

DC Wrap: Johnson, Baldwin differ on push for Bolton to testify in Trump impeachment trial

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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

"It's a gut-check time for members of the United States Senate ... Every Senate impeachment trial in our nation's history has included witnesses, and this Senate trial should be no different."

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, in a press conference where she called for former National Security Advisor John Bolton to testify in front of the Senate.

"I believe at the time Roe v Wade came down, abortion was illegal in 48 of the 50 states, if not it was almost 48 states. It was just an outlandish decision, since the decision has come down we have had over 45 million lives cut short because of abortion in this country."

- U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, discussing abortion law in a House speech, as the Right for Life March held its national demonstration in Washington.

This week's news

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, is questioning why the Senate should consider issuing a subpoena to former national security adviser John Bolton after the House passed on doing so.

There has been a renewed push to subpoena Bolton followed a New York Times [report](#) that he alleges in an upcoming book that President Trump said in August he wanted to continue to freeze security funding to Ukraine until officials in that

country announced an investigation into political rival Joe Biden and his family.

Senators are posing questions in Trump's impeachment trial through Chief Justice John Roberts, who is reading them aloud.

The question Roberts read Wednesday from Johnson: "If House managers were certain it would take months to litigate a subpoena for John Bolton, why shouldn't the Senate assume lengthy litigation and make the same decision as the House made and reject a subpoena for John Bolton?"

Trump attorney Jay Sekulow used the question to slam House Dems for what he said described as a rushed process to impeach the president and then telling senators "go figure it out."

"This is what this has really become. That is what this actually is," Sekulow said.

Watch the question and Sekulow's [answer](#).

— Earlier in the week, U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin called on Republican lawmakers to allow Bolton to testify.

The report in the New York Times on Bolton's claims appears to undercut a key element of the Trump legal team's argument: that the freeze in funding was not explicitly linked to the request made of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky during a July phone call to investigate the work Biden's son was doing with a Ukrainian energy company.

Appearing at a U.S. Capitol news conference alongside Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., Baldwin urged GOP senators to allow Bolton to be called as a witness.

The Madison Dem added that if Bolton testified under oath to the allegations, it would "directly contradict" what Trump told fellow Wisconsin U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh.

Johnson said in a contentious October interview on "Meet the Press" that when he asked the president about the prospect of quid pro quo with U.S. aid to Ukraine, Trump 'vehemently, adamantly" denied any link.

“He said, ‘I’d never do that,’” Johnson said.

But Baldwin said “the people of Wisconsin certainly want to know if the president did not tell Sen. Johnson the truth.”

“The American people simply want all the facts. They want the truth in order to provide them that the Senate must support testimony from relevant witnesses with firsthand knowledge about president Trump’s conduct,” she said.

Baldwin also urged her GOP colleagues to reflect on the responsibilities they accepted when they became senators.

“Every senator took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and every senator needs to ask themselves whether they’re going to live up to that oath in this Senate impeachment trial,” she said.

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, is helping lead a bipartisan push to compel the FDA to enforce labeling laws for non-dairy products.

Baldwin, joined by U.S. Sen. Jim Rish, R-Idaho, wrote U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Stephen Hahn, urging him to “stand up for America’s dairy farmers” by forcing imitators to drop dairy terms from their products. Current FDA regulations state dairy products must come from dairy animals, but products such as almond milk have continued to use the label “milk” without consequence.

“Imposter products should no longer be able to get away with violating law and taking advantage of dairy’s good name,” the senators wrote.

The senators are also lead cosponsors of the DAIRY PRIDE Act of 2019, which under federal law would require non-dairy alternatives to drop all dairy labels. They argue the use of those terms has significantly hurt America’s dairy farmers and the public, because it is harder for consumers to “make educated decisions regarding what they feed themselves and their families.”

“This is both unfair to our hardworking dairy farmers and problematic for consumers,” the senators said. “When non-dairy alternatives use dairy terms to describe their imitation products, the imitators are often assumed to have the same health benefits and nutrient levels as real dairy products.”

See the release [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, announced Racine received more than \$673,000 in Housing and Urban Development funding to address homelessness.

Rates of homelessness have been steadily dropping in the state of Wisconsin as a whole over the last 10 years, however a [point-in-time](#) street count in Racine in mid-2018 found that the number of homeless had increased by 42 percent, up to 275 people. Racine County has the highest rate of homelessness in Wisconsin as well, with 14 per 10,000 residents sleeping in shelters or on the street on any given night.

The Homeless Assistance Leadership Organization, a local shelter in Racine, has [reported](#) full or overcrowded shelters recently, citing a lack of stable and affordable housing for residents.

“Federal, state, and local partners must work together to end homelessness,” Steil said in a Jan. 21 release, “This federal funding supports Racine’s efforts to help families and youth in need and increase access to shelter.”

The funding comes as HUD announced it would make more than \$2.3 billion available for Community of Care Programs, like HALO in Racine, across the country. The programs help to promote community engagement and provide access to programs that help the homeless and provide funding to quickly re-house individuals.

“Local agencies across Wisconsin have worked diligently to end homelessness,” HUD Midwest Regional Administrator Joseph P. Galvan said. “We hope to keep the momentum going and are here to support agencies in their tireless efforts to end homelessness as we know it.”

See the release [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, is helping lead a bipartisan call for increased funding to the EPA’s Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse

Municipal Grant Program.

A letter sent to EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler requested no less than \$500 million be added to the budget, after just \$28 million was appropriated for the program in 2019. Combined sewer systems are common in the Midwest — including cities such as Milwaukee — and can pose a health risk when heavy rain brings floods, which can trigger the release of raw sewage.

“Combined sewer overflows are one of the water challenges that cities and states around the country are facing,” Moore said in a release. “We must invest in our water infrastructure.”

The letter was signed by 23 other members, including fellow U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont.

Sewage overflow has hit Wisconsin and other Great Lakes communities particularly hard after heavy rain in recent years. In 2018 Milwaukee saw six overflows, which resulted in 1.2 billion gallons of stormwater and untreated sewage filtering into Lake Michigan.

“The Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Municipal Grants Program is vitally important to helping communities eliminate sewer overflows,” National Association of Clean Water Agencies CEO Adam Krantz said. “This funding is extremely welcome, and well overdue ... This program will help rectify this hardship for communities.”

See the release [here](#).

— A group of Republican senators, including U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, wrote IRS Commissioner Charles P. Rettig, requesting information on how the department enforces the electric vehicle tax credit.

This comes after a Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration audit in September found problems with the credit. The audit found that \$72 million in tax credits have been incorrectly claimed and that the IRS “does not have effective processes to identify and prevent erroneous claims.”

The problem was first found in a 2011 TIGTA audit, where \$33 million in plug-in electric tax credits were incorrectly awarded.

“Despite recognizing this fraud eight years ago, it has not only persisted but become even more widespread” the senators wrote. “It is troubling that these improper payments continue and have more than doubled in size in the eight years since they were first reported.”

Those senators hope the information requested will help them solve the loophole.

See the letter [here](#).

Posts of the week

Today, on the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, [#WeRemember](#) those who suffered, lost their lives, and lost loved ones at the hands of Nazis, and recommit to never allowing an atrocity like the Holocaust to happen again. <https://t.co/TjYfHvE5Dd>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [January 27, 2020](#)

Got out to Kettle Moraine State Forest north of La Grange for a few miles of xc skiing this weekend. <pic.twitter.com/xJKCkXiOhn>

— Bryan Steil (@BryanSteil) [January 27, 2020](#)

I’m honored to have the opportunity to nominate young people to the U.S. Military Service academies every year. So proud of these incredible men and women, who made the selfless and courageous decision to serve the country. <pic.twitter.com/GoGJeZynes>

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [January 24, 2020](#)

And a special shout out to this group of Wisconsinites who were out there with me!

When I say I'm proud to be from the Badger State, it's because of folks like you all. pic.twitter.com/vQiGII6Rbu

— Mark Pocan (@MarkPocan) [January 26, 2020](#)

Vice President [@Mike_Pence](#) is believed to be the first sitting Vice President or President to visit inside the Wisconsin State Capitol. Thank you for coming! pic.twitter.com/bZSpsu1gdK

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [January 29, 2020](#)

ICYMI

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[Congress members team up to push The Crown Act which would ban hair discrimination](#)

[Sen. Johnson already frustrated by impeachment trial](#)

[Steil talks shoreline erosion, protecting Medicare at listening session](#)

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[Fox News Report: Rep. Gallagher reacts to the Iraqi parliament's vote to expel US troops](#)