

# DC Wrap: Delegation reacts to Soleimani's death and retaliatory missile strike

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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

"It's hard for me to interpret this — if the dust settles and we would have taken out their top terrorist mastermind and all they will have done is lob some rockets in the desert and beat their chests at home — as anything other than a big win."

-U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay talking to MSNBC about Iran's missile attacks on U.S. airbases in Iraq in retaliation to the assassination of Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

"The president said he was going to end the endless wars and bring troops home, and in the last six months depending on which numbers you look at 14,000 to 15,000 troops more people are in the Middle East right now than there were six months ago."

-U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont on distrust in the Progressive Caucus that President Trump has a handle on the situation in the Middle East.



## This week's news

— The Wisconsin congressional delegation split along party lines after an Iranian missile strike on a U.S. base in retaliation for killing Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

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President Trump last week took credit for a drone strike at the Baghdad International Airport that killed the general, who was the leader of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force.

Officials at the Pentagon said in a statement that Soleimani and his forces "were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American and coalition service members" and that the strike was preemptive to prevent him from "actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members."

Republicans hailed the move, calling Soleimani's death a necessary step to push back Iran's recent terrorist activity.

"Iran, the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism, has been escalating its malign actions for years," U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, said in a tweet. "It is time for Iran to de-escalate and end its terrorist acts and use of proxies. Americans will continue to support the brave men and women who have volunteered to keep us safe."

U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville added Iran "actively works to destabilize countries in the Middle East."

"Our thoughts are with our service members and U.S. personnel who are threatened by Iran," he added.

But Dems in Wisconsin's congressional delegation said they didn't see the imminent threat Republicans say Suleimani posed.

"We just left a classified briefing, and many of us left with the same questions we went in with," U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont said in a press conference Wednesday. "We didn't get any more answers on the imminent threat, they kept saying you need to see the information it's really imminent, and nothing was shown to us."

"It's good [Soleimani] is gone, but this unilateral action further escalates conflict in the Middle East and we need the Trump administration to explain to Congress and

the American people their plan to de-escalate tensions with Iran,” U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison said in a tweet.

Iran responded to Soleimani’s death Tuesday night, launching missiles that hit two American bases in Iraq. So far no injuries or casualties have been reported from the attack.

“We do not seek escalation or war, but will defend ourselves against any aggression,” Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said in a tweet following the strikes.

U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Green Bay told MSNBC Wednesday that if Zarif “is serious about not wanting to escalate beyond last night’s attack, that’s a sign we’ve enhanced our deterrent posture in the Middle East.”

“If this is the extent of the Iranian reprisal, this is a win for America and our allies in the region,” he said.

After the missile strikes, Baldwin said she was “grateful that there were no casualties in Iraq last night.”

“President Trump must work to de-escalate tensions with Iran, there is an opportunity to pursue diplomatic solutions that will make us safer. We should seize it,” she added.

See Baldwin’s tweets:

<https://twitter.com/SenatorBaldwin/status/1214992405885333504>

<https://twitter.com/SenatorBaldwin/status/1213194749882044416>

See Johnson’s tweet:

<https://twitter.com/SenRonJohnson/status/1213136688672890885>

See Steil’s tweet:

<https://twitter.com/RepBryanSteil/status/1213210980676710400>

See Zarif’s Tweet:

<https://twitter.com/JZarif/status/1214736614217469953>

-Democratic National Convention Committee CEO Joe Solmonese told journalists in Milwaukee for an overview of the 2020 convention plans that the Dem Party aims to correct the errors that led to President Trump's win in 2016.

"We fell short in 2016, and while you can't boil the outcome of any election down to one cause, one of the errors that we made was failing to communicate effectively as we could in key states," Solmonese said during a Tuesday panel discussion with Gov. Tony Evers, Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes and state Treasurer Sarah Godlewski.

Solmonese said at this stage, organizers are getting out into Wisconsin communities "to make sure more communities of every background feel included, seen and heard."

"We're making it a priority to get out across the state, into Wisconsin communities, getting to know the people, listening to their stories and making sure that our convention reflects what they want to see and what they want to hear," he said.

He said the convention "is less about spectacle and more about substance."

"When we bring the eyes of the world to Wisconsin, we're going to remind the American people what Democrats stand for, from affordable health care, to higher wages to common-sense gun reform," Solmonese said. "And if we pull that off I am confident that we will win in November."

Evers said he believes Wisconsin will be the state that elects the next president and he wants to make sure each candidate gets a chance to share their ideas with Wisconsin voters.

He said the convention will serve as a window to the state.

"We have very few chances to talk about what a great state this is," Evers said. "From my vantage point as governor, we need to make sure we tell a good story about Wisconsin."

Barnes said the Dem Party "can no longer take states like Wisconsin for granted."

He noted his and Evers' efforts to get around the state during the 2018 election to hear from voters.

"In 2018, we made sure that we had those conversations," Barnes said. "That's why

we were able to drive historic midterm turnout. Now we know we need to have historic turnout in the presidential election in order for us to be successful.”

And he said there is still an opportunity for growth for Dems in Wisconsin.

“People need to know that you care about them because for far too long people have been ignored,” Barnes said. “And that’s why the 2016 election ended the way that it did, largely. “

Godlewski said as she travels the state, she hears a theme of economic insecurity, from people struggling with paying off student loans to preparing for retirement.

“They’re not looking for a free ride, but they’re looking for a way in which they can have a good, quality middle-class lifestyle,” Godlewski said. “And I think what they will see is they’re not getting that with what’s going on in Washington and that they want change.”

In response to the media walkthrough, Trump Victory spokeswoman Anna Kelly said the convention will demonstrate why Trump won Wisconsin.

“From abolishing all private health insurance which would eliminate over 3.5 million Wisconsinites’ private plans, to tearing down border walls, to eliminating all fossil fuels costing nearly 100,000 Wisconsinites their jobs, the Democrats’ flashy media tour cannot hide that their radical policy proposals are wrong for Wisconsin,” Kelly said in a statement. “This summer’s convention will only remind Wisconsin voters why they delivered their 10 electoral votes to President Trump in 2016 and why they will do so again in November.”

See more on the media walkthrough in Tuesday’s AM Update.

— Roger Polack, a lawyer and former civilian intelligence official and senior policy adviser in both the Bush and Obama administrations, is running for the 1st CD as a Dem.

Polack joins attorney Josh Pade, who got less than 1 percent of the vote in the 2018 Dem gov primary, in seeking to challenge freshman GOP U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, of Janesville.

According to Polack's website, he served multiple tours in Afghanistan as a civilian intelligence officer.

See his website:

<http://rogerforwisconsin.com/>

— U.S. Sens. Ron Johnson and Maggie Hassan introduced bipartisan legislation to create a Federal Commission on Counterterrorism.

The commission would reevaluate counterterrorism information sharing across federal, state, and local law enforcement, as well as their ability to identify, track, and prevent terrorist threats in the United States. Both domestic and international counterterrorism efforts would be evaluated.

“The timely sharing of terrorist threat information is a critical part of defending the homeland,” Johnson said in a release. “In light of the grave consequences of mistake or failure, a review of this kind is long overdue.”

The commission would convene representatives from the nation's top intelligence agencies, as well as bringing in local law enforcement to review how terrorist threat information is shared on all levels of the government.

“Eighteen years after 9/11, it's time that we reevaluate counterterrorism information sharing efforts at all levels of government and address any gaps,” Hassan said in a release.

See the release:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2020/sen-johnson-introduces-bipartisan-bill-to-establish-federal-commission-on-counterterrorism/>

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin announced plans to support the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement when the Senate votes on the trade deal.

The proposal moved one step closer to ratification after the Senate Finance Committee on Tuesday voted 25-3 to send the version passed by the House in December to the full Senate floor.

Baldwin, who is not a member of that panel, in a statement the initial deal negotiated by President Trump fell short.

But the Madison Dem lauded “improvements” made by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D.-Calif., and House Dems “to make this a better trade deal that I can support.” She cited the addition of labor enforceability standards as well as efforts to address “unfair” Canadian trade barriers and Mexico’s limit on the state’s cheese exports as factors in winning her support.

“I will vote for the USMCA, because it is a better deal for farmers, manufacturers, businesses and workers,” Baldwin said in a Tuesday release.

## ***Posts of the week***

Great to see my friend [@RepSteineke](#) working to expand mental health resources for students and equip our teachers and schools with the tools they need to address this matter. Nice work Jim! <https://t.co/OENpKFesDD>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [January 7, 2020](#)

The Badgers didn’t get the W at the Rose Bowl, but this photo from the flyover before kickoff is amazing. [#OnWisconsin](#) [#USA](#) ☐☐

Photo by Mark Holtzman of West Coast Aerial Photography.  
<https://t.co/ACZ388tLYx> [pic.twitter.com/rWaiyn1tK6](https://pic.twitter.com/rWaiyn1tK6)

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [January 6, 2020](#)

Great meeting today with Avrianna, the current Miss Wisconsin Princess,

who received the honor after giving an incredible speech about closing the dream gap.

Thanks for letting me try on your crown, Avrianna. But it looks much better on you! [pic.twitter.com/u4zPXZF9lr](https://pic.twitter.com/u4zPXZF9lr)

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [January 3, 2020](#)

Hello, Lake Michigan. Hello, 2020. [#HappyNewYear](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/Xs0EpBZNTY](https://pic.twitter.com/Xs0EpBZNTY)

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [January 1, 2020](#)

May: National Burger Month ☐

Who doesn't love a Culver's ButterBurger?? [pic.twitter.com/pLjnoAozGN](https://pic.twitter.com/pLjnoAozGN)

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [December 31, 2019](#)

## **ICYMI**

[CPC Co-Chairs Jayapal & Pocan Call on Congress to Prevent Catastrophic War With Iran](#)

[Democrat Roger Polack Seeks to Challenge Representative Bryan Steil](#)

[Wisconsin Republicans sign letter asking Supreme Court to reconsider Roe vs Wade](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson bashes Nancy Pelosi's 'bizarre' impeachment strategy](#)

[U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin endorses Yoni Pizer for Illinois State Rep](#)

[Rep. Ron Kind knocks president for failing to consult with Congress before airstrike](#)