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DC Wrap: Green says America must ‘care about the challenges facing communities around the world’

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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: https://forms.gle/YLYZtJWHPSt24HhZ7

Quotes of the week

“In exchange for [new PPP loans] businesses would have to establish new ownership structures. An employee stock ownership plan, for example, is a great form of ownership because everyone participates in the earnings of the company.”
-U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, during an Axios event discussing his proposal for restrictions on new PPP loans.

“We are literally flushing money down a drain, and I mean literally. Due to a design flaw in the new $13 billion Ford-class aircraft carrier we are spending $400,000 on specialized acids to unclog toilets.”
-U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, on the House floor in support of his proposed 10 percent defense budget cut that ultimately failed on vote.

This week’s news

— Mark Green is a former Wisconsin congressman, ambassador to Tanzania and newly minted executive director of the Washington-based McCain Institute think tank. Green tells WisPolitics.com.in a new DC Wrap interview the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the need for America “to care about the challenges facing communities around the world.”

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access via desktop.

Green, who served nearly three years as administrator of the US Agency for International Development in the Trump administration, compared the pandemic to the 9/11 attacks in that both episodes display Americans "have to care about what goes on in those remote regions."

"If you would have told me in 1999 and 2000 that we would see such a devastating blow against the United States from one of the most remote corners of the world, I would have said you are crazy. But one of the lessons about 9/11 is that we have to understand the world better," he said. "It's just as true with COVID-19."

Green also praised the investments USAID made in a number of global health initiatives as "enormously helpful in those early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic" and said he was "delighted" to see former Gov. Tommy Thompson take over as interim president of the UW System.

See the interview:
https://youtu.be/C41BXx9xC7k

— The Biden campaign in a scathing memo slammed U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson over a "desperate taxpayer-funded smear campaign" by a panel led by the Oshkosh Republican.

The panel is conducting a probe into the presumptive Dem nominee's son's involvement with a Ukrainian energy company.

The memo, obtained by WisPolitics.com, comes one day after Dem leaders in Congress warned the probe is a tool for "laundering" a foreign interference campaign seeking to damage Biden's chances of winning the presidency in November. In a Tuesday letter to FBI Director Chris Wray, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and ranking Dem members of Intelligence panels in both houses called for lawmakers to be briefed by the FBI.

The investigation in question, which has been in the works since early this year, seeks to compel testimony from Blue Star Strategies, a Dem public affairs firm that

did consulting work for a Ukrainian energy company. Hunter Biden sat on the board.

Johnson previously said the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee has received records indicating Blue Star "sought to leverage Hunter Biden's role as a board member of Burisma to gain access to, and potentially influence matters at, the State Department."

The top Dem on that panel, Sen. Gary Peters of Michigan, has long opposed the probe, saying in March he was concerned it "could be used to further disinformation efforts by Russian or other actors."

Congress' top Dems added their weight to that argument in the letter to Wray.

"We are gravely concerned, in particular, that Congress appears to be the target of a concerted foreign interference campaign, which seeks to launder and amplify disinformation in order to influence congressional activity, public debate, and the presidential election in November," the letter said.

The letter did not name Johnson's probe, but media outlets in Washington reported a classified attachment to the letter that was not publicly released identified the investigation as the source of concern.

A Johnson spokesman in an email to WisPolitics.com slammed the letter.

"It does a disservice to our election security efforts when Democrats use the threat of Russian disinformation as a weapon to cast doubt on investigations they don't like but are silent when recently declassified intelligence revealed that Democrat-funded opposition research on the Trump campaign contained actual Russian disinformation," spokesman Austin Altenburg said.

See more here.

— U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore has unveiled legislation aimed at cutting through red tape in the administration of parenting time agreements for unmarried couples with children.

The agreements, known as PTAs, are currently negotiated separately from child support agreements, which Moore said can place a large financial burden on unmarried parents. Her legislation would reduce administrative costs normally involved in setting up PTAs, as well as combining the PTA process with child support agreements.

“Children benefit immensely from spending time with both of their parents,” the Milwaukee Dem said. “Unfortunately, unlike divorced parents, parents who were never married to one another must establish PTAs separately from child support agreements.”

See the release here.

— New Republican U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany says “it’s really time we move on” from the $600 federal boost to state unemployment benefits set to run out later this month.

The Minocqua Republican told a Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce webinar today the money was meant to bridge the initial months of the pandemic’s first wave, but it was never meant to be a long-term supplement.

“We gotta make sure that people are getting back to work and we’re putting every incentive out there for people to work,” he told listeners. “Because quite simply, as a couple, you could theoretically make $100,000 a year sitting on extended unemployment. Now most people will not do that but it does serve as a disincentive to work. And I do think that we need to change that.”

Lawmakers approved of the weekly UI raise as part of its original federal stimulus package meant to curb the economic damage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the extra money to the millions of unemployed workers nationwide is set to expire by the end of the month unless Congress passes an extension.

Tiffany added as Congress debates its next stimulus package, it should shift the focus from UI bonuses to “getting people back to work.”

See more here.

— Joe Biden has a plan to build a strong economy in an environmentally sustainable manner while creating jobs and growing businesses, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind and former Dem presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg say.

Kind said Biden's plan to use tax credits for sustainable and renewable energy in his plan mirrors a plan recently passed through the House. He also slammed President Trump for taking credit for a strong economy inherited from the Obama administration.

"Donald Trump had one job when he became president: don't screw it up," he said. "But instead President Trump failed to recognize that the strength of our economy is directly tied to the health of all Americans. That's why we still, seven months after the virus landed on our shore, are in desperate need of a nationally coordinated strategy."

See more here.

— Retiring GOP U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner has endorsed state Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald to replace him in the 5th CD.

Sensenbrenner, who has held his current congressional seat since 1979, touted the Juneau Republican as "someone who can look to the future and stand up against Nancy Pelosi's liberal agenda that will cripple our nation."

See more here.

— Joe Biden's campaign and the Dems' Wisconsin Coordinated Campaign have announced seven hires, including veteran operative Tanya Bjork as a strategic adviser.

The additions come after the Biden campaign late last month announced its senior leadership in Wisconsin.

See more here.

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, who hasn't publicly made up his mind about a reelection bid in 2022, raised $41,130 in the second quarter, according to his latest FEC filing.

In other races, Republican Derrick Van Orden outraised U.S. Rep. Ron Kind in the latest fundraising period, though the incumbent Dem continued to have the largest war chest among members of the state's congressional delegation at more than $3.1 million.

The other congressional incumbents all had significant fundraising advantages over their challengers.

See more on Johnson here, other congressional races here.

Posts of the week

> Did Milwaukee ask for this? No.
>
> Do we want this? Absolutely not.https://t.co/3ybnYHBwws
>
> — Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) July 21, 2020

> Congress needs to think outside the box.#PPP loans provided short term help but many businesses remain significantly or totally shut down by the pandemic.
>
> This idea helps reopen businesses while giving employees a stake in their success. https://t.co/i2lexeahun pic.twitter.com/6tizmQk6WE

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) July 21, 2020

Consider this your reminder to wear a mask today. #MaskUpWisconsin https://t.co/pMaPFH8pzV

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) July 21, 2020

Thank you Senator Olsen for providing leadership to restore two of Wisconsin's treasures. https://t.co/25XRpxQAQo

— Tom Tiffany (@TomTiffanyWI) July 21, 2020

Tawni and I were devastated to hear about the loss of Ben Belzer. I had the honor of getting to know Ben during his time as an intern in my La Crosse office, and will always remember his joy for life and passion for serving his fellow Wisconsinites. https://t.co/ou7CUDFr1n

— Archive: Rep. Ron Kind (@RepRonKind) July 20, 2020

ICYMI

Rep. Gwen Moore on the passing of civil rights leader John Lewis
Biden campaign goes on offensive against Republican Senator Ron Johnson's Burisma probe
Just one top Wisconsin Republican says he's committed to going to the GOP national

convention
Local Congressman against federal agent crackdown
Rep. Mike Gallagher demands answers from Apple and NBA over China dealings linked to forced labor of Uighur Muslims
The woman who could help Biden solve his political challenges