

DC Wrap: GOP House delegates criticize bill that would create a commission to investigate Jan. 6 Capitol attacks

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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

“You wouldn’t think it would be that hard for us to do a deep dive on what happened Jan. 6 but apparently that too is getting co-opted by the politics of the moment.”

– *U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, tweeting his thoughts on House colleagues who voted against creating a commission to investigate the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.*

“Unfortunately, by narrowly focusing on one isolated event in an effort to promote a political narrative while ignoring the broader context of violence in which it happened, the bill establishing this commission represents a missed opportunity.”

– *U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua, on investigating what he calls politically motivated crimes such as the Jan. 6 Capitol riots.*

This week's news

— Wisconsin’s House delegation voted along party lines on a bill that would create a national commission to investigate the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The bill, now in the Senate, would create a special commission to investigate what happened the day of the attack and what led up to it. The commission would then submit recommendations to improve security. Republicans opposed the bill. They

say the investigation would be redundant because it overlaps with investigations from the FBI, Department of Justice and others.

Freshman U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, says details on the attack are still unclear, but the bill would create a biased commission from the start that would never get to the bottom of things.

“While many questions remain surrounding the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6th, Speaker Pelosi’s proposal for a Commission was partisan right out of the gate and ultimately falls short of a comprehensive study,” he said.

U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, in a tweet said the potential future attacks warrants the need for the commission.

“Unfortunately for America, the GOP made their choice: sweep the attempted insurrection under the rug,” Moore said. “We need a January 6th commission to prevent another attack on our country again.”

See the [roll call](#).

— But before the bill becomes law to create the Jan. 6 investigation commission, it must gain votes from at least 10 GOP senators.

Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson of Oshkosh said he hopes no senators vote for the bill because Pelosi would have too much say in who would be on the commission. That 10-vote margin means the bill must get a slightly higher margin of support from Republicans than the 35 GOP House votes it received to get to the Senate.

He added Pelosi won’t be held accountable for security lapses because she will get to pick commissioners.

“Well of course that’s one of the biggest problems with this commission, is commissioners are going to be named by congressional leaders including Speaker Pelosi who is, let’s face it, ultimately responsible for securing the Capitol,” Johnson said.

His Dem colleague, Tammy Baldwin, of Madison, supports the commission because she says it would investigate former President Trump’s role.

“Trump incited a violent insurrection against our Democracy in an attempt to steal the election, based on the big lie it was stolen from him,” Baldwin tweeted. “I support a Jan 6 Congressional commission to make this truth clear to those who spread the big lie.”

— Baldwin said she wouldn’t rule out using reconciliation to get parts of President Biden’s \$2 trillion infrastructure package passed through Congress.

Baldwin, D-Madison, in a WisPolitics.com virtual infrastructure event called for a “robust investment” in both state and national infrastructure. She said the state could use dollars for both traditional infrastructure like roads and bridges, as well as other areas like broadband.

With 50 seats plus Vice President Kamala Harris as the tie-breaking vote, Dems control the U.S. Senate. It would take a 60-vote supermajority to break a potential GOP filibuster of the bill. However, Dems could use a budget construction rule called reconciliation in order to pass parts of the package with only 51 votes. Republicans have slammed Dems for using the rule as a way to push through a partisan agenda.

“I’m not sure we will end up avoiding reconciliation in some aspects,” said Baldwin, who spoke about two bipartisan infrastructure bills she is working on. “But as I indicated, there are opportunities in areas of agreement.”

In a separate segment of the event, a bipartisan panel of local leaders said they’d use federal dollars to update roads and prepare for the electrification of the transportation system.

Panelists included Wisconsin DOT Secretary Craig Thompson, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, Waukesha County Exec. Paul Farrow and Neenah Mayor Dean Kaufert.

Barrett, a Dem, said he didn’t believe the proposed federal investments in infrastructure were too broad. He suggested the city could use the money to, among other things, modernize public street lights and replace lead pipes.

Kaufert, a former top GOP Assembly member, said a bipartisan agreement on paying for transportation infrastructure — in Madison or Washington, D.C. — “isn’t in the cards.” But he added he felt the attitudes are beginning to change as major

car manufacturers like Ford and GM announce plans to go fully electric in the coming decade.

Watch the [luncheon](#).

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher says he will make sure military training does not produce “wokesters” as he was picked for a leadership role in the House Armed Services Committee.

The Allouez Republican and former Marine will now serve as the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Military Personnel under the committee. The subcommittee covers military personnel policy, military healthcare and POW issues among other things.

Gallagher said he is honored to hold the position and there is nothing more important than ensuring the military has the resources it needs. He added Marine Corps wisdom will help guide him.

“I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure the Department is laser-focused on performing these functions and training our service members to be warriors – not wokesters,” he said.

See the [release](#).

— Wisconsin’s congressional delegation is divided on the escalating fighting in Israel as U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin calls for a ceasefire.

The Madison Dem joined 27 of her Dem Senate colleagues calling for an immediate ceasefire as the death toll has risen to over 200 and fighting in the area enters its second week. Tensions in the region have been high for decades, but violence escalated as Hamas fired hundreds of rockets at Israeli cities a few weeks ago and Israeli military forces responded by bombing what they say are Hamas bases of operations.

“To prevent any further loss of civilian life and to prevent further escalation of conflict in Israel and the Palestinian territories, we urge an immediate ceasefire,”

the 28 Dem senators said.

GOP U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson says Israel has a right to defend itself from Hamas.

See more [here](#).

— Those divisions continue in the House of Representatives as U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan condemned Israel's moves, slamming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

“We must acknowledge and condemn the disproportionate discrimination and treatment that Palestinians face versus others in this region,” the Madison-area Dem said in a floor speech. “No one should suffer the loss of life, liberty or dignity that the Palestinian people have suffered under the Netanyahu and previous administrations in Israel during the 50-year occupation of the West Bank.”

Pocan specifically condemned the forced removal of Palestinians from their homes and recent attacks on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the region.

On the other side of the aisle, U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Allouez, says the United States needs to stand with Israel right now.

See more [here](#).

— Two former Wisconsin Republican congressmen have joined an effort to build a new coalition within the GOP built around truth-telling.

Former Green Bay-area Rep. Reid Ribble, and former Fond du Lac Congressman Tom Petri, have signed on to “A Call for American Renewal,” joining more than 150 other former Republican Party officials and independent leaders.

Ribble said the effort is aimed at bringing together center-right voters to “move the country forward, starting first and foremost by being truth-tellers.” Ribble appeared on WISN’s “UpFront,” which is produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

Ribble said the group wants “a return to founding principles, where our country

started.”

See more [here](#).

— Gov. Tony Evers says he'll use \$100 million in coming federal COVID stimulus money to cover a first round of broadband expansion grants through the PSC.

Along with announcing the federal money, Evers also called on the Legislature to approve his \$200 million broadband expansion program in the state budget. That proposal includes \$151.7 million for expansion grants.

“This isn’t a question of providing federal or state funding for broadband — we must do both to ensure folks can get connected,” Evers said.

See more [here](#).

— But using federal money from the latest COVID-19 stimulus package to expand broadband would require a higher level of service for the projects than putting state money toward the build-out, according to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

That means using federal money to expand into underserved areas would make the projects more expensive than if state funds were used, according to LFB.

The Joint Finance Committee will take up broadband expansion as part of today’s executive session, and LFB laid out some options for the committee ahead of the vote.

See more [here](#).

— Gov. Tony Evers sought to pressure GOP lawmakers to expand Medicaid by promising to pump \$850 million in federal money into projects in their districts that range from broadband to job training.

Republicans have repeatedly rejected Evers' call to expand Medicaid, even as the federal government added a new \$1 billion sweetener if the state approved the expansion.

Evers warned that Republicans who shoot down his call to expand Medicaid this time also would be rejecting projects in their districts. He said many of the projects he'd fund with the additional federal money were proposed by Republican lawmakers.

See more [here](#).

— State Dem Chair Ben Wikler, who has built a financial juggernaut during his time leading the party, will be unopposed next month for another two-year term.

A party spokesman said Wikler was the only one to file papers by Saturday's deadline to run for the post. He is seeking another two-year term with 1st Vice-chair Felesia Martin and 2nd Vice-chair Lee Snodgrass.

Wikler wasn't expected to receive a challenge after a string of statewide victories for Dems and a robust fundraising operation. In the run-up to the 2020 election, the party counted \$57.5 million in receipts through its state and federal accounts between what it raised and what it received via transfers from other committees.

Dems will meet virtually June 5-6 for their annual convention. That includes a speaking component June 5 that will run from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. with a lineup that's scheduled to include Gov. Tony Evers, U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, and U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee.

— Evers hinted strongly he would veto legislation to nix \$300 a week in enhanced federal unemployment benefits if the legislation reaches his desk.

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, and Joint Finance Co-chair Howard Marklein, R-Spring Green, announced the bill Tuesday. Vos said he hoped to bring up the bill in the Assembly once the Legislature is back on the floor in regular

session next month. Republicans argue the additional money discourages people from returning to the workforce.

Evers said he questions this “whole pushback against poor people and people that are struggling during the pandemic.”

See more [here](#).

— Fifty chambers of commerce statewide are urging lawmakers to end the \$300 federal unemployment benefit, arguing it contributes to the state’s workforce shortage.

This comes on the heels of Wisconsin’s Republican congressional delegation also urging Gov. Tony Evers to end the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation.

Workforce was already the biggest challenge facing Wisconsin businesses prior to the COVID-19 downturn, the chambers wrote. And instead of a bounce back from the pandemic, the state’s economy is being held back by an “acute labor shortage” made worse by the benefits they say incentivize people to stay home.

GOP U.S. Reps. Glenn Grothman, of Glenbeulah, Gallagher and Fitzgerald each noted that businesses in their respective districts are hiring but cannot find workers.

“Employers across Wisconsin are reducing business hours, cutting services, and shutting their doors because they are unable to find workers to fill family-supporting jobs,” U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, said.

U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua, added: “It simply doesn’t make sense to pay people to stay home when so many employers are desperate for help.”

See more [here](#).

Posts of the week

<https://twitter.com/RepGallagher/status/1395066424251539467>

<https://twitter.com/RepGwenMoore/status/1394408537556664320>

<https://twitter.com/RepGrothman/status/1394374829407625216>

<https://twitter.com/RepRonKind/status/1393665358544920583>

<https://twitter.com/RepBryanSteil/status/1395057411602452495>

ICYMI

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[Wisconsin unemployment: Republicans urge pandemic bonus end](#)

[Gwen Moore and other Democrats offer bill to make school meals free for all students, regardless of income](#)

[Democrats push tax hikes on wealthy over infrastructure 'user fees'](#)

[Baldwin, Pocan join progressive push for Middle East cease-fire](#)

[Cap Times investigation on sexual assault in National Guard sparks federal hearing and initiatives](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson: Cyber Attacks on Energy 'Existential' Threat](#)

[Ron Johnson, Joe Biden agree on support for Israel in escalating conflict](#)

['Let's be honest about where we're putting our troops': Congressman weighs in on pulling out of Afghanistan](#)