

# Baldwin on 'UpFront' says she'll continue push for paid sick leave; Steil voices full support of McCarthy for House speaker

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U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin says Democrats will continue to push for paid sick leave despite Congress rejecting a proposal to add it to legislation averting a nationwide rail strike.

"We'll be bringing it up again," Baldwin said on WISN's "UpFront," which is produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com. "This is something that should be assured all employees."

On the Respect for Marriage Act, which passed the U.S. Senate last week, a measure Baldwin spent months negotiating to secure 60 votes, Baldwin said several Republican members were under "a lot of pressure to change their votes" in the final hours before final passage. But she added they "stuck firm."

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, voted against the measure. Baldwin didn't directly say whether she talked with him personally about his vote.

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"Look, we offered every opportunity for people who wanted to support this to have input," Baldwin said.

Baldwin is up for reelection in 2024.

"I'm widely expected to run again," she said with a laugh. "No announcement on this show. Sorry."

Also on the program, U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, says he is fully backing Kevin McCarthy to be House speaker when Republicans take control of the U.S. House.

“Yes, absolutely,” Steil said on “UpFront.” “I think he has the opportunity to really take us forward and get on with the work that needs to be done.”

When asked whether McCarthy currently has enough votes to secure the speakership, Steil said, “I think he will on Jan. 3.”

McCarthy appointed Steil to lead the “Restoring the People’s House” transition team, leading to speculation McCarthy may nominate Steil to chair the House Administration Committee.

“We’ll see how things play out in the weeks ahead,” Steil said. “I think we have a critical opportunity here in particular as it relates to federal election law to make sure that we are examining how we can make it easy to vote and hard to cheat. Bringing forward election integrity provisions across this country I think are going to be really important.”

Steil said he voted against the rail strike bill because he wanted both sides to return to the negotiating table. He added he will vote in favor of the Respect for Marriage Act when it returns to the House.

“I will vote for it as I did in the past,” Steil said. “It really just maintains the status quo. This is the political bickering that I think people are so frustrated with. This is the home stretch of one-party Democratic control, but ultimately it doesn’t alter state law and just maintains the status quo.”

In another segment, former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Janine Geske is pushing for justices to no longer be elected, saying the court has become increasingly political and polarized.

“I’m hoping that someday we decide to go to an appointed judiciary,” Geske said. “It really has deteriorated these races into almost like a legislative race.”

Geske pointed to other states that have an appointment process, some including a bipartisan committee.

“Ultimately it’s often the governor that makes an appointment, sometimes the

legislature has to confirm depending on what state, but that would take some of that out,” Geske said.

Geske was appointed by former Gov. Tommy Thompson and served on the Wisconsin Supreme Court from 1993-98.

“I’m expecting tens of millions of dollars from outside groups to enter into this race,” Geske said of the spring race for philosophical control of the high court. “We’re going to be inundated with ads just like we were during this last race in November, and I don’t think it’s going to be very pretty.”

Four candidates are running in the race, including conservatives Waukesha County Judge Jennifer Dorow and former state Supreme Court Justice Daniel Kelly. The liberal candidates include Dane County Judge Everett Mitchell and Milwaukee County Judge Janet Protasiewicz.

The top two candidates in the Feb. 21 primary will advance to the April 4 election.

See more from the show:

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