a new bridge crossing the St. Croix River approximately six miles north of the I-94 crossing, if specified mitigation items are included as enforceable conditions.

- May 26: S. 1134 was introduced and referred to Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.
- July 28: Johnson testified in support of S.1134 in front of Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks.
- Nov. 10: The legislation was reported favorably by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.
- Nov. 16: Sen. Johnson and a bipartisan group of Minnesota and Wisconsin legislators met with Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. Johnson and others argued for the legislation.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)

Senator Johnson has cited enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) as an important factor in his decision to leave private life and come to Washington. The law has already raised the cost of health care premiums and as key elements are put into place over the next few years, will far exceed the original cost to taxpayers projected by its proponents. He has explained how America’s world-class medical care saved his daughter, Carey, and corrected her life-threatening heart defect. Repeal of the 2010 health care law is a high priority for Senator Johnson.

Bills Sponsored

- S. 192: **Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act**, Sen. DeMint (R-SC)
 Repeals the PPACA.
- S. 281: **Save Our States Act**, Sen. Hutchison (R-TX)
 Delays the PPACA until after the Supreme Court rules on its constitutionality.

Votes Taken

- H.R. 4: Repeal 1099 reporting requirements for payments of \$600.
- S. Amdt. 28 to S. 223: Repeal the expansion of the PPACA information reporting requirements.
- S. Amdt. 13 to S. 223: Repeal of the PPACA.
- H. Con. Res. 35: Defund the PPACA.

Correspondence

- November 29: Letter to Dr. Douglas Elmendorf, Director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) requesting that CBO re-examine its estimates for health insurance exchanges.

OFFICIAL LETTERS

Senator Johnson sent several official letters, notably:

- January 27: **To the EPA regarding ‘Boiler MACT’ rule**
Senator Johnson joined his colleagues in expressing concern that proposed emission rules would cost billions of dollars and eliminate jobs in an already struggling economy.
- February 16: **To Center for Medicare, Medicaid Services (CMS) about the University of Wisconsin Organ Procurement Program**
Senator Johnson and other Members encouraged CMS to maintain the Organ Procurement Program in Wisconsin, or face fewer transplants and longer wait times for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.
- March 2: **To Members of the United States Senate**
Senator Johnson, along with seven of his colleagues, sent a letter to the rest of the Senate informing them that they will vote “no” on any legislation that does not offset new spending, does not include a “sunset” date for new programs, is not publicly available for three full days prior to a vote, duplicates existing government programs, or does not have a basis in one of the enumerated powers of the Constitution.
- April 5: **To the EPA about Menominee River contamination**
Senator Johnson sent a bipartisan letter requesting more information regarding the remediation being considered, and the timeframe for remediation plans.
- April 12: **To the Department of Veterans Affairs on post 9/11 benefits**
Senator Johnson sent a letter to Secretary Eric Shinseki expressing concern that a 2010 law would shift costs for some veterans’ benefits to the states, potentially harming future benefits.
- July 1: **To the Ambassador to Dominican Republic on Air Cargo Carriers**
Senator Johnson sent a bipartisan letter seeking fair handling of air cargo carrier property seized by the Air Force of the Dominican Republic.
- July 15: **To the Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, Federal Trade Commission, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding proposed school nutrition standards**
Senator Johnson joined with eighteen colleagues in a bipartisan letter to express concern with proposed marketing standards.
- September 8: **To the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on staff allocations**
Senator Johnson sent a letter to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, requesting an accounting of the Department’s staff allocations at headquarters and component levels to ensure efficiency and to reduce duplication.
- September 12: **To the Air Force Secretary about EPA standards at Truax Field**
Senator Johnson and his colleagues sent a letter to Secretary Michael Donley, requesting clarification of mistakes calculating air quality and noise standards. The Air Force confirmed an error in downgrading Truax’s status.
- September 29: **To the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on budget**
Senator Johnson sent a letter to FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate requesting a detailed overview of the agency’s financial condition and operational budget.

- October 6: **To the Department of Labor (DoL) on the “persuader” rule**
Senator Johnson sent a letter to DoL Secretary Hilda Solis requesting that DoL rescind a rule that would require employers to report all consultations with labor counsel or consultants, with estimated compliance costs of \$1.5 billion in the first year alone.
- October 7: **To EPA regarding ‘Boiler MACT’ regulations**
Senator Johnson sent a letter with other members of the Wisconsin delegation asking EPA to meet with representatives of towns and cities regarding the impact of the proposed rule.

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

\$1.4 Trillion in Savings: Recommendations for the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction

In September 2011, Senator Johnson’s Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia submitted \$1.4 trillion in savings recommendations to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. These recommendations were also released publicly as a Minority Staff Report.

Key Committee Votes

- Voted against nine of eleven 2012 spending bills which received committee votes.
- Voted against excessive spending levels for discretionary programs for 2012.
- Forced Appropriations Committee Members to vote on the record regarding increased funding for Commerce, Justice, Science programs.
- Voted to require that savings derived from DHS program consolidations and terminations be returned to the Treasury.
- Voted to require the Government Accounting Office (GAO) to assess whether DHS has performance metrics process to evaluate certain achievements.
- Voted to require DHS to obtain a “clean” financial audit opinion and submit a report with plans to implement a new financial system at DHS.
- Voted ‘no’ on the DHS Authorization bill because it created new programs and authorities without an offset or a sunset.
- Voted to give more protection to government whistleblowers that expose waste, fraud, and abuse.
- Voted to expand the Office of Management and Budget’s authority over improper payments by federal agencies.

Key Witnesses Questioned

- **Cass Sunstein, Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget**
Regarding the regulatory burden to the private sector and challenges to the current regulatory process
- **John Berry, Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management**
Regarding the use of taxpayer resources to fund labor-management forums in the federal government

- **Douglas Elmendorf, Director, Congressional Budget Office**
Regarding the federal budget, the deficit, and the likely cost of the PPACA
- **Jacob Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget**
Regarding Social Security payments, national debt, and the PPACA's impact on the deficit
- **Timothy Geithner, Secretary of the Treasury**
Regarding the President's lack of leadership on deficit reduction, the impact of taxation on production and its ability to raise federal revenue
- **Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State**
Regarding the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt following regime change, and State Department efforts to provide information and education in other nations
- **Janet Napolitano, Secretary of the Homeland Security**
Regarding Border Security, growth in overhead at DHS, and increases in agency budget
- **Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services**
Regarding possible errors in the PPACA cost estimates
- **Robert Mueller, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation**
Regarding growth in agency manpower, prioritization of criminal activities vs. counter-terror, investigation of financial fraud
- **Richard Serino, Deputy Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency**
Regarding disaster declarations, and whether the federal government has too large a role in disaster response

CONSTITUENT OUTREACH

As a citizen-legislator, Senator Johnson believes that communicating with his constituents is extremely important. He listens to and responds to constituents through a range of media and looks forward to meetings with anyone concerned about the challenges we face as a nation.

Senator Johnson has been personally involved in over 300 meetings with Wisconsin constituent groups. This includes visiting schools, manufacturing plants, and medical facilities.

Senator Johnson's office responded by mail or e-mail to 275,020 inquiries by Wisconsin constituents in his first year.

In 2011, Senator Johnson's office opened 2,003 cases on behalf of constituents who are encountering problems with federal agencies. Of those, 1,693 cases have been closed.

State Staff Meetings

Senator Johnson implemented Mobile Office Hours to offer assistance to constituents who cannot visit one of his state offices. The Senator's staff arranges to come to city halls, libraries, or other venues, and to be available for a certain period of time. Constituents who need help dealing with federal agencies, such as the Veterans' Administration and the Social Security Administration, can come in person and speak with someone who can help. Since the start of this program, these Mobile Office Hours have been held in all 72 counties, on a weekly basis, throughout the year. The Senator's staff has held 226 Mobile Office Hours meetings.

The Senator's staff has also attended over 1,200 outreach events in Wisconsin. These include community events, civic meetings, and visits to association meetings, etc.

Telephone Town Hall Information

Senator Johnson's office held twelve telephone town halls in 2011. 157,064 Wisconsin citizens actively participated. The events last approximately 60 minutes and participants voice their concerns and opinions on issues of the day, with Senator Johnson responding to their questions and inquiries.

Industry Roundtables

As the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Senator Johnson also serves that subcommittee's constituency. In this role the Senator has held seven industry roundtables throughout the year focusing on burdensome regulations, government management of the health care regulations, government competition with the private sector in commercial activities, as well as other issues.

BUILDING BRIDGES

In an effort to promote cooperation with the House of Representatives in the passage of legislation to address important challenges, Senator Johnson accepted invitations to meet with and address:

- The House Republican Study Committee (168 members)
- The House Freshman Republican class (85 members)
- The House Republican Policy Committee (56 members)

In addition, Senator Johnson has met with numerous experts and national public policy organizations to promote passage of priorities including Cut, Cap, and Balance, America's Choice, and others.

Leadership

Part of being effective as a citizen-legislator is to achieve a degree of confidence with other members as a thoughtful and serious colleague. An opening in the Republican Senate Leadership became available late in 2011. In an effort to bring a more independent voice to the Republican Leadership table, several fellow members urged Senator Johnson to run for Vice Chairman of the Republican Conference. He was not successful, but the very close 25-22 vote is worthy of note as an indicator of the positive progress Senator Johnson has made in a very short time frame.

RESPONDING TO THE PRESS

Editorial Board meetings with local Wisconsin newspapers

Senator Johnson recognized that meeting with Wisconsin newspaper editorial boards is important, as it allows local readers to learn more about their Senator's actions and views. In 2011, Senator Johnson attended 15 meetings with Wisconsin newspaper editorial boards.

Press Interaction

Senator Johnson understands the important watchdog role the American press has in informing citizens on current issues and has made himself and his office available to the press. Senator Johnson personally participated in over 150 interviews with Wisconsin print, radio, and television media during 2011. His office responded to hundreds of inquiries from Wisconsin press.

Op-eds

Senator Johnson wrote 12 op-eds during 2011, which have been featured in a number of Wisconsin newspapers, as well as national publications such as *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*.