

DC Wrap: Delegation reacts to second Trump impeachment, Capitol riot

Posted on Thursday, Jan 14, 2021

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

"Seven days is too long for him to be in power. He could declassify state secrets, he could monetize national secrets to foreign adversaries and he could even pardon the person who killed the U.S. Capitol Police officer."

- U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, in a floor speech yesterday before voting to impeach President Trump for a second time.

"My father once said to me, 'Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should.' In the short time I've served in this body, one thing is clear: this is not a serious place."

- U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua, in a floor speech knocking the impeachment effort. All five Wisconsin House Republicans voted against impeachment.

This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan voted to impeach President Trump for a second time because Trump needs to be held accountable for his "erratic" behavior.

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The Madison-area Dem said he thinks the American people are looking forward to some relief from the “unconventional” Trump, but he still wants the impeachment to move through the Senate. Pocan added he hopes Joe Biden and his team are more willing to work with Congress than Trump.

“I think it’s at a point where people need to be able to take that breath,” he said in a virtual press conference last night. “I hope that the Senate will now do the right thing, take up the measure and remove Donald Trump from office and make sure that he can’t run for president again.”

Pocan said he is “truly exhausted” after the last four years of Trump and hopes for some rest. “I hope Joe Biden can be as boring a president as possible, because I think that’s exactly what the nation needs right now.”

He said he looks forward to working with a president who “doesn’t govern by Twitter” and is known for working with other politicians rather than against anyone who opposes them.

He added that the margin of votes to impeach Trump would likely have been greater than the final 232-to-197 tally had Congress been able to hold a “secret vote” because at least some caucus members on both sides of the aisle feared for their own safety if they voted to impeach.

“Clearly people were afraid for their lives. I mean both parties, for different reasons in some cases, but all created by the same person, Donald Trump,” Pocan said.

— Pocan’s comments came after the Wisconsin congressional delegation voted along party lines on the question of Trump’s second impeachment, this time for inciting insurrection after his supporters last week stormed the U.S. Capitol.

The vote proceeded as expected as Wisconsin’s House members had largely staked out their positions ahead of yesterday’s vote. Some reports from Washington indicated U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher was considering voting with 10 of his GOP colleagues in support of impeachment, but the Allouez Republican ultimately voted against it as he indicated several times previously.

Gallagher in a release said it was clear to him Trump did not tell anyone to “lay

violent siege to the Capitol.”

The Allouez Republican said a second impeachment process is unlikely to succeed in the Senate considering the lack of congressional investigation before their vote. He added that “a second failed impeachment will dramatically empower, not diminish, President Trump.”

U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, said in a statement impeachment “not only sets a horrible precedent for future administrations, but it further divides the country.” And the newest member of the delegation, Juneau Republican and U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, said in a statement Speaker Nancy Pelosi “turned this process into political theater that will not help the nation move forward.”

Ahead of the final vote, U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, said in a floor speech Trump “radicalized” his supporters.

“As his vice president fled from a lynch mob, the speaker cowered and people died, he watched with glee,” she said.

Pocan, who along with Moore cosponsored the impeachment resolution, added Trump “incited domestic terrorism.”

“We all know whether you say it aloud or not: Donald Trump is responsible for inciting the attacks in our democracy,” the Town of Vermont Dem said.

Republican U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, countered those charges were “preposterous.”

“He did say he wanted people to ‘fight like hell or we’re not going to have a country anymore’ but that’s obviously standard hyperbole and was not meant to end in physical fights,” he said. “But what is offensive is what you are saying (is) inflammatory about the tens of thousands of peaceful protestors who were there last week, as well as the tens of millions of people they represent.”

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany called on Joe Biden, who takes office Wednesday, to “rise to the moment and call off this effort to rub salt in the wounds of millions of Americans.”

“It is now time for all of us, Democrats and Republicans alike, to turn down the temperature,” said the Minocqua Republican, who voted last week to sustain

objections to counting the electoral votes of Arizona and Pennsylvania.

See Steil's statement [here](#).

See Fitzgerald's statement [here](#).

See Moore's speech [here](#).

See Pocan's speech [here](#).

See Grothman's speech [here](#).

See Tiffany's speech [here](#).

See the roll call [here](#).

— The delegation on Tuesday night also split along party lines as the House passed a resolution calling on Vice President Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment.

Pence in a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., ahead of that vote indicated he would not move forward with an effort to remove Trump from office.

That, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind said in a statement, served as the impetus for his decision to back impeachment.

"If President Trump has any decency left, he should resign, otherwise, Vice President Pence should put country before self and immediately invoke the 25th Amendment to ensure a peaceful transfer of power," Kind said in the statement. "If he does not, we will have no choice left but to impeach President Trump."

The La Crosse Dem had indicated last week he was skeptical of impeachment due to the time frame remaining to pursue it and the precedent "rushing" such a move would set.

See the roll call [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Johnson is calling for an independent commission to investigate attacks on the U.S. Capitol because partisan divides would spoil an internal investigation.

The Oshkosh Republican said in a press release that Congress should appoint an independent commission to investigate multiple government agencies involved in the Jan. 6 riots and protests. He said a Capitol Police internal review is welcome, but “we believe we need a truly independent commission with wide latitude and authority to examine the failures by the Capitol Police leadership, House and Senate Sergeants at Arms, and the officials that oversee them.”

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., also supports the call for an independent commission.

Johnson added that any investigation Congress performs on itself would not give the public confidence. “Americans understand Congress is rife with partisan disputes and turf wars,” he said

The outgoing chair of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee also said the committee must be composed of independent security experts and funded in a bipartisan way.

See the release [here](#).

— Gov. Tony Evers announced about 500 members of the Wisconsin National Guard are being mobilized for federal duty in Washington, D.C., amid worries about violent protests as Biden is sworn in as president next week.

Evers previously announced Monday he was mobilizing the Guard to help protect the state Capitol with reports of possible armed protest at state Capitol buildings around the country.

Evers said yesterday the troops will arrive in Washington, D.C., in the coming days.

Meanwhile, the Wisconsin National Guard took to social media to ask people to stop sharing false rumors that martial law will be imposed.

“Help stop the proliferation of rumors by not sharing them. Seek out trusted sources,” the Guard urged.

See Evers release [here](#).

See the Guard’s tweet [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, said Evers’ response to a letter he and U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, sent last month asking for details on the state’s vaccination plan was “pathetic.”

Evers’ response last month detailed the hub-and-spoke model for distributing the Pfizer vaccine, which requires ultra-cold storage; asked for “better vaccine supply estimates farther into the future” from the federal government; pointed to guidance from the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee on statewide vaccine allocation; and provided a rough timeline for access to the vaccine for the general public.

But Steil on Monday blasted that response, saying “these bureaucratic answers display a stunning lack of urgency in getting people the life-saving help they need.”

The Janesville Republican cited a number of media reports detailing how Wisconsin’s vaccine rollout is lagging behind Midwest neighbors as well as a Centers for Disease Control data tracking dashboard that ranked the state 40th in the nation for vaccines administered per 100,000 people.

“If Governor Evers cannot figure out how to distribute the vaccine to those who need it, he should step aside and let someone who can lead this effort do it,” Steil said in a statement.

Baldwin also denounced the vaccine rollout but directed her criticism at the Trump administration.

The Madison Dem joined 43 Senate colleagues from her party and Independent U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders in calling for Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar to correct “significant failures” of the distribution process.

“States, Tribes, and localities, providers, and the public are being left without

federal support or clear, complete information about what to expect in the future as nearly 300,000 Americans fall ill daily from this virus,” the Dems said in a letter sent Monday.

The Dems wrote that the administration should have already implemented a comprehensive national plan, including providing detailed guidance and resources to states. They also called for transparent communication to states on vaccine allocations and members of the public on vaccination locations.

“In light of this failed vaccine rollout amidst a surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths, we urge you to finally take the steps necessary to ensure COVID-19 vaccines are quickly and equitably distributed and administered across the country,” the letter said.

See the letter from Steil and Baldwin [here](#).

See Evers’ response [here](#).

See Steil’s release [here](#).

See the CDC tracking dashboard [here](#).

See the Dem letter [here](#).

— The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected President Trump’s request to expedite consideration of two petitions he filed asking the justices to overturn Wisconsin’s election results.

The Monday rejection, offered without comment, snuffs out the dwindling chance the court would step in and reverse Joe Biden’s win in Wisconsin by less than 21,000 votes before he’s sworn in Jan. 20.

The president’s lawyers filed the petitions late last month asking the justices to review a Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling and a decision by the 7th Circuit that rejected Trump’s attempts to overturn the results. Both petitions argue the state Supreme Court and federal appeals court inappropriately ruled that Trump had waited too long to file his challenges to how Wisconsin’s election was run under the principle of laches.

The 7th Circuit also ruled Trump's lawsuit challenging the election failed on the merits.

Both cases currently list a Feb. 3 deadline for the defendants to respond to the petition for the court to hear the cases. That's two weeks after Biden will be inaugurated.

Monday's move by the court is the latest legal setback for the president and his supporters in their attempts to overturn the results.

Former Trump attorney Sidney Powell still has a suit pending before the 7th Circuit seeking to reverse the results based on unsubstantiated claims that foreign actors had tampered with the software used in Dominion voting machines.

The Powell legal team sought to have that case consolidated with similar challenges to the results in Michigan, Georgia and Arizona and asked the U.S. Supreme Court to expedite the petition in the Michigan suit. But the court rejected that motion as well.

See the court's rejection of the motions [here](#).

— The state Dem Party's TV ad targeting U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson calls the Oshkosh Republican "unfit to serve."

The spot is running on broadcast TV in the Green Bay, La Crosse and Wausau markets and statewide on cable. A party spokeswoman said the buy, which is more than \$100,000, also includes a digital component.

The spot opens with a news report on the Capitol Police officer who died during last week's violent protest and video of people storming the building. The narrator says the mob was "incited by power-hungry politicians like Ron Johnson."

The narrator then quotes a Journal Sentinel editorial that called Johnson a leading member of the sedition caucus and called on him to resign.

The ad buy comes after Johnson has been in the spotlight for supporting President Trump's claims of voter fraud and then joining the effort to object to counting some state's electoral voters only to vote against sustaining the objections.

Johnson hasn't announced whether he will seek a third term in 2022.

See the ad [here](#).

— Tom Nelson, the Outagamie County exec and a Dem candidate for U.S. Senate next year, called for Johnson to step down in the wake of last week's "act of terrorism at the U.S. Capitol."

"Let's be clear — Ron Johnson was responsible for the insurrection yesterday at the U.S. Capitol and he must resign," Nelson said in a Twitter video. "If he refuses altogether, in 2022 I will defeat him."

See the video [here](#).

Posts of the week



[View this post on Instagram](#)



A post shared by Representative Tom Tiffany (@reptiffany)

Wishing a happy Founders Day to the incredible women of [@dstinc1913!](#)
pic.twitter.com/BleD15uGqp

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [January 13, 2021](#)

This is what a hero looks like.

Capitol Police officers Sicknick and Liebengood tragically passed away after last week's insurrection at the Capitol. They dedicated their lives to protecting our country's institutions and for that, I am eternally grateful.
pic.twitter.com/7jw80S5BvN

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [January 11, 2021](#)

To every police officer who worked to secure the Capitol last week: thank you. pic.twitter.com/jyRioeu2Bn

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [January 12, 2021](#)

pic.twitter.com/c2ONFjHxwy

— Archive: Rep. Ron Kind (@RepRonKind) [January 13, 2021](#)

President Trump incited a violent insurrection against Congress as we were working to faithfully carry out our constitutional duties to accept the vote of the American people. We must take action to hold him accountable for his impeachable offenses. pic.twitter.com/7ICl1RIOz6

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [January 13, 2021](#)

The U.S. Capitol Police has a 24/7 tip line to submit video or photos (along with detailed descriptions) about Jan 6. pic.twitter.com/iaRSvMM9Uj

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [January 12, 2021](#)

ICYMI

[Here's how Wisconsin's representatives voted in the second impeachment of President Trump](#)

[Wisconsin Democrats debut TV ads targeting Ron Johnson over the Capitol riots.](#)

[Former diplomat who met with Ron Johnson is among Ukrainians hit with sanctions](#)

[Scott Fitzgerald, Tom Tiffany sole Republicans from Wisconsin to object to Joe Biden certification](#)

[Steil fears trying to remove Trump from office could 'enflame the situation'](#)

[Sen. Baldwin Asks Pence To Remove Trump Under 25th Amendment](#)

[Rep. Gwen Moore says she tested positive 11 days before speaker vote](#)

[Rep. Ron Kind On The Insurrection And Its Aftermath](#)