

DC Wrap: Moore calls on Defense secretary to investigate reports of abuse, neglect of Afghan refugees at Fort McCoy

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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

"This is our obligation, and it's also our opportunity to thank the people who protected our soldiers who were in Afghanistan for 20 years. They and their families now are out of harm's way with the Taliban, and we're going to make sure that they're a part of this country."

- U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan during an MSNBC interview on Afghan refugees arriving at Wisconsin's Fort McCoy military base.

"The Democrats voted down all three of these proposals, there is no line they are not willing to cross to grant amnesty to illegal immigrants, and ram trillions of dollars in partisan spending through the House."

- U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald on Democrats rejecting his amendments to a bill that would grant legal status to millions of undocumented immigrants. See more below.

This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, is calling on the secretary of Defense to investigate "possible mistreatment and/or neglect" faced by Afghan refugees at Fort McCoy.

A letter from Moore and Dem colleague U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, alleges families at Fort McCoy lack access to basic necessities, including feminine hygiene products. The letter also says staff have behaved rudely to refugees.

“These families fled their homes and left everything behind, and many arrived here literally with only the clothes on their backs,” the letter said. “They should be treated with compassion and dignity.”

Refugees have also reported limited access to food, a concern U.S. Rep. Ron Kind said he will communicate with Fort McCoy leadership.

“The reports of inadequate food for our Afghan allies at Fort McCoy are concerning,” Kind, D - La Crosse, said in a statement. “I’m committed to supporting a safe and successful transition for our Afghan partners.”

Read the letter [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, however, offered a more positive assessment after his visit to Fort McCoy with other Democrats.

“These refugees have been really great at Fort McCoy,” Pocan said during an interview last week with MSNBC. “There’s been nothing but great stories.”

Pocan also praised efforts at the Army base, calling it “a really well-run operation” after his Republican colleagues raised concerns about vetting processes.

“Any kind of rhetoric about whatever background they may have, we have to remember, if we want to ever be able to work with another country, in a future situation, we’re going to have to deliver,” Pocan said. “And I think right now, this country certainly is lifting both its hands and hearts to those people.”

Watch the interview [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald criticized Democrats for blocking three amendments he introduced to legislation that would provide legal status to as many as 8 million undocumented immigrants. Democrats intend to include that measure in the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation package.

Fitzgerald’s amendments would:

- restrict funds to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services until the State Department verifies that American citizens being evacuated from Afghanistan are not charged for their repatriation flights.
- prohibit amnesty for sex offenders.
- restrict the attorney general from awarding a competitive grant or contract to a local government that has a policy against prosecuting violent offenses that affect the health, safety or economy of the community.

“Prohibiting amnesty for sexual predators should be a no brainer,” Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, said in a statement. “And ensuring that Americans who fled Afghanistan from the Taliban are not charged upwards of \$2,000 for their repatriation flight should be a priority.”

U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, echoed Fitzgerald’s concerns about the proposed amnesty provisions on Twitter.

“This rewards people who broke the law and have entered the country without proper background checks while doing little for millions of people following the rules and immigrating legally,” Grothman said in a statement.

Read Fitzgerald’s press release [here](#).

See Grothman’s statement [here](#).

— The Ways and Means Committee’s markup of major parts of Democrats’ \$3.5 trillion social spending package includes climate legislation introduced by U.S. Reps. Gwen Moore and Ron Kind.

Included in the package are two bills introduced by Moore that would lower costs of home energy audits and ensure Native American tribes can access tax credits to develop renewable energy.

“We should be doing everything we can to help Americans reduce their carbon footprint,” Moore, D-Milwaukee, said in a statement. “Addressing the climate crisis also means empowering communities most vulnerable to climate change.”

Provisions from Kind’s bill that would reduce the cost of alternative energy options for Wisconsin dairy farmers were also included as part of the package. Those

provisions make key investments to support clean energy development and combat climate change, Kind said.

“This pandemic has been devastating for communities across the state. However, far too many Wisconsinites were struggling even before this crisis.” Kind said in a statement. “As we recover, we need to address these longstanding issues and ensure our economy works for everyone.”

Another included measure is Moore’s bill that would ensure Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recipients can pursue doula and midwifery careers through the Health Profession Opportunity Grant program.

“With this bill, we also enhance a program that helps low-income individuals enter health careers in order to exit poverty,” Moore said. “We make efforts to build a culturally competent perinatal health care workforce, which will help us fight the maternal health crisis that claims too many Black and Native women.”

Read Moore’s press releases [here](#) and [here](#).

Read Kind’s press release [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany in a joint letter with his GOP colleague, U.S. Rep. Scott Perry of Pennsylvania, to the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations demanded Taiwan get full membership to the U.N.

The congressmen criticized the U.N. for giving membership to countries they called “state sponsors of terrorism,” including Cuba, Iran and Syria. The letter also listed North Korea as an example, but it is not a U.N. member state.

“No cogent or logical argument can be made for Taiwan’s 50-year exclusion from the U.N.” the letter said. “The only miscalculation our Nation could make here is failing to support one of our closest allies.”

The letter also accused the U.N. of allowing China “to dictate our foreign policy” and suggested that Taiwan replace the People’s Republic of China as a member state.

“America doesn’t need a permission slip from Communist China to support our allies,” Tiffany said in a statement.

See more [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Allouez, introduced bipartisan legislation that would put a five-year freeze on taxpayer funding for gain-of-function research, which studies viruses' transmissibility.

The legislation comes following a report from The Intercept about materials related to U.S.-funded coronavirus research in China. That report prompted Gallagher to call on Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, to resign.

“While we continue to investigate the origins of COVID-19, the U.S. should – at a minimum – halt all funding for this dangerous research until we understand the role it played in this pandemic,” Gallagher said in a statement.

A press release from Gallagher’s office also claimed research in Wuhan funded by the U.S. may have led to the ongoing pandemic.

Read the press release [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson sent a letter with GOP colleagues to the U.S. Department of Agriculture alleging that the Food Safety and Inspection Service’s mask mandate for employees at private businesses forced meatpacking and poultry processing plants to shut down.

The letter said FSIS informed businesses that sought to appeal the mandate, which the senators say was imposed with little notice, that it would no longer provide inspection services for their facilities after Aug. 25 and their products could be subject to recall.

The letter asked the USDA to clarify what grants FSIS the authority to issue mask mandates.

“We stand with these businesses in taking issue with this federal overreach by FSIS,” the group wrote. “Individual processing facilities and plants have established policies to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 that work best for their employees

and operations and are adhering to local and state guidance and restrictions.”

Read the letter [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil called President Joe Biden’s vaccine mandate an “overreach” as Gov. Tony Evers goes forward with testing requirements for unvaccinated state government employees.

Federal workers will be required to sign forms confirming they’ve been vaccinated or instead comply with new rules on mandatory masking, weekly testing and social distancing.

“The announced federal government mandate is another example of Biden imposing rules on private businesses and citizens through unilateral executive action,” Steil, R-Janesville, said in a statement on Twitter.

See the statement [here](#).

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin sent a letter with Dem colleagues to Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona urging calling on him to apply to state laws a recent re-interpretation of department policy they say protects student loan borrowers.

The new interpretation of department policy will prevent the federal government from obstructing state-level efforts to protect student loan borrowers and increase oversight of the student loan program and its contractors, the group said in its letter.

“The revised interpretation of federal preemption will encourage stronger partnership to hold loan servicers and other student loan contractors accountable,” the letter said. “By explicitly endorsing these partnerships, the Department can further align Federal and state actions to protect and support borrowers and consumers.”

Read the letter [here](#).

— Join WisPolitics.com for a Sept. 29 breakfast at the AT&T Forum near Capitol Hill. The in-person event, in conjunction with MMAC's Milwaukee Night in DC, features Wisconsin 2nd District Congressman Mark Pocan on the infrastructure bills.

Also speaking will be a polling and political advertising expert on the California recall election and Wisconsin political trends.

The expert is former UW-Madison and University of San Francisco Prof. Ken Goldstein, now with the Association of American Universities (AAU). See his bio [here](#).

The breakfast starts at 8:30 a.m. with the program going from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

The cost is \$20 and includes breakfast.

To attend, pay here and put Sept. 29DC in the "purpose of payment" line in this form: <https://www.wispolitics.com/make-payments/>

Posts of the week

The [#Biden](#) admin wasn't being honest when they implied most [#Afghans](#) coming to US are "translators." Today [@SecBlinken](#) admitted that under questioning from my friend [@RepScottPerry](#) ↓ <https://t.co/iLLbrzva7E>

— Rep. Tom Tiffany (@RepTiffany) [September 13, 2021](#)

Top Cong. Dems are trying to secure amnesty for 8m illegal immigrants. This rewards people who broke the law & have entered the country without proper background checks while doing little for millions of people following the rules & immigrating legally. <https://t.co/vmCJbx3bTs>

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [September 14, 2021](#)

During his testimony today [@SecBlinken](#) said much of US military equipment left behind was made inoperable.

News reports show photos and video indicating not all equipment was rendered inoperable.

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [September 15, 2021](#)

From lobbying against climate legislation to funding climate deniers to protecting polluters in court, the [@USChamber](#) has an extensive history of obstructing climate solutions.

Read more in [@LobbyForClimate](#)'s new report here:
<https://t.co/asY2Mq8SNa>. [#ChamberAgainstClimate](#)

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [September 15, 2021](#)

For 27 years, the Violence Against Women Act has saved lives and served as a vital tool in our fight against domestic violence.

The House voted to reauthorize [#VAWA](#) earlier this year with bipartisan support. Now it's time for the Senate to take action and do the same.

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

Q: What do your ears, eyes and teeth all have in common?

A: They're all part of your body, but aren't covered by Medicare.

It's time we expand Medicare to include coverage for dental, vision and hearing. The [#BuildBackBetterAct](#) gets this done.

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [September 14, 2021](#)

Rep. Gallagher, [@RepBuddyCarter](#), and [@RepCuellar](#) introduced legislation that would pause all U.S. taxpayer funding for gain-of-function research for five years.

Read more about their bill here: <https://t.co/XNjrLvVjpLpic.twitter.com/frzSRPzPIE>

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [September 14, 2021](#)

My statement following the Judiciary Committee's consideration of the Democrats' reckless \$3.5 trillion spending bill, which passed yesterday evening in the dead of the night. <pic.twitter.com/1dAq458ITc>

— Rep. Scott Fitzgerald (@RepFitzgerald) [September 14, 2021](#)

Tune in now to watch my [@WaysMeansCmte](#) colleagues and I continue marking up the Build Back Better Act. □ <https://t.co/ArtQwJKqp5>

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [September 14, 2021](#)

Packed crowd at Darien's 60th Annual Cornfest parade! 📷 📷
pic.twitter.com/INs3VJOKJO

— Bryan Steil (@BryanSteil) [September 12, 2021](#)

ICYMI

[Baldwin joins colleagues in call to bolster ports infrastructure funding in upcoming Build Back Better legislation](#)

[U.S. Sen. Johnson and colleagues push to end government shutdowns, hold Congress accountable](#)