

DC Wrap: House delegation splits on impeachment inquiry; Steyer denounces “corporate stranglehold” on America in Milwaukee stop

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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

“No person should feel vulnerable because of their ethnicity or identity. The bigotry and hatred driving the nationwide rise in hate crimes aims to sow division, but Milwaukee will not stand for it. Instead, we must continue to embrace and love our neighbors. The fabric of our communities is strengthened by our diversity, which makes Milwaukee such a special place to live.”

– U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore’s statement following a racially-motivated acid attack in Milwaukee.

“It’s what farmers do, it’s what local and county governments do, it’s what state government does, the federal government...that bottom-up is the most important aspect of the whole thing.”

– U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher discussing the maintenance of water quality after an H2O Policy Summit he hosted with State Rep. Joel Kitchens.



This week's news

— Wisconsin House Dems voted unanimously to proceed with the impeachment inquiry against President Trump amidst strong opposition from the delegation's GOP members.

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Dem U.S. Reps. Ron Kind, Gwen Moore and Mark Pocan backed the resolution to continue an investigation into what Pocan labeled as “a violation of his oath of office.”

Kind, D-La Crosse, said he approved the resolution so lawmakers can “uncover all of the facts and evidence.” Kind was one of 31 House Dems who voted to proceed with President Clinton’s impeachment inquiry in 1998.

“I firmly believe that impeachment should be the last resort, but as a co-equal branch of government, Congress has a constitutional obligation to investigate any misconduct — regardless of political party,” Kind said in a release.

But all House Republicans voting opposed the motion.

“An unfair process can only lead to an unfair result, and this entire process has been fundamentally unfair to the president,” U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner said in a release. “Just as no American — including the president — is above the law, no one is below it either.”

Along with Sensenbrenner, U.S. Reps. Mike Gallagher, Glenn Grothman and Bryan Steil knocked the resolution as a partisan effort.

“This process must be fair and transparent. I ask that Speaker Pelosi immediately releases the full transcripts of all depositions taken since the beginning,” Steil said in a letter to the California Dem.

However, Pocan predicted an increase in widespread support as the investigation moves into its public phase.

“The public will now be privy to every bit of this information,” the Town of Vermont Dem said. “You’re going to see public support growing and growing.”

See the statements from the delegation:

Mark Pocan:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2019/upfront-pocan-says-public-support-for-impeaching-trump-will-grow/>

Ron Kind:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2019/u-s-rep-kind-statement-on-the-passage-of-the-house-rules-resolution/>

Jim Sensenbrenner:

<https://sensenbrenner.house.gov/press-releases-statements?ID=304C6951-C774-4F54-A702-93120012232E>

Bryan Steil:

<https://steil.house.gov/media/press-releases/steil-urges-speaker-pelosi-conduct-transparent-impeachment-process>

— Democratic presidential candidate Tom Steyer touted his plans for education, health care and climate change before an audience of educators and students during a town hall organized by the American Federation of Teachers.

The billionaire hedge fund manager and activist also stressed the need to break “the corporate stranglehold” on America to fix a government he described as broken. And he took shots at President Trump and former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker.

“I’m running for a simple reason,” Steyer on Wednesday told the audience at the Milwaukee Area Technical College. “I believe that the government is broken, that it’s been purchased by corporations, that it’s working perfectly for them but it’s not working at all for the American people.”

He said America has the financial means to address issues such as health care affordability, access to quality public K-12 and higher education, and access to

clean air and water.

“We have the most successful society in the history of the planet. We have a broken government, not a broken people,” Steyer said. “We are rich enough to do everything that people are hoping we can do and we think would be incredible.”

Steyer called for taking away the ability of corporations to write the rules in order to ensure prosperity for the American people.

“Just take it away,” he said. “We need the government to write the rules for us, and the corporations live within those rules. They don’t get to write them.”

Steyer said when Republicans take control of government, their first move is to cut taxes on the wealthy, followed by cuts to education and health care. He said Republicans then target organized labor, labeling Walker “the kingpin and the face of breaking organized labor in America.”

Steyer said education is key to ensuring equality and prosperity in America. He called for two years of free higher education for all, student loan interest rates at the same level as what government pays, and student loan forgiveness for those who work in public service jobs.

“If you think about a society, in the 21st century, that is built around information, skilled labor, knowledge, the idea of cutting education as a prosperity move is the stupidest thing I can imagine,” Steyer said.

On health care, Steyer said he favors offering a public option as opposed to a “Medicare for All” plan other Dems want.

He said rather than force people into a government plan, offering a voluntary public option will demonstrate how effective it is.

“I just don’t want to tell 160 million Americans, ‘You’re going to do it my way, which isn’t proven, or you’re going to be breaking the law,’” he said. “I feel like, let’s make it work; let’s let people make the choice for themselves.”

Steyer, who founded NextGen America, previously known as NextGen Climate, said he is the strongest candidate to address climate change.

“I would make it priority one, and I would create millions of jobs and clean up the air

and the water as a result,” He said.

Steyer took several shots at Trump, calling him “a failure as a businessperson” and that “his economic policy is the stupidest I’ve ever seen.”

He said Trump is “incoherent” and “ignorant” on jobs and the economy.

“I would love to take him on,” he said. “He doesn’t understand that the prosperity of America is built around the prosperity and success of the American people.”

Steyer was introduced by AFT President Randi Weingarten, who decried “crushing student debt” and GOP moves in Wisconsin to restrict collective bargaining and cut funding to K-12 and higher education.

After his speech, Steyer took questions from the audience, but that was interrupted near the end by a fire alarm. After the all-clear was given, Steyer posed for a photo with members of AFT Local 212, some of whom chanted “lock him up” in reference to Trump.

Steyer, who in 2017 began running ads calling for Trump to be impeached, largely steered clear of the topic but did briefly address his Need to Impeach campaign when discussing his background.

RNC Spokesperson Mandi Merritt knocked Steyer.

“Tom Steyer’s impeachment obsessed vanity project turned presidential campaign doesn’t resonate with Wisconsinites,” Merritt said. “While Steyer lights more of his money on fire pushing a radical agenda, Wisconsin voters continue to reap the benefits of President Trump’s America First agenda.”

Following the MATC event, Steyer was to participate in a town hall with Milwaukee County Dems. He began his day at a breakfast with Latino leaders at Nuevo Mercado el Rey.

— Meanwhile, Kind waded into state politics as part of a last-minute push to save the nomination of his former deputy chief of staff, Brad Pfaff, to serve as DATCP secretary.

“As a kid who grew up on a family farm in Wisconsin, no one understands the challenges that our family farms face or the work that needs to be done to revitalize our state more than Brad Pfaff,” Kind said in a release.

This came after U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, who also backed Pfaff, urged Wisconsin lawmakers to “put partisan politics aside and confirm him so he can continue doing his job and we can all get to work putting our Wisconsin farmers first.”

Kind’s efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, as Wisconsin state lawmakers voted 19-14 along party lines to reject Pfaff’s confirmation. Kind said the decision “isn’t putting the best interest of our farmers or our state first.”

Moving forward, state Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald issued a warning to the remaining unconfirmed nominees, saying he’s not sure “if the rest will make it.”

See Kind’s release:

<https://kind.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-kind-brad-pfaff-datcp-secretary-no-brainer>

— Back in Washington, Sen. Tammy Baldwin joined a bipartisan group of lawmakers urging President Trump to maintain U.S. involvement in the Paris Climate Agreement, saying withdrawal would be a “costly mistake.”

“We have a moral obligation to future generations to do something about this challenge. It’s now or never and we can’t accept never from this president,” Baldwin, D-Madison, said in a release.

The move, which comes in the form of a resolution, is a response to the Trump administration beginning the process of officially removing the U.S. from the climate international agreement. The accord signed in France in 2016 outlines goals for emission reductions to mitigate the effects of climate change.

While GOP lawmakers have generally been supportive of the move, Maine Republican U.S. Sen. Susan Collins signed on to the resolution.

See the release:

<https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/press-releases/keep-the-united-states-in-the-paris-climate-agreement>

— Baldwin’s counterpart in the Senate, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, introduced legislation to create a Federal Clearinghouse of School Safety Best Practices to address potential acts of mass violence.

Johnson, who serves as chair of the Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee, introduced the bill during the panel’s most recent meeting. Lawmakers say the legislation is aimed at preventing tragedies like the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. in 2018.

“This bill honors the memory of all those who have needlessly lost their lives and is a proactive step to help mitigate this horrific violence. I encourage all parents to ask what their child’s school is doing to protect their students and demand action if they believe their school isn’t doing these simple steps recommended by the Federal Clearinghouse on School Safety Best Practices,” Johnson said in a release.

The bill was also sponsored by Florida Republican U.S. Sens. Rick Scott and Marco Rubio.

See the release:

<https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/media/majority-media/sens-johnson-rick-scott-rubio-introduce-school-safety-legislation-in-memory-of-parkland-students>

— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman slammed a recently proposed higher education bill that aims to lower the cost of college for students and families.

Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, opposed the legislation on the grounds that it “contains far too many harmful provisions that do not hold universities accountable and will not help students succeed.”

He criticized the high cost of higher education in the U.S., and requested that lawmakers begin to hold universities accountable. He also said the bill’s inclusion of debt forgiveness for public service employees is “discriminating” against jobs in the private sector.

“I like the fact that you’re trying to get something about allowing people to

refinance loans. I don't know if this bill is going to get out of the Senate, but that is such a valuable thing. I hope we can eventually pass a freestanding bill on that issue, to put pressure on the Senate to take it up, so we can actually accomplish a few things this cycle," Grothman said in his statement.

See the release:

<https://grothman.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=1313>

Posts of the week

Look who I ran into in da House! 50 Cent! [@50cent](https://twitter.com/ccHhuWd8kE)
[pic.twitter.com/ccHhuWd8kE](https://twitter.com/ccHhuWd8kE)

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [October 30, 2019](#)

Happy Halloween from our office pup, Lulu! 🐾 🐾
[pic.twitter.com/O7LvFeSzT5](https://twitter.com/O7LvFeSzT5)

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [October 31, 2019](#)

Thanks [@YankeeMineDog](#) for visiting me today. Yankee is a decorated landmine-sniffing hero who served overseas saving countless lives. The work that Yankee and dogs like her perform is critical in the most severely mine-affected countries around the world. <https://t.co/bGVHynbRGx>

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [November 5, 2019](#)

ICYMI

[Congressman: Trump has multiple impeachable offenses](#)

[Steil errs comparing Donald Trump impeachment rights to Clinton, Nixon](#)

[Sen. Baldwin announces increased funds for farmers' health resources, services](#)

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