

DC Wrap: White House nominates Ludwig to fill Eastern District vacancy

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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

“House Democrats passed bipartisan legislation to lower prescription drug costs for American families. Now, two months later, that bill is still sitting on Mitch McConnell’s desk. The Senate needs to take action now.”

-U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin on Twitter calling on McConnell to take action on the FAIR Drug Pricing Act.

“I think the right thing to do would be for Congress to pay for the border wall out of where the funds should be sent, and not take any funds that we need for example to rebuild the Navy, increase the size of the Navy and adequately fund the military.”

-U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher to Fox 11 News on how President Trump's border wall should be funded.

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This week's news

— The White House on Wednesday nominated Brett Ludwig, a bankruptcy judge in Milwaukee, to fill a longtime vacancy on the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

Ludwig, who was appointed to the bankruptcy court for the Eastern District in 2017,

is a Marshfield native. He was a partner at Foley & Lardner before joining the bench.

He was one of four candidates that U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, and Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, forwarded to the White House in December to consider for the vacancy.

The White House originally nominated attorney Gordon Giampietro in December 2017 for the seat, which has been vacant since conservative Judge Rudolph Randa took senior status in February 2016. Randa died later that year.

Baldwin originally agreed to a list of candidates to replace Randa that included Giampietro. But she later expressed opposition to his nomination after his past comments on gay marriage came to light. She encouraged Giampietro to withdraw as his backers argued Giampietro was being penalized due to his Catholic faith. Ultimately, the White House didn't re-submit his nomination to the Senate for consideration after the new Congress convened in 2019.

The White House also announced it is nominating Menomonee Falls Police Chief Anna Ruzinski to serve as U.S. marshal for the Western District of Wisconsin.

She has been chief of the Menomonee Falls department for 12 years after serving 26 years in the Milwaukee Police Department, according to the White House.

See the [announcement](#).

See more on [Ludwig](#).

— U.S. Reps. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, and Debbie Dingell, D-Mich., are leading House Dems in an effort to restore humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

The letter was signed by 31 lawmakers — including fellow Wisconsin U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee. It calls on U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to take immediate action to restore funding.

“Palestinians in Gaza are facing a humanitarian crisis and unless the United States acts now, we will be complacent in the starvation and poverty of millions of people,” Pocan said in a release.

More than \$60 million in U.S. aid for health, education and infrastructure programs was cut earlier this month.

“Eighty percent of the population in Gaza depends on international assistance to survive,” Pocan continued. “Without our support, an overwhelming amount of families are living in poverty, have undrinkable water, food shortages, and inadequate healthcare.”

See the release [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson and fellow GOP Sens. Tom Cotton of Arkansas and Joni Ernst of Iowa are probing the Department of Homeland Security on how a former al-Qaeda operative legally emigrated to America.

Ali Yousef Ahmed Al-Nouri is accused of killing two Iraqi police officers in 2006 during the American occupation of the country. He was arrested in Arizona on Feb. 4 after having lived in Phoenix since 2008 working as a driving instructor.

“If these reports are accurate, we are concerned that our vetting processes did not identify a former leader of al-Qaeda,” they wrote in the letter sent a letter to DHS Acting Secretary Chad Wolf on Thursday.

Al-Nouri earned his American citizenship two years ago, after being allowed into the country as a refugee.

See the release [here](#).

— A WisPolitics.com panel featuring two partisan operatives and pollster Charles Franklin said they see Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders as the frontrunner to win the Dem presidential nomination, but added former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has the capacity to stay in the race.

The panel discussion took place on Feb. 20, before the Nevada caucuses won by Sanders.

Dem strategist Tanya Bjork said Sanders did “well for himself” at the Nevada debate, adding he “didn’t get into the fray too much, but guided the fray just enough.”

GOP operative Keith Gilkes agreed with Bjork, noting the two candidates’ high fundraising numbers.

“Candidates that find a way to raise money and keep themselves viable are the ones that are going to be in this at the very end,” he said. “And we know two of them are going to be there, Bloomberg and Bernie.”

The Wisconsin presidential primary is April 7.

The panel expected the New York Dem’s campaign to continue to grow as Super Tuesday, March 3, approaches

“Many more people are watching the ads that he’s running [than the debate],” Bjork said. “I think in terms of the whole scope of how this is going to play out, I don’t think (Nevada) debate met meant much.”

“One reason [debates] don’t matter much is usually people see what they want to see,” added Franklin, director of the Marquette University Law School poll. “They see their person do well and they thought that stinger really worked for them.”

However Gilkes warned Bloomberg can’t afford to continue to come off as a “tone-deaf billionaire” for much longer.

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher on Wednesday unveiled a bill that would dissolve the Presidential Election Campaign Fund and free up \$350 million.

The fund allows taxpayers to divert \$3 from their annual tax return to help the finance presidential primary and general election campaigns and national party conventions

But it hasn’t been used by a successful candidate since George W. Bush in 2004 and has spent more than \$100 million for losing candidates in that time.

“The Presidential Election Campaign Fund has become a relic of the past,”

Gallagher said in a release. “It only makes sense that the hundreds of millions of dollars in this long-unused fund are diverted towards paying down our nation’s ever-growing debt, not towards any Presidential candidate’s self-promotion tour.”

A similar bill has been introduced to the Senate and is currently in the Senate Finance Committee.

See the release [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin delivered President George Washington’s farewell address on the Senate floor Monday, marking the first time a Wisconsin senator has delivered the speech.

The address has been given in the Senate on Washington’s birthday every year since 1896.

It also marks the ninth time a woman has read the speech.

— Gallagher and wife Anne Horak are expecting a baby in June, according to a post on Horak’s Twitter page.

The Green Bay Republican and Broadway actress were married in September.

See the post:

<https://twitter.com/AnneHorak/status/1231961037039177728>

Posts of the week

The “Six Triple Eight” Battalion was the only all-Black, all-female unit to serve overseas during World War II.

I was inspired by the story of one of these incredible heroes, who is also a Milwaukee resident, Ms. Anna Mae Robertson. [#BlackHistoryMonth](#)
<pic.twitter.com/HRotnQ0ADT>

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [February 22, 2020](#)

It was great to see the ice boats out on Lake Geneva. Ice boats are basically a sailboat on skis and can reach speeds over 80 miles per hour!
pic.twitter.com/xXvjuzDT7P

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [February 20, 2020](#)

Saddened to hear of the loss of Katherine Johnson today. A trailblazer who paved the way for women and people of color to excel in math and sciences, Katherine opened the door for so many to succeed and reach their full potential. Her legacy will live on. <https://t.co/3mQjnZmYY9>

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [February 24, 2020](#)

Happy Birthday to the incomparable [@repjohnlewis](#), a friend, hero, & inspiration to our entire nation.

Every single one of us is lucky to work alongside a trailblazer and icon like you. pic.twitter.com/p26nO9Bmvj

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [February 21, 2020](#)

The threat contaminated water poses to our way of life in NEW makes combating PFAS and its effects a top priority for all levels of government. The [@EPA](#)'s preliminary step to regulate PFAS through the PFAS Action

Plan is the right one. <https://t.co/pSeg6z4NWh>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [February 21, 2020](#)

ICYMI

[Gallagher Touts Winter Commerce Act at Bay Ship](#)

[Mark Pocan predicts only 3 presidential candidates will make it to Wisconsin primary](#)

[Sen. Tammy Baldwin wins 'Champion of Science' award with nomination from UW-Madison, Marquette](#)

[Rep. Ron Kind holds listening session on college affordability plans](#)

[Grothman hopes Congress can work together](#)

[Jessica King campaign stops at UW Oshkosh](#)