

DC Wrap: National Guard used no state funds for COVID-19 testing

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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

Many women are working full-time, or working two jobs just to make ends meet, yet far too many are barely getting by, and far too many women and children are living in poverty.

- U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, in a tweet ahead of the Senate vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act, which she helped reintroduce this session.

The bill that was defeated today would simply be a big gift to the primary patrons of Democrats, trial lawyers. It would have lined their pockets, harmed our economy and reduced opportunities for women. That's why I voted no.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, on the move to sideline the Paycheck Fairness Act, which was meant to address the gender pay gap.

This week's news

— Wisconsin's National Guard has received \$102 million in federal funds to help pay for work combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wisconsin Guard spokesman Maj. Joe Trovato told WisPolitics.com those funds help pay for soldiers' salaries, food, lodging, fuel, equipment and other expenses. Trovato says the Guard received federal funds despite remaining under state control because of the declared national public health emergency.

Those FEMA dollars entirely paid for mobilizing over 1,000 Wisconsin National Guard troops to fight the pandemic since those troops would not normally be on duty. That means the pandemic response didn't use state money.

Trovato also says the Guard administered more COVID-19 tests than any other state's National Guard organization during the largest and longest Wisconsin deployment in history, which dates back to about 1837.

The challenges the Guard faced and overcame throughout the pandemic strengthened bonds and sculpted young leaders into experienced ones, Trovato added. He called the experiences unique opportunities to learn how to better work together, creating a stronger Guard for the future.

"And that experience has been absolutely invaluable to creating a more effective, highly developed force that I think will really be in a good position to continue to serve Wisconsin in any way going forward," Trovato says.

While about 1,700 Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard troops fought the pandemic, many others continued to serve throughout the country and world.

Trovato says Wisconsin soldiers saw action fighting forest fires in California as others were deployed to places like South Africa and eastern Europe.

Watch the [interview](#).

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan praised the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for approving his earmark to include \$18 million for Wisconsin road repairs in his 2nd District.

The Town of Vermont Dem's provision would spend over \$6 million repairing sections of Atwood Avenue in Madison, along with the pedestrian paths and a portion of the Lake Loop Bike Path. The rest of the money would go to replace a bridge in Middleton and repair a half dozen highways.

"I have witnessed firsthand the need for critical investments in our roads and bridges," said Pocan. "And I know this funding would be instrumental in providing the infrastructure that Wisconsinites need and deserve."

The bill with his provision is expected to see a full House vote within the next couple of months.

See the release [here](#).

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher introduced bipartisan legislation to move the 2022 Olympic Games out of Beijing due to China’s human rights violations against its Uyghur Muslim population.

The Allouez Republican joined nine other countries which introduced similar legislation as part of an international effort to pressure the International Olympic Committee into finding another venue.

“Authoritarian regimes have a long and troubling history of using the Olympics to whitewash their crimes and disseminate propaganda on a global scale,” he said. “Given the ongoing genocide in Xinjiang, it is unconscionable that the free world would proceed with the 2022 games with business as usual.”

Gallagher has called for action by the IOC to move the 2022 winter games since the end of 2019.

See the release [here](#).

— Lawyers for GOP lawmakers argue it would be duplicative to require them to file their own lawsuit challenging a federal COVID-19 relief provision that bars states accepting federal funds from then passing a net tax decrease.

The U.S. Treasury Department has urged a federal judge in Alabama to reject allowing the GOP legislators to join a multi-state suit there seeking to challenge the provision. Among other things, the Biden administration argues it would be inappropriate to allow Wisconsin lawmakers to join a lawsuit in the 11th District Court of Appeals when they are free to file a similar action in the 7th Circuit, which covers the state.

But in their response, the GOP lawmakers argued they would suffer injury from a “waste of sovereign resources arising from separately litigating an identical action anew.”

In a filing May 28, the Treasury argued Wisconsin lawmakers shouldn’t be allowed to intervene in the suit that involves a half-dozen states because they don’t have

standing. The Treasury attorneys argued Wisconsin statute gives lawmakers the ability to represent the state in defending a state law. But this case is about a federal statute, and the Wisconsin Department of Justice would have exclusive authority to represent the state in such a case.

See more [here](#).

— Wisconsin's U.S. senators were on opposite sides as the Senate approved a bill that aims to improve the nation's competitiveness with China.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, joined a bipartisan group of 67 others in favor of the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, which is meant to help give American tech companies a leg up on their Chinese competition. It comes with a nearly \$250 billion price tag that covers grants to tech companies, research programs and facilities among other things. The bill would also curb some Trump-era tariffs. Baldwin sponsored several provisions in the package.

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, voted against the bill.

The legislation includes a version of the Endless Frontier Act. U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Allouez, joined California Dem U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna in introducing the House version of the Endless Frontier Act in April.

However, Gallagher has not said if he will support the more expensive Senate bill.

See the [roll call](#).

— The nation's top Dems told state party activists at the DPW's virtual convention Wisconsin is key in 2022, They urged them to mobilize around successes such as a refundable child tax credit to turn out voters next fall.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., also talked about two Wisconsin races as key to their prospects next fall.

Pelosi praised U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, for the perspective he brings to the

caucus, while Schumer knocked U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh.

See more [here](#).

— Meanwhile, the Dem candidates for U.S. Senate made a pitch to party activists on why they should replace Johnson.

And Evers formally announced his reelection bid during his speech to the convention Saturday night.

See full coverage in the WisPolitics.com [Dem Convention Blog](#).

— Both houses of the state Legislature yesterday voted along party lines to end enhanced federal unemployment benefits even as Gov. Tony Evers has signaled he will veto the bill.

Assembly Republicans acknowledged that ending the extra \$300 a week in UI wouldn't be a silver bullet to address the state's labor shortage. But they said it's one way to start forcing more people to join the workforce, arguing some state residents haven't bothered to seek a job due to the additional benefits.

The bill would require the governor and Department of Workforce Development to terminate the state's participation in the federal program.

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, on the floor said part of the problem with the employment shortage is that state politicians like Evers have "bare-bones" personal experience on how the private sector works. Vos said many of the employees at his gourmet popcorn factory have been working double shifts because of the lack of line workers.

See more here.

— A Republican lawmaker on the Legislature's powerful budget-writing committee said the state would stay in compliance with federal guidelines,

so as not to miss out on \$1.5 billion in federal matching funds for education.

Rep. Jessie Rodriguez, R-Oak Creek, said Wisconsin and other states just need more guidance from the federal government concerning the money.

“We’ve said from the beginning we want to make sure that we provide increased funding for education. We have, through categorical aids, and at the same time making sure that we were going to craft a budget for education that meets those requirements. So this is not any different than we’ve done in the past. We still haven’t finished crafting our budget,” Rodriguez said in an interview aired on “UpFront,” produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

In the joint interview with Rodriguez, Rep. Evan Goyke, D-Milwaukee, said the stakes are too high for Republicans not to “figure it out.”

See more [here](#).

— Wisconsin would overhaul its policies for absentee ballots, indefinitely confined voters and the use of drop boxes under bills that cleared the state Senate yesterday.

The Senate also voted to ban the use of private money to cover the costs of an election.

Many of the provisions in the four bills that cleared the Senate stem from the issues former President Trump raised as he unsuccessfully sought to overturn Wisconsin’s election results

See more [here](#).

— Dem megadonor George Soros gave the state party \$500,000 last month as Wisconsin Dems continue to pull in six-figure checks from national donors.

Milwaukee philanthropist Lynde Uihlein gave the state Dem Party \$150,000 last

month. The two donations made up the bulk of the \$714,558 the party raised between April 30 and May 31.

The party spent \$233,902 and had \$1.6 million in the bank.

The party's expenses include \$200,000 it transferred to the campaign of Gov. Tony Evers on May 25. The gov has since announced the hire of four senior staffers and his re-election bid.

The party filed a report for the period because it was active in the 37th AD special election, giving Dem candidate Pete Adams \$427.

See the [filing](#).

Posts of the week

<https://twitter.com/BryanSteil/status/1402645665793155076?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/repmarkpocan/status/1402350912937644035?s=20>

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<https://twitter.com/RepGallagher/status/1401902001148071940?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/RepRonKind/status/1401586453465944071?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/RepGwenMoore/status/1400524634001391620?s=20>

ICYMI

[US Sen. Ron Johnson Says It's Too Early To Announce Candidacy](#)

[Maternal, infant mortality among women of color highlighted in roundtable with U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin](#)

[Rep. Pocan joins restaurants to discuss new round of financial relief](#)

[Rep. Glenn Grothman weighs in on election results and teachings of critical race theory](#)