

# DC Wrap: Baldwin blasts McConnell over threat to slow Senate if Dems suspend filibuster to pass voting legislation

Posted on Thursday, Jan 13, 2022

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

*"We continue to see them try to connect the Republican conference to what happened on January 6. I think the American people can see through that."*

– U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, on what he called theater by Dems, adding his constituents aren't talking about the Jan. 6 riots and protests at the U.S. Capitol.

*"Inciting an insurrection is unpresidential. Asking for votes to be 'found' is unpresidential. Destroying relationships with our allies is unpresidential."*

– U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Madison, on former President Trump's role in the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol riots and protests.

## This week's news

**— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin blasted Minority Leader Mitch McConnell's "abuse of Senate rules" after he threatened Republicans could gum up the Senate if Dems suspend filibuster rules to pass voting rights legislation.**

Baldwin told WisPolitics.com in an email she opposes the Kentucky Republican's "abuse of Senate rules to federalize voter suppression," referring to his call to maintain the 60-vote filibuster rule to stop Dems from advancing the legislation. Dem leaders plan to package the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act into one proposal, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she will introduce it today.

Baldwin, D-Madison, criticized Republicans for moving toward what she called voter suppression.

“A year after Trump incited a violent insurrection on our democracy, Republicans are still using his big lie to undercut faith in our elections and justify voter suppression,” she said.

She added Wisconsin Republicans validating Trump’s “big lie” are suppressing the freedom to vote, which she said is the most fundamental freedom of all.

“Across the country, we are seeing the rise of legislation designed to curtail American’s access to the ballot box and in Wisconsin we have a taxpayer funded promotion of Trump’s big lie,” she said.

McConnell in a Tuesday floor speech said doing away with the filibuster would put them in a “post-nuclear Senate,” and he questioned if his colleagues knew what he could put them through.

“A post-nuclear Senate would not be more efficient or more productive,” he said. “I personally guarantee it. Do my colleagues understand how many times per day the Senate needs and gets unanimous consent for basic housekeeping? Do they understand how many things could require roll call votes? How often the minority could demand lengthy debate?”

See Pelosi’s [letter](#).

Read McConnell’s [speech](#).

**— U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, announced that Wisconsin received a record \$246 million to help families heat their homes through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.**

The American Rescue Plan and annual appropriations provided the funds for the program. The amount is more than double typical yearly funding.

In December 2021, Kind joined a letter urging the Dept. of Health and Human Services to support LIHEAP in light of projections of higher heating costs over the winter.

“As Wisconsin continues to cope with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, I’m

glad to see the American Rescue Plan working to provide relief. This funding will go a long way towards helping hard-working families keep the heat on and stay safe this winter,” Kind said.

**— Baldwin voiced support of the Masks For All Act to distribute N95 masks to Americans. The bill was reintroduced by U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-VT, to deliver a set of three masks to every American.**

“As Americans are urged to upgrade the quality of the masks they wear, I want to make sure everyone has access to an American-made N95 mask, and this legislation will help make that happen and save lives,” Baldwin said.

The initiative would use the Defense Production Act to prevent mask shortages and distribute masks through the U.S. Postal Service and at post offices, pharmacies, schools, public transportation stations, COVID-19 test sites and other locations.

See more [here](#).

**- U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher in a video slammed school closure advocates as Wisconsin’s two biggest school districts move to virtual learning due to pandemic-related issues.**

In a Twitter video, the Allouez Republican said kids should be in classrooms right now instead of in virtual learning situations because many of them will fall behind. Milwaukee and Madison school districts announced a short move to virtual learning just after the holidays.

“We can’t afford more learning loss,” he said. “So it’s time for the ‘adults’ to stop letting their greed, their fear, and their irrationality to mess up our kids’ future.”

See the [video](#).

**— U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald said he wants to amend a bill in order to ensure soldiers discharged for refusing to take a COVID-19 vaccine are eligible for Montgomery and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.**

The Juneau Republican in a floor speech said he wants to amend the Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act to allow those who received an honorable or general discharge for refusing to get vaccinated can get the benefits he says they deserve. Restrictions Congress put in place in 2011 prevent them from getting those

benefits.

Fitzgerald added those troops have paid their dues and questioned why Congress should deny them.

“And now we’re going to tell them that we don’t care how spotless their record may have been beforehand? That because they made a moral, ethical, or even religious objection to a vaccine, we’re going to deprive that veteran, or their children, of benefits and stigmatize their service record?”

See the [press release and speech](#).

**— U.S. Sens. Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin issued joint resolutions congratulating the UW-Madison and UW-Eau Claire women’s volleyball teams for their recent championship victories.**

See the [press release and resolutions](#).

**— The head of the Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans during a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee virtual event Monday said Johnson is only interested in serving himself and his donors.**

WARA President Gary Mitchell accused Johnson of spreading lies about the 2020 election, slamming him for touting unapproved COVID-19 remedies such as using ivermectin and mouthwash. Mitchell also said Johnson’s work to repeal the Affordable Care Act and prevent Medicaid expansion only helps him and his biggest donors’ pocketbooks while hurting Wisconsinites.

“It’s clear Johnson has no problem trying to take money out of the pockets of older Wisconsinites to satisfy his self-serving agenda,” Mitchell said.

See more [here](#).

**— Dem U.S. Senate candidate Alex Lasry launched a new digital ad targeting Johnson in light of the Oshkosh Republican’s announcement that he will run for reelection in 2022.**

Lasry’s campaign said the digital ad is the beginning of a six-figure buy that will run on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

The ad calls Johnson an “insurrection-denier,” “COVID-denier” and “climate change-denier.”

“You can’t deny the truth. There’s nothing more important than defeating Ron Johnson. I’m proud to be endorsed by progressive leaders across Wisconsin. They know I’m our best chance to win in November and give Wisconsin two senators they can be proud of,” Lasry says in a voiceover.

See the [ad](#).

## ***Posts of the week***

Thank you [@WIFarmBureau](#) President Kevin Krentz for the nomination. Happy [#NationalMilkDay](#) Wisconsin! To celebrate I’m taking the [#MilkChugChallenge](#) and I challenge [@SenBewley](#). Cheers and thank you to our hardworking farmers across America’s Dairyland! [#DairyPride](#) [#SupportWIDairy](#) [pic.twitter.com/XmmRDpvyCS](https://pic.twitter.com/XmmRDpvyCS)

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [January 11, 2022](#)

Wisconsin is America’s Dairyland for a reason. Our dairy farmers help form the backbone of our state, and we are all proud of their work! On average, Wisconsin produces roughly 30 billion pounds of milk a year! Celebrate National Milk Day with a glass today. [pic.twitter.com/qckUxnJl2l](https://pic.twitter.com/qckUxnJl2l)

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [January 12, 2022](#)

Happy [#NationalMilkDay](#) to hardworking dairy farmers across Wisconsin. I’m proud to represent so many in this industry throughout the Dairy State. [pic.twitter.com/VUq7vOFRNI](https://pic.twitter.com/VUq7vOFRNI)

— Senator Ron Johnson (@SenRonJohnson) [January 11, 2022](#)

Be smart. Get vaccinated. Do your part to keep Wisconsin safe. [@RWHC pic.twitter.com/IXHT0X3WYf](#)

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [January 10, 2022](#)

Today I want to thank our men and women in blue. They are on the frontlines working to support and safeguard our communities 24/7 and deserve recognition for their service. [#LawEnforcementAppreciationDay https://t.co/lbvmjs5zVQ](#)

— Rep. Scott Fitzgerald (@RepFitzgerald) [January 10, 2022](#)

## **ICYMI**

[Wisconsin Republican Sen. Ron Johnson is running for reelection](#)

[One year later, Democratic Rep. Ron Kind says Jan. 6 attack is 'imprinted' in his memory](#)

[Tammy Baldwin slams GOP for wanting to 'whitewash' Jan. 6; Ron Johnson ticked off that Democrats now have anniversary to 'pound on'](#)