

# DC Wrap: Gunderson expects next COVID relief will include aid to bolster colleges' budgets

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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***

*"We do know now the initial briefings [President Obama] had with President Trump were really a partisan investigation into Trump."*

*-U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, on new information Senate Republicans have gotten in regards to the 2016 presidential transition process.*

*"People have lost their jobs at no fault of their own because of the virus, and to say we're going to punish them and give them only \$200, doesn't seem to make sense."*

*-U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan on the version of the HEROES Act in the Senate that would provide additional unemployment benefits for those who lost their jobs during the pandemic.*

## ***This week's news***

**— Former U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson, R-Osseo, says he expects colleges and universities to use the next wave of COVID-19 relief to deal with additional costs and lost revenue from the pandemic.**

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Gunderson now serves as president of Career Education Colleges and Universities, a national association representing postsecondary trade schools. He said both the Dem-backed House bill and negotiations in the GOP-controlled Senate yielded “significant proposals” on education bordering \$100 billion.

But he added the multi-billion dollar figure has yet to be divided among schools ranging from pre-K through colleges and universities and said “where that money goes is yet to be seen.”

The CARES Act allocated roughly \$14 billion to higher educational institutions, but Gunderson noted the legislation included a provision requiring at least 50 percent of the funds they received go to financial aid for students.

He said he didn’t expect that to continue.

“I think the traditional higher education community has really led the conversation in the pleas that, ‘Hey, we need some help to deal with all of the additional costs, all the additional lost revenue,’” he said. “So schools are pursuing a plea to get more money to the institution, not to the students per se, and I think the Congress has heard.”

See the interview:

**— Entertainer Kanye West filed some 2,800 signatures in his bid to qualify for Wisconsin’s presidential ballot, above the minimum needed under state law, according to a WisPolitics.com review of his nomination papers.**

Still, the papers had a host of problems, including incomplete entries and duplicate signers, that could invalidate numerous signatures as the Election Commission completes its review of the filing.

In at least two instances, signers listed their names as Kanye West. A third originally signed as Kanye West before crossing out that signature and replacing it with a different name.

West hired the petitioning firm Let The Voters Decide to aid with his last-minute push to qualify for the Wisconsin ballot. The papers were then dropped off right at

yesterday's deadline by attorney Lane Ruhland, who has worked for conservative causes. Ruhland, who represented the Trump campaign in a lawsuit against a Rhinelander TV station over an ad it aired from a Dem group, didn't respond to a voicemail left by WisPolitics.com.

The state Dem Party also declined comment on West's filing.

West's papers are rife with signatures that were crossed out, making it difficult to ascertain an exact number of signatures that will be the beginning point for the commission's review. One page, for example, had 10 signatures on it. But there was an X over at least nine of the signatures that appeared to also cover the 10th. The Elections Commission doesn't count crossed out signatures in its review.

Even if the commission certifies 2,000 valid signatures, there will be a window to challenge the papers.

The commission begins its review of nomination papers with a presumption of validity for signatures. That means it wouldn't look to strike out a signer who listed the same name as a celebrity, instead requiring a challenge to be filed and upheld for such signatures to be stricken.

See [more](#).

**— Opinions over Joe Biden not coming to Milwaukee for the Democratic National Convention quickly fell along partisan lines, with GOP operatives slamming the decision as abandoning the state and Dems backing it for putting public health first.**

The convention committee in a Wednesday statement revealed Biden would instead accept the nomination from his home in Delaware, after earlier saying he would still attend the downsized Democratic National Convention in the state's largest city.

"Vice President Joe Biden will no longer travel to Milwaukee and will instead address the nation and accept the Democratic nomination from his home state of Delaware," the convention said in a statement, citing health and safety concerns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gov. Tony Evers, who officially endorsed Biden this week, over Twitter said the

presumptive Dem nominee is leading by example by prioritizing safety over the convention.

“A lot has changed since we set out on this journey more than a year ago now, but the one thing that hasn’t is Democrats’ commitment to putting health and safety first,” he tweeted. “It has never been more important for elected officials to lead by example — that’s the kind of leader @JoeBiden is, and that’s the kind of president we need.”

And Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett told reporters in a webinar after the announcement that he was “both professionally and personally” disappointed with the news, but that “we can’t forget the fact that we’re in the middle of a pandemic.”

Meanwhile, state GOP Chair Andrew Hitt accused Biden of “formally abandoning the state of Wisconsin,” making comparisons to 2016 Dem candidate Hillary Clinton, who didn’t visit the state through the campaign and lost it by about 22,000 votes.

“Joe Biden has not visited the state of Wisconsin once this year and now is using coronavirus concerns as an excuse for his absence despite recent travel to other states,” Hitt said in a statement. “What’s even more clear in Joe Biden’s refusal to travel to even take a private plane to Milwaukee to accept his party’s nomination in a nearly empty room, is that he would rather use the COVID-19 pandemic for political gain rather than lead the country.”

See [more](#).

### **— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson returned fire in an ongoing spat over an investigation targeting Joe Biden’s son, accusing congressional Dem leaders of grossly mischaracterizing the probe.**

In a letter with U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, the Oshkosh Republican and Homeland Security chair responded directly to a missive sent last month to FBI Director Chris Wray by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and ranking Dem members of Intelligence panels in both houses.

The four Dems called for lawmakers to be briefed by the FBI on Johnson’s probe into Hunter Biden, which they warned is a tool for laundering a foreign interference

campaign seeking to damage Biden's chances of winning the presidency in November.

Johnson on Wednesday fired back that letter "grossly mischaracterizes our investigation" and said he and Grassley "neither sought out, relied upon, nor publicly released anything that could even remotely be considered disinformation."

The Dem letter warning of a foreign influence campaign did not explicitly 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. According to reports, the addendum alleged Johnson had received information on Biden in part from a Ukrainian lawmaker with strong ties to the Russian government.

Johnson and Grassley in the letter appear to confirm the contents of the addendum but said "we have not received any information from that person, including tapes, and we both have publicly and privately stated as much."

"Thus it is you, not us, who have participated in the spread of disinformation," the pair said.

See [more](#).

**— After the Trump administration threatened to cut funding two programs serving low-income areas, U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore introduced a bill that would instead increase those benefits.**

The bill would lift restrictions on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for those with felony drug convictions, allowing them to receive those federal funds.

"Our country is still grappling with the remnants of the 'War on Drugs.' People who have already served their time are still punished by an unjust system, which hinders their ability to access needed resources," Moore, D-Milwaukee, said. "This permanent ban most affects women and the communities of color hit hardest by [COVID-19]."

See the release [here](#).

**— The latest polling from the conservative Restoration PAC has Biden leading Trump by a dozen points among likely voters, an improvement compared to the previous poll.**

The group found 50.3 percent of likely voters backed Biden, while 37.9 percent supported Trump.

That's better than the 54.3-37.8 spread in Biden's favor the group's polling found in June.

The poll also found 68.4 percent of likely voters believe the country is headed in the wrong direction, while 62 percent disapprove of Trump's handling of the coronavirus.

Overall, 40.2 percent approved of Trump's job performance, while 57.3 percent disapproved.

The latest poll of 600 likely voters was conducted July 13-27. Seventy percent of respondents were interviewed over landlines with the rest via cell phones. The margin of error was plus or minus 3 percentage points.

See more [here](#).

**— Less than two weeks out from the August primary, 3rd CD Republican candidates Derrick Van Orden and Jessi Ebben are largely aligned on policy issues.**

In a debate hosted Wisconsin Public Radio, the pair were mostly cordial but at various points made efforts to portray themselves as the candidate with the closest ties to President Trump.

The most contentious moment of the hour-long debate came when Ebben was asked by moderator Ezra Wall about the role of Congress in supporting Wisconsin agriculture. Ebben responded with a shot at Van Orden by recounting recent listening sessions with "not hobby farmers, but real farmers."

Van Orden lives on a small hobby farm in Hager City and grows alfalfa. He countered that “hobby farmers are farmers” and noted that small farms in Wisconsin “are having a more difficult time” than their industrial counterparts.

See more [here](#).

**— In the funding race, Van Orden again outraised Kind in the most recent reporting period.**

Meanwhile, 5th CD Republican Cliff DeTemple outraised Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, but only because the businessman again made a six-figure contribution to his campaign.

Van Orden, a former Navy SEAL, raised \$168,132 in the pre-primary period, which covers July 1-22. He spent \$266,617 and had \$288,338 left in the bank. Ebben, a public relations professional, raised \$11,867 in the period, spent \$70,378 and had \$74,054 left in the bank. She also listed \$75,500 in debts.

See more [here](#).

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

Is this GOP operative the woman who turned in Kanye West’s nomination papers today in WI? If so, that’s a whole lot of Nixonian tactics going on.

<https://t.co/9ha1lhPLZS>

— Mark Pocan (@MarkPocan) [August 5, 2020](#)

Col. Heg gave his life to create a more perfect union. Earlier this summer, criminals in Madison tore down his statue. Ignorance is dangerous. We

should honor Col. Heg's sacrifice. [pic.twitter.com/AO9jNf8d5u](https://pic.twitter.com/AO9jNf8d5u)

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [August 4, 2020](#)

I did.

Because it is.

And we need to do more to address this public health crisis.

<https://t.co/1Vvf8kMhiZ>

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [August 4, 2020](#)

The Great American Outdoors Act is the most significant conservation package in a generation and a huge win for NEW. I'm thrilled the President has signed this into law, and look forward to continue working on bipartisan ways to protect our environment. <https://t.co/KmSlrdQ38L>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [August 4, 2020](#)

Thank you to everyone who attended my town hall meetings in [#Newton](#), [#SheboyganFalls](#) and [#MtCalvary](#), and for continuing to sanitize, wear masks and social distance as we discuss how to move our country forward and defeat [#COVID19](#). [pic.twitter.com/XrKDNI4N99](https://pic.twitter.com/XrKDNI4N99)

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [August 4, 2020](#)

## ***ICYMI***

[Rep. Mike Gallagher: DoD Should Have Greater Visibility of Contractors' Networks](#)

[Progressive Caucus co-chair: Reported oversight change in intelligence office 'seems a bit...fascist'](#)

[GOP Senator Accuses Media of Pushing Coronavirus 'Panic Porn'](#)

[Wisconsin Support Grows for Senator Baldwin's Legislation to Provide Federal Funding for Local Jobs Programs](#)

[Let's hear from Rep. Tiffany](#)

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