

Bill Kaplan: Rep. Gallagher, bipartisanship

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Trump: Over six months of deception, drama, hyper-partisanship and narcissism, but nothing for regular folks. No plan to deal with loss of jobs and lower wages from automation, globalization and unfair trade deals. No infrastructure program. No tax reform to close loopholes for the rich and make taxes fairer. Just another Moby-Dick crusade to take health care coverage away from millions, including hundreds of thousands in Wisconsin.

Meanwhile the probe into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and more revelations of wrongdoing, subsume the White House. Trump and his closest cronies are increasingly in legal and political jeopardy: Special Counsel Robert Mueller has begun using a D.C. federal grand jury – confirming that he is leading a criminal investigation; a crackerjack team of prosecutors with “expertise in prosecuting national security, fraud and public corruption ...” is on the case (*Washington Post*); Mueller and his team have asked the White House for documents related to former Trump National Security Adviser Michael Flynn and Trump has now admitted that he helped prepare his son’s (Donald Jr.) inaccurate and misleading statement on meeting with the Russians during the campaign.

No surprise that Trump has been trying to force out Attorney General Jeff Sessions so that he could appoint someone to fire Mueller. And, there’s White House chatter about Trump pardoning himself and others. Then on Friday Trump retweeted a video clip of a conservative talk show discussion of the Russian probe leading to indictments. The *Washington Post* said: “for Trump to entertain the prospect of an indictment is an unforced error that plants questions about whether he has any reason to think an indictment might be coming.” Some congressional Republicans are reacting properly.

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First, the Senate adjourned after agreeing unanimously to block Trump from being able to replace Sessions with a “recess” appointment. Second, there are two bipartisan Senate bills to protect Mueller. Both would require “judicial review of any move to oust Mueller” (*Politico*). One is co-sponsored by North Carolina ultra-conservative GOP Senator Thom Tillis. A shot across the bow. Where is Wisconsin GOP Senator Ron Johnson? Will he support the rule of law, including checks and balances?

Probably more likely to speak up is Wisconsin GOP Representative Mike Gallagher. He has gained a reputation for independence and integrity with his tweets over Trump’s firing of FBI Director James Comey. Gallagher said: “It is imperative that both congressional and FBI investigations into Russian interference in our country continue unimpeded and unaltered.” Former U.S. Marine Gallagher would be a natural to sponsor a bipartisan House bill to protect Mueller. And, he displayed similar bipartisanship last week.

Gallagher and 42 other Democratic and GOP representatives have released “a bipartisan fix for health care” that would restrain Trump’s effort to sabotage the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Their plan would help stabilize and strengthen private health insurers by funding cost-sharing payments (out-of-pocket costs) due under the ACA. It also includes other good ideas like reinsurance to help insurers cover patients requiring costly care. Bipartisanship at its best.

— *Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C. for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 -2009.*