

DC Wrap: May 5-11

Posted on Thursday, May 11, 2017

This is the 10th sample of a weekly DC Wrap product from WisPolitics.com. Let us know your feedback: info@wispolitics.com.

Quotes of the week

I think the timing of the firing is indeed suspicious. It raises a lot of questions. And like most Americans and like most Wisconsinites, I just want the truth.

- U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay, on the firing of former FBI Director James Comey amid an investigation into possible collusion between Russian officials and the Trump campaign. During an interview yesterday, he spoke warily of Russian President Vladimir Putin and the country itself, saying that Russia “does not share our interests.” See more from the interview:

<http://www.wearegreenbay.com/news/local-news/rep-mike-gallagher-talks-comey-firing-healthcare-and-town-hall-meetings/710848097>

I hope and pray this had nothing to do with the FBI’s independent investigation into Russian interference and possible collusion of Trump associates with Russia during the 2016 election.

- U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, who joined other Dems in knocking President Trump’s decision to fire Comey as “a grotesque abuse of power.” He also called on congressional leadership to schedule hearings “so we can get to the bottom of this.”

This week’s news

— House Speaker Paul Ryan says former FBI Director James Comey was “compromised” and lost confidence of officials at the Department of Justice.

Ryan did not immediately comment on the president’s decision to fire Comey. But he went on Fox News late yesterday to say Trump “made a presidential decision” to remove him because he did not want the FBI to be in disarray under Comey’s leadership.

“I think he had just basically lost the confidence of a lot of Republicans and a lot of Democrats based upon his conduct, his actions and some of the comments that he made,” Ryan said of Comey. “Most importantly, he lost the confidence of the president, and it is entirely within the president’s role and authority to relieve him, and that’s what he did.”

Ryan added he does not believe it would be a good idea to appoint a special prosecutor to look into possible connections between the Trump campaign and Russia.

See more from the interview:

<http://www.speaker.gov/video/speaker-ryan-firing-fbi-director-james-comey>

— Ryan is praising President Trump’s appointment of former U.S. Rep. Mark Green to lead USAID, the federal agency in charge of humanitarian assistance.

Green, a former GOP gov candidate who was elected with Ryan to the House in 1998, represented the northeast Wisconsin 8th CD until 2007. He’s currently president of the International Republican Institute, which helps boost democracy around the world, and was U.S. ambassador to Tanzania until 2009.

Ryan said Green, whose appointment requires Senate confirmation, has a “passion to help people in need, ” which would serve him well as administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

“His years of experience fighting poverty and repression in the developing world make him an exceptional choice to lead USAID,” he said. “In this post, Mark will serve as a strong voice for liberty and help strengthen American leadership abroad.”

See the White House announcement:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/05/10/president-donald-j-trump-announces-key-additions-his-administration>

— A new survey from the Dem firm Public Policy Polling has Ryan’s numbers upside down in his southeastern Wisconsin congressional district.

The poll found 43 percent of 1st CD voters approve of the job Ryan is doing, while

51 percent disapprove. It also found 46 percent would re-elect Ryan if the election were held today, while 48 percent would prefer “someone new.”

The poll was paid for by the Stop the Speaker PAC, whose mission is to “make Paul Ryan’s life hell,” according to its website.

The survey also found President Trump’s job approval number at 49-45 in the district.

The poll of 553 district voters, conducted Tuesday and Wednesday, had a margin of error of plus or minus 4.2 percentage points.

See the results:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/170511PPP.pdf>

— The House is on recess again this week, but this time, two Wisconsin congressmen from across the aisle are coming together for a listening session — and food.

U.S. Reps. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, and Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay, are coming together on Thursday to hold a “Pizza and Politics” event in Appleton with employees at Thrivent, according to a Pocan spokeswoman.

The two are then heading to Green Bay to do a show on Fox 11 together.

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, this week highlighted cybersecurity in his committee and the “relentless and incredibly destructive attacks” he says affect each sector of the economy.

Johnson chairs the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, which held a hearing on the issue yesterday. Johnson cited estimates that cyberattacks cost \$375 billion to \$575 billion each year.

He also praised federal workers who are tackling the issue as “really fabulous patriots who are working at way below” what they’d make in private companies. But he said the feds need to “engage the private sector” to ensure all the most talented people collaborate on cybersecurity.

“We just need to make sure we get as many bright minds as possible working on such a difficult issue,” he said to kick off the hearing.

Those who testified at the hearing were Jeffrey E. Greene of Symantec Corporation; Steven Chabinsky of White & Case LLP; Brandon Valeriano, the Donald Bren Chair at the Marine Corps University; and Kevin Keeney of Monsanto Company.

See more on the hearing:

<https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/cyber-threats-facing-america-an-overview-of-the-cybersecurity-threat-landscape>

Listen to the hearing:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?427984-1/homeland-security-governmental-affairs>

— U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson on Tuesday took opposing votes on the nominee for commissioner of the FDA.

Scott Gottlieb was ultimately confirmed on a 57-42 vote, with one abstaining. Johnson, R-Oshkosh, joined the majority to support President Trump's pick.

Gottlieb had previously held jobs at the agency during George W. Bush's presidency. He's also been a frequent consultant to drug companies and has been a big investor in the health care industry, raising concerns among some Dems he wouldn't be able to lead the agency in an unbiased way.

See the roll-call vote:

https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=115&session=1&vote=00124

— Baldwin joined nine other senators on Tuesday to introduce a bill that looks to safeguard pension plans.

The legislation seeks to combat a 2014 provision that the senators fear could result in millions of retirees and workers facing deep cuts in their multi-employer pension plans.

Baldwin, D-Madison, said at a news conference touted the importance of pension plans as a "central pillar of economic security for our working class."

"It's time for Washington to respect the hard work of American workers and make sure that the promises made to them are kept," she said.

Posts of the week

I also met a very talented local Sparta artist. Thank you for the beautiful drawing! pic.twitter.com/ChUZW9gFjU

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [May 5, 2017](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/RepSeanDuffy/photos/a.120115528057340.17864.119657691436457/1321095291292685/?type=3&theater>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BTscOQzl84A/?taken-by=mikeforwisconsin>

ICYMI

Wisconsin delegates split along party lines in House health care vote

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2017/wisconsin-delegates-split-along-party-lines-in-house-health-care-vote/>

Wis. Dem members slam Trump for firing Comey

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2017/wis-dem-members-slam-trump-for-firing-comey/>

Sen. Baldwin says McConnell not taking Comey firing seriously

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/may/10/baldwin-mcconnell-not-taking-comey-fire-seriously/>

Super PAC attack blaming Tammy Baldwin for deaths of 3 veterans at Tomah VA hospital lacks evidence

<http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2017/may/05/americas-pac/super-pac-attack-blaming-tammy-baldwin-deaths-3-ve/>

Wisconsin Republicans worry about crowded Senate primary aiding Tammy Baldwin again

http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/wisconsin-republicans-worry-about-crowded-senate-primary-aiding-tammy-baldwin/article_ba2f9147-3e7a-5fcb-a6c0-630eacfd786a.html

Sen. Baldwin: Senate GOP is “not out to a good start” on Obamacare replacement bill

<http://fox6now.com/2017/05/09/senate-gop-creates-13-man-group-to-craft-health-care-plan-sen-baldwin-is-critical/>

Senate GOP chair won't rule out independent Russia probe

<http://thehill.com/video/332789-senate-gop-chair-wont-rule-out-independent-russia-probe>

Congressman Pocan Will Speak at Thomas Paine Dinner Thursday

<https://doorcountypulse.com/congressman-pocan-will-speak-thomas-paine-dinner-thursday/>

Mark Pocan to Talk Health Care in Paul Ryan's District

<http://www.rollcall.com/news/politics/pocan-talk-health-care-paul-ryans-district#sthash.i71Z0Yjh.dpuf>

Sexual assault, domestic violence themselves are not pre-existing conditions under GOP health bill

<http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2017/may/09/gwen-moore/sexual-assault-domestic-violence-themselves-are-no/>

Kind: Health care bill ‘a bad piece of legislation’

http://www.wiscnews.com/juneaucountystartimes/news/local/article_3ac293c3-8179-5aa3-aff2-9bc4f3a8dc93.html

Many Wisconsin Dems call for investigation into Comey firing

<http://wsau.com/news/articles/2017/may/10/many-wisconsin-dems-call-for-investigation-into-comey-firing/>

Rep. Mike Gallagher unleashes tweet storm over Comey firing

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2017/05/10/rep-mike-gallagher-unleashes-tweet-storm-over-comey-firing/315630001/>

Watch: Rep. Mike Gallagher answers questions about health care bill

<http://www.wbay.com/content/news/Watch-Rep-Mike-Gallagher-421732254.html>

Rep. Gallagher invited to town hall meeting

<http://www.wbay.com/content/news/Rep-Gallagher-invited-to-town-hall-meeting-421692203.html>

GOP congressman: Republicans were 'irresponsible' to celebrate AHCA passage at White House

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/08/politics/kfile-gop-congressman-acha-celebration/>

Gallagher stands by health care vote

<http://www.wrn.com/2017/05/gallagher-stands-by-health-care-vote/>

Rep. Duffy on AHCA: 'Our Bill Actually Brings Us Closer to Choice and Competition'

<http://insider.foxnews.com/2017/05/05/rep-sean-duffy-gop-health-care-bill-obamacare-reelection-2018>

Rep. Duffy Defends AHCA: 'Obamacare is Imploding... We Have to Do Something'

<http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/sean-duffy-obamacare-imploding/2017/05/05/id/788427/>

Will health care fight backfire on GOP?

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/blogs/wisconsin-voter/2017/05/08/health-care-fight-backfire-gop/101370250/>