

DC Wrap: Delegation hopes for collaboration as Biden administration makes first moves

Posted on Thursday, Jan 21, 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

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Quotes of the week

"I continue to be amazed at the courage of reformers in Russia who stand up to Putin and his thugs, and I urge a strong and effective response by the Biden administration."

– U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, tweeted regarding Russian official's arrest of anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny.

"I think the Republican Party has an opportunity to purge someone from their party who has shown time and again that he is unfit for public office."

– U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, on voting to impeach Donald Trump in an interview on WISN's UpFront.

This week's news

— Members of Wisconsin's current congressional delegation said they hoped Inauguration Day would mark a new time of unity and collaboration between parties.

"I wish President Biden well and encourage him to follow through on his pledge to

be a president for all Americans and act to unify our divided nation,” tweeted U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, an ally of former President Trump.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, tweeted twice. The first tweet featured a photo of herself wearing a mask near the inauguration ceremony outside the U.S. Capitol building and said: “Today, America begins a new path forward. We have a lot of work to do, and I know Joe and Kamala are ready to do it.”

Her second tweet featured a photo of Biden along with the caption: “@POTUS Joe Biden: ‘Democracy has prevailed.’”

Freshman U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, said in a statement he looks forward to working with the incoming Biden administration.

He also said the freedoms promised in the U.S. Constitution “cannot be taken for granted.”

“President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris will swear an oath today, as Congress has done, to ensure the liberties enshrined in the Constitution remain a solemn promise for all Americans,” he added.

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, said he wants the new administration to prioritize implementing a “national, coordinated plan to defeat COVID-19.”

He also congratulated Harris on being the “first Black, first Asian and first woman Vice President.”

“I’m ready to roll up my sleeves and get to work alongside this new Administration to move our country forward and build back better,” Kind added.

U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Allouez, also said he looks forward to working with the incoming administration.

“From successfully distributing a vaccine to combating threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party, it’s my hope that in the days ahead we can find enduring solutions that make the lives of Northeast Wisconsinites better,” he said.

Despite his disagreements with the incoming administration, the Marine veteran said he is “ready to work with them on the enormous challenges facing our country and my family will be praying for them and their families.”

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Madison, also had COVID-19 on his mind during the inauguration of the 46th President of the United States.

"I am confident that President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris are ready to progress our country through crisis and by reminding us of the humanity behind the 400,000 who have lost their lives to COVID-19 in America and the millions who are still unemployed, hungry or unhoused," Pocan said in a statement.

He said the inauguration marks a chance for Americans to "build our country back" after "four years of corruption, bigotry, chaos and crisis."

U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, tweeted yesterday she is looking forward to working with the new administration.

"I am looking forward to working with an Administration that wants to champion policies" that put workers first, restore safety net programs and support people who are most vulnerable.

She also called the inauguration the beginning of a "new era" in a press statement.

"I place great confidence in the leadership of President Biden and Vice President Harris and know they will immediately move to put the resources of the federal government to work to end the pandemic, relieve the economic pain felt during this recession, and help heal racial and political divisions," she added in the statement.

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

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

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

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

See Johnson's tweet [here](#).

See Baldwin's tweets [here](#) and [here](#).

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

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

— Other Republican members of the delegation released a joint statement slamming one of the new administration's first moves — stopping construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

The pipeline project was halted by the Obama administration and resumed by the Trump administration, providing 11,000 jobs across the country, according to the joint statement from U.S. Reps. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, Mike Gallagher, R-Allouez, Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua and Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau. Biden yesterday revoked a key cross-border presidential permit needed to complete the pipeline.

While Tiffany, Grothman and Steil didn't explicitly comment on the events surrounding the inauguration process, they said the president's first moves in office aren't unifying them.

"So much for unifying the American people. In his first hours in office, President Biden has destroyed thousands of good-paying jobs, including many in Wisconsin, by halting the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline," Steil said in the statement.

Grothman said Biden broke his promise to govern as a moderate politician on his first day in office. "With the stroke of his pen, he has stifled 11,000 high-paying jobs, further reduced the amount of oil imported into the U.S. and has cancelled the hope of gas prices going down at the pump," he said in the statement.

Tiffany added the decision was "a rejection of bipartisanship" and "a slap in the face to Wisconsin employers and workers who rely on this project for their livelihoods, and our friends in Canada, particularly their indigenous community."

See the statement [here](#).

— Former House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Janesville, attended the inauguration to "honor this process" and declared Biden was the "legitimately elected president of the United States."

"Our institutions were tested this year and our institutions passed the test," Ryan

told a pool reporter. “I’m here out of respect for the peaceful transfer of power and for the institutions.”

— The U.S. Senate confirmed Avril Haines as Biden’s pick for Director of National Intelligence, marking the first cabinet confirmation of the new administration.

Both U.S. Sens. from Wisconsin, Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison and Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, voted in favor of nominating the first woman to serve in the lead intelligence role.

Biden nominated her for the position in November last year.

Haines, 51, previously served as deputy national security adviser in the Obama administration. She was also picked by President Barack Obama to be the first female deputy CIA director in 2013.

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson no longer chairs the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee after transitioning out of that role earlier this month, a spokesman confirmed.

WisPolitics.com previously reported the Oshkosh Republican’s six-year tenure as chair was set to end this year with the swearing-in of a new Congress due to term limits.

That put Ohio Republican U.S. Sen. Rob Portman in charge of the Jan. 19 confirmation hearing for Alejandro Mayorkas, President-elect Joe Biden’s nominee to lead the Department of Homeland Security.

See more [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, is praising Joe Biden’s pick of Andrea Palm to be the deputy secretary for Health and Human Services.

Biden's team announced the pick on Jan. 18, and Gov. Tony Evers said she was due this week to depart her position as Health Services secretary.

"Andrea Palm has been a strong leader for Wisconsin and she is a dedicated public servant who has worked hard to take bold action to confront the #COVID19 pandemic," Baldwin tweeted. "I look forward to supporting @PresElectBiden's nomination of her as it moves forward in the Senate."

The nomination requires Senate confirmation.

See the gov's statement [here](#).

See the Biden release [here](#).

— Republican U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, the newest member of Wisconsin's congressional delegation, says he doesn't know who is responsible for the Jan. 6 riots at the U.S. Capitol and called for an "absolute top-to-bottom" investigation.

President Trump during a speech at the Jan. 6 Washington rally ahead of the riot told his supporters they had to "fight like hell and if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore." He also told them to go to the Capitol and to "never concede."

Fitzgerald said in the wake of Trump supporters storming the Capitol while he was in the House chamber, he has reviewed footage of the speeches given by Trump and others at the rally. But after that review, he said it was "hard for me to believe right now that that entire crowd was somehow fired up just by the speeches of the day to take that action."

"I think he definitely fired up that crowd in a way that some people may have believed he meant, 'Go to the Capitol and intimidate.' And if that's the way those people perceived it, that's troubling," the Juneau Republican, an early supporter of Trump, told a WisPolitics.com virtual event Jan. 14. "But I still think it was more about don't do physical harm."

See more [here](#).

Posts of the week

Today, America begins a new path forward.

We have a lot of work to do, and I know Joe and Kamala are ready to do it.

[#Inauguration pic.twitter.com/ntK8QrA4cL](https://pic.twitter.com/ntK8QrA4cL)

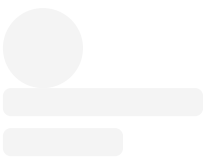
— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [January 20, 2021](#)



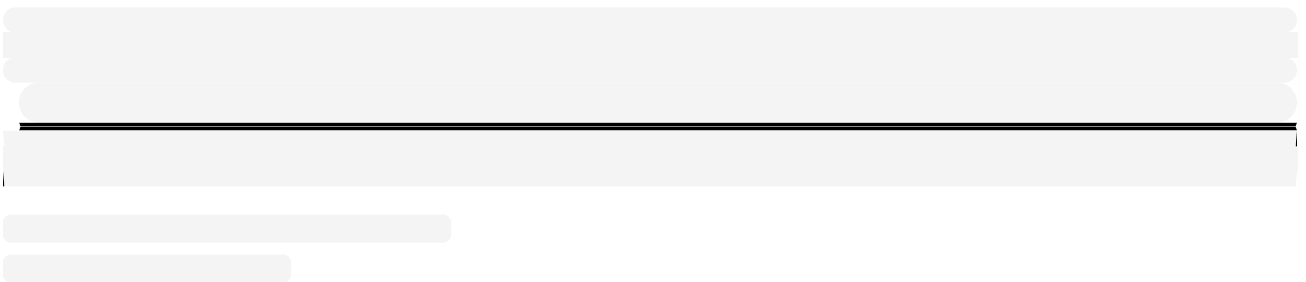
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A post shared by US Rep. Gwen Moore (@repgwenmoore)





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A post shared by Senator Ron Johnson (@senronjohnson)



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['We Have to be Very Vigilant': Sen. Baldwin Weighs in on Potential Riots, Capitol Security, and Biden's Presidency](#)

[Opinion: Senator Ron Johnson calls editorial about him 'unhinged and uninformed.' The Editorial Board responds.](#)

[Minocqua Brewing Co. raises money to oust Ron Johnson, Tom Tiffany](#)

[Rep. Gwen Moore: A day of service to welcome the Biden-Harris administration](#)

[Grothman calls National Guard deployment to DC a "waste of taxpayer money"](#)

[Rep. Ron Kind votes to impeach President Trump](#)

[Wisconsin congressional Democrats planning to watch inauguration online](#)