

DC Wrap: Gallagher-led cyber panel testifies in first ever fully virtual congressional hearing

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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:
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Quotes of the week

"I just have to throw in my criticism that we have done nothing related to the pandemic on the Senate floor since we were called back into session."

-U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin on CNN discussing the Senate HELP Committee's hearing on Tuesday.

"New York City is different from Milwaukee, which is different from Janesville. We need to have a data-driven approach and localize these decisions to safely and quickly reopen parts of the economy now."

-U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil on Newsmax discussing what the plan for reopening parts of the country should look like.

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This week's news

— A cyberspace panel led by U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher on Wednesday took its first step toward enshrining its recommendation into law with its first official congressional hearing.

The hearing marked the first fully virtual hearing in the history of Congress as Gallagher, Cyberspace Solarium Commission co-chair Sen. Angus King, and commissioners Suzanne Spaulding and Thomas Fanning testified before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs. U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, chairs that committee.

This hearing comes on the heels of a sweeping set of 75 proposals to overhaul the way the federal government manages cybersecurity released in March. The proposals range from upping the number of military personnel trained for cyber operations, to using government resources to protect “systemically important” critical infrastructure owned by the private sector, to promoting the use of paper-based voting systems as widely as possible.

“We start from a sobering recognition, similar to one which animated the original Project Solarium some 67 years ago — the status quo is not getting the job done,” Gallagher said Wednesday. “The status quo in cyber invites attacks on Americans and amounts to a slow surrender of American power.”

Gallagher’s office highlighted the importance of elevating the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency in the federal government, so it can proactively defend .gov space from cyber attacks.

“One of the least appreciated recommendations in the report that could have the biggest impact, is to give CISA the authority to do persistent threat hunting on .gov networks,” Gallagher said in the hearing. “They need to be able to defend prior to an attack.”

Central to the CSC’s plan to overhaul cybersecurity is a recommendation to appoint a Senate-confirmed National Cyber director. The position would help all the government’s cybersecurity branches coordinate with each other, to ensure all .mil or .gov sites are protected.

“A National Cyber director that is Senate-confirmed — and therefore more responsive to Senate and House oversight — is that proximity to the president which would enhance their ability to coordinate across missions,” Gallagher said. “[The NCD] would be able to do much more long-term planning.”

The private sector is another focus for the CSC after huge data breaches from companies like Marriott, Equifax and Facebook exposed millions of users’ records.

The commission didn't recommend sweeping top-down regulation though, opting instead for incentives to beef up cybersecurity.

One recommendation involves mandatory penetration testing for publicly traded companies to show the sources of a breach before it happens.

"There's something called the '1, 10, 60 rule' where you're able to detect an intrusion in 1 minute, have someone look at it in 10 minutes, and then be able to isolate it within 60 minutes," Gallagher said. "We deliberately tried to adopt an approach that would harness market factors so that the private sector could step up and respond to a clear incentive the government is setting."

See the hearing [here](#).

See the report [here](#).

— Fresh off his victory in the 7th CD, GOP state Sen. Tom Tiffany pledged to work with President Trump in Washington, D.C., to get the country back on the right track.

Speaking to supporters via Facebook Live on Tuesday night, Tiffany said businesses in the northern Wisconsin congressional district were telling him earlier this year they expected 2020 to be one of their best years ever. That's before the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the country.

"I have one goal as I go out to Washington, D.C., and that is to get America back on her feet again," Tiffany said. "This is a real blow that we've taken over the last couple of months."

With all precincts in, Tiffany, R-Minocqua, had 109,594 votes, or 57.2 percent, while Dem Tricia Zunker, president of the Wausau School Board, had 81,931, or 42.8 percent, according to unofficial returns.

Tiffany, a state senator, will serve the rest of the term fellow Republican Sean Duffy won in 2018. He is already circulating nomination papers to run again in November, when he will be up for a full two-year term.

Duffy's September resignation was the first of several twists in the sprawling

northern Wisconsin district. First, Dem Gov. Tony Evers set the election dates for Mondays in December and January. But he was forced to set new dates with a Feb. 18 primary and Tuesday's general election because his first choice didn't comply with federal law dictating how far ahead of an election ballots have to be sent to those outside the country.

Tiffany then beat Jason Church in a GOP primary that saw \$2.8 million in outside spending. That outside involvement slowed to a trickle in the general election for the heavily GOP seat. Reports filed with the FEC show groups doing independent expenditures either backing Tiffany or opposing Zunker had spent a combined \$391,543 since Feb. 19.

The only group to report spending in support of Zunker is Citizen Action of Wisconsin, which spent \$44,729 late last month on salary and benefits for those making calls on behalf of the Dem.

After liberal Dane County Judge Jill Karofsky won statewide in April by 10.5 points for a seat on the state Supreme Court, many were watching the 7th CD for signs of how Wisconsin may go this fall in the presidential race.

The district backed Donald Trump by 20 points in 2016. Zunker touted that she finished with more than 40 percent of the vote, something no Dem candidate had done in the district since 2012, when Duffy won his first reelection.

She called the race a bellwether of what's happening in the state in response to Trump's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I ran on affordable health care, help for our small businesses and family farmers, and protecting our environment, and that message resonated with people throughout Northern Wisconsin," Zunker said. "Despite a global pandemic and the lack of universal mail-in voting, we showed what can be done, and we laid the groundwork for this seat to turn blue in November."

Trump, who tweeted his endorsement of Tiffany several times in the days leading up to the election, sent his congratulations via his favorite social media platform.

"Big News: Tom Tiffany of the Great State of Wisconsin has just become Congressman Tom Tiffany. He will do a FANTASTIC job for the people of Wisconsin, and the United States. Congratulations!" Trump tweeted.

Trump's state campaign immediately called Tiffany's win a victory for the president that demonstrates the enthusiasm for him in Wisconsin.

State Dem Chair Ben Wikler, meanwhile, called the results a sign that Trump's base is "cracking" after he won the district by 20 points four years ago while winning statewide by less than 0.8 percentage points. To repeat that Wisconsin win, Wikler said, "red areas have to get redder to balance out blue areas getting bluer."

— A key Democratic National Committee panel took the first steps towards scaling back the party's convention in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A DNC official told WisPolitics.com the Rules and Bylaws Committee voted to approve a resolution that would give the Convention Committee "maximum flexibility to plan a safe event that guarantees every delegate can accomplish their official business without putting their own health at risk."

The resolution gives the convention's organizers authority to "make the necessary changes to the format, size, date or other aspects." That includes allowing convention delegates to participate either "in person or by means that allow for appropriate social distancing" as well as adjusting the format to deal with crowd size.

Joe Solmonese, the CEO of the Democratic National Convention Committee, praised the move.

"Safeguarding the health and well-being of everyone involved with our convention remains our top priority," he said in a statement. "This resolution provides our team with increased flexibility to adjust our plans, ensure that every delegate is able to accomplish their official business without putting their own health at risk, and enables us to chart the most appropriate course forward as we work to launch our nominee to victory in November."

The proposal still needs to be approved by the full Democratic National Committee before going into effect. The convention is currently scheduled to kick off on Aug. 17.

— Acting Director of National Intelligence Richard Grenell indicated to a Wisconsin senator that former Vice President Joe Biden may have been among the Obama-era officials involved in the “unmasking” efforts of former Trump administration national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Grenell on Wednesday released to U.S. Sens. Ron Johnson and Chuck Grassley a declassified list of officials who may have been privy to the “unmasking” efforts. Under federal law, identifying information about U.S. citizens picked up in surveillance of foreign officials must be hidden, or “masked,” but top intelligence officials can request “masked” identities be revealed.

The list includes officials “who may have received Lt. Gen Flynn’s identity in response to a request processed between 8 November 2016 and 31 January 2017 to unmask an identity that had been generically referred to in an NSA foreign intelligence report.”

It contains 39 names, including Biden, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, former FBI Director James Comey, and former White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough, among others.

Still, the list noted that “while the principals are identified below, we cannot confirm they saw the unmasked information.”

Biden also denied any wrongdoing in relation to the Flynn case in an interview on “Good Morning America.”

“I know nothing about those moves to investigate Michael Flynn, number one,” Biden said today. “Number two, this is all about diversion. This is a game (President Trump) plays all the time.”

The move comes after Johnson, R-Oshkosh, and Grassley, R-Iowa, on Tuesday called for Grenell and Attorney General William Barr to publicly release the list. In a letter to the Trump administration officials, the lawmakers cited media reports indicating Grenell declassified the list.

“Based on recent press reports, it is our understanding that you conducted a classification review and declassified information related to numerous requests to ‘unmask’ the names of U.S. persons who appeared in certain intelligence reporting around the time of the 2016 election through January 2017,” the pair wrote. “We

wholeheartedly agree that transparency is needed more now than ever.”

The Justice Department moved last week to drop charges against Flynn, who pleaded guilty in 2017 to lying to federal agents about conversations he had with a Russian official as part of the investigation into collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian intelligence. Flynn later sought to withdraw the plea.

See the [list](#).

See the [letter](#).

See the Biden [interview](#).

— House Dems have announced a sweeping new COVID-19 recovery bill with a price tag of over \$3 trillion, the largest relief package in American history.

The bill, dubbed the HEROES Act by Dems, would provide \$1 trillion for state and local governments, a \$200 billion fund for essential worker hazard pay, an additional \$75 billion for testing, tracing and isolation efforts, and a new round of direct payments to Americans of up to \$6,000 per household.

It would also expand food assistance to struggling families with a 15 percent increase in SNAP benefits, which the Wisconsin Dem delegation [pushed for](#) last week.

The trillion dollars that would be delegated to states would help supplement lost tax revenue, so governments can continue to pay health care workers, first responders, police and teachers.

But GOP members see the bill as a “progressive wish list” that puts politics before people.

“Instead of calling the House into session to come up with a bipartisan Phase 4 relief package, Speaker Pelosi kept us out of town and came up with a \$3 trillion, 1,815 page progressive wishlist,” U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher said in a [tweet](#).

Republican lawmakers have objected to parts of the bill that would see thousands of

non-violent federal inmates released due to fears of overcrowding in prisons, and stimulus checks for some undocumented immigrants.

“Yet again, she’s chosen partisanship over leadership in this time of crisis,” Gallagher said.

The bill is now headed to a vote in the House on Friday.

See the bill [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin helped introduce legislation Wednesday that would increase funding to help every student secure a reliable internet connection.

The Madison Dem’s proposal, which builds on legislation from New York Dem U.S. Rep. Grace Meng, would provide a \$4 billion boost for home high-speed internet access as students adjust to learning remotely.

“Reliable high-speed broadband and educational resources are necessary for helping our students overcome the ‘homework gap’ during this challenging time,” Baldwin said in a release.

Baldwin said the so-called “homework gap” has been highlighted during the pandemic as 12 million students in the country don’t have access to home internet and have not been able to complete assignments. Those students, she said, are at risk of falling behind their peers in important subjects like reading, math and science.

“We have to make sure every student can continue their education right now,” Baldwin said. “This legislation will help ensure that students in Wisconsin have access to what they need to stay connected to their school community — no matter where they live.”

See the release [here](#).

Posts of the week

Congratulations to my friend [@TomTiffanyWI](#) on your hard fought victory this evening! Well deserved. I look forward to working with you in Congress to deliver results for Wisconsin.

— Bryan Steil (@BryanSteil) [May 13, 2020](#)

My biggest takeaways from today's hearing:

- ✓ The White House doesn't have a nationwide testing plan & still needs one to do the widespread testing we need.
- ✓ Trump must unlock the full power of the DPA to scale up the production of testing supplies, [#PPE](#) & medical equipment. pic.twitter.com/rlpgQplfSk

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [May 12, 2020](#)

May is National Military Appreciation Month. Thank you to the courageous men and women in every branch of our military who sacrifice so much to defend our freedom. [#NMAM](#) pic.twitter.com/Qe9YNLrcuV

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [May 12, 2020](#)

Don't be embarrassed to ask for help. Drop the tough guy/gal act and seek assistance (i.e. leadership principle: know yourself and seek self-improvement). There are many resources available to us as veterans — we just have to be willing to ask and learn about them. [#VeteransChat](#) <https://t.co/E8pTTnCDUh>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [May 12, 2020](#)

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— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [May 13, 2020](#)

ICYMI

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[U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin asks Trump Administration for farmer assistance](#)

[Mark Pocan: To reopen Wisconsin we need testing, testing, testing](#)

[Steil advises reopening with localized, data-driven approach](#)

[Rep. Gallagher, Sen. Johnson push to reopen more businesses](#)

[Rep. Gwen Moore calls for increased coronavirus testing](#)