

DC Wrap: Fitzgerald under fire after his old state office allegedly reserved space for fake presidential electors

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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

"The Supreme Court makes decisions that have a profound effect on the daily lives of all Americans and Justice Stephen Breyer has served with distinction and has always been guided by the ideal of working to protect the constitutional rights and freedoms of all Americans."

-U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, reacting to Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer's retirement.

"People decide to have families and become parents, that's something they need to consider when they make that choice. I've never really felt it was society's responsibility to take care of other people's children."

-U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, arguing people should be able to support their own families without government assistance.

This week's news

— GOP U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald is under fire this week for his alleged role in attempting to cast electoral college votes in Trump's favor despite Biden's popular vote win in Wisconsin.

The Juneau Republican's office during his time as state Senate majority leader reserved meeting space in the state Capitol for the Republican Party of Wisconsin the same day and time RPW convened its presidential electors there, according to public records. Fitzgerald also after joining Congress voted against certifying Biden's win.

State Sen. Chris Larson submitted the open records request that yielded the documents. In a statement the Milwaukee Dem blasted Fitzgerald for what he called an effort to defraud democracy, a betrayal of the oath of office and an effort to overthrow the election.

“If Congressman Fitzgerald did indeed provide the meeting space in our State Capitol where 10 partisans conspired to defraud our democracy, he must explain why he did so,” Larson said. “The Congressman owes it to his constituents and the American people at large to condemn the actions of the fraudulent GOP electors.”

Fitzgerald did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

See the Larson [statement](#).

— U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer is set to retire, opening up a seat for a nominee from President Biden.

According to national media reports, Breyer does not plan to leave the position until a new nominee is confirmed. The balance of the court will stay the same as Biden is certain to nominate another liberal justice.

Biden has pledged to nominate the first Black woman to the court. Among the possibilities: Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson of the U.S. Court of Appeals’ D.C. circuit, Justice Leondra R. Kruger of the California Supreme Court and Columbia, S.C. federal District Court Judge J. Michelle Childs.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin reacted to Breyer’s retirement on Twitter, but did not give any hints as to who she might see filling the seat.

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson did not immediately respond to a request for comment on what qualities he wants to see from Breyer’s replacement.

See quotes of the week above for Baldwin’s quote.

— Baldwin and Moore joined VP Kamala Harris on a visit to Milwaukee this week to tout the Biden administration’s plan to accelerate funding of a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package to replace all lead pipes over the next 10 years.

The administration will invest \$140 million in Wisconsin’s water infrastructure this

year, including \$48 million out of the \$15 billion national budget for lead lateral removal. According to a previously released fact sheet from the White House, Wisconsin can expect to see \$841 million over five years for water infrastructure.

Local activist Deanna Branch, who had lead poisoning herself and whose son was hospitalized twice with lead poisoning, thanked the Biden administration for their “hard work.”

Harris said that people like Branch have had to fight to address the issue of lead poisoning “for far too long.”

“The bottom line is that eliminating lead exposure in our nation must be among our nation’s highest priorities,” Harris said, adding that millions of Americans are exposed to lead every day.

In a conversation with employees of Hero Plumbing, Harris said the goal is to do more than just provide clean water.

“It’s not only going to be about the children and making sure they drink clean water, it’s going to be about investing in the talented people in the community to build up the skills to do the work,” Harris said.

She also visited community leaders, health care officials and union workers at the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership/BIG STEP program, where she discussed the effects of lead poisoning on Milwaukeeans and the city’s efforts to replace lead laterals.

Harris also noted the importance of replacing lead laterals in the context of public health.

“Each day in the life of a child is a very long time, and so each day that we get these fixed – Right? Let’s think about it in the positive – each day that we fix these, is a day that we help a child and improve that child’s health. So this is really important,” Harris said.

Baldwin said the infrastructure bill would create jobs as well as provide access to clean water.

“The Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill has a historic investment for lead remediation and addresses other contaminants like PFAS. And it is an investment in our communities

that will create family-supporting union jobs all across the state, but especially here in Milwaukee,” Baldwin said.

[Register now](#) for a Feb. 3 WisPolitics.com/WisBusiness.com breakfast on the infrastructure package.

— Republicans panned Harris’ visit.

State GOP Chair Paul Farrow dismissed the visit as an attempt to “play damage control for Joe Biden’s disastrous first year in office.” Meanwhile, RNC spokeswoman Rachel Reisner said Harris should focus less on Biden’s infrastructure plan and more on other constituent concerns.

“Wisconsinites deserve to know how the Biden administration’s plan to eliminate cash bail will keep their families safe and address the issue of rising crime rates, not listen to Kamala Harris shill Biden’s floundering agenda,” Reisner said.

U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil suggested that the Biden administration should focus on spending responsibly.

“We need to be investing in our infrastructure, we just need to have a plan to pay for it,” the Janesville Republican told CBS 58. “And so what we’ve seen this administration do is to continue to spend money in a reckless manner, and what that’s doing is driving up the costs of everyday goods.”

U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher said that the administration should be focusing more on the escalating situation in Ukraine than touting legislation.

“Ukraine is on the brink of disaster, crime is surging across the country, and the border remains unsecure. Vice President Harris should be working overdrive to help address these crises – not taking a victory lap,” the Allouez Republican said.

— Gallagher, a House Armed Services member, slammed the Biden administration over its handling of issues between Ukraine and Russia as troops mass on both sides of the border.

As thousands of U.S., NATO and Russian troops gather for training exercises and security at the border between Ukraine and Russia, Wisconsin delegates are watching to see what comes next.

Gallagher, R-Allouez, in a cable news interview slammed the Biden administration for urging family members of U.S. embassy workers in Ukraine to leave the country.

“The same team that bungled the evacuation in Afghanistan may get another shot to do the same in Ukraine,” he said. “We’re a year into the Biden administration, and you can literally measure our global retreat by the number of embassies we’re evacuating.”

While not all of the embassy workers have evacuated, the State Department is urging Americans not to travel to Ukraine.

Dem U.S. Rep. Ron Kind told WisPolitics.com he’s concerned about Russia massing troops at the border.

“Ukraine is an important democracy and I support working closely with our allies to find a diplomatic resolution to current tensions, deter Russian aggression against Ukraine, and reiterating U.S. support for Ukrainian sovereignty,” the La Crosse Dem said.

Vice President Kamala Harris during her stop in Wisconsin earlier this week told reporters the Biden administration is prepared to take decisive action if Russian President Vladimir Putin “moves in an aggressive manner” in Ukraine.

“The bottom line is we have been clear and consistent for quite some time that we respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and we expect that Russia would do the same,” Harris said. “Any aggressive action taken by Vladimir Putin will be met with severe consequences.”

See the Gallagher [release](#).

- Steil and fellow GOP reps sent a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra urging the Biden administration to make monoclonal antibody treatments more widely available.

“It is essential that the administration provide us with a detailed plan to ensure that we do not again face critical shortages of lifesaving treatments,” the letter states.

The letter was sent along with signatures from U.S. Reps. Glenn Grothman, Tom

Tiffany and Scott Fitzgerald. They say the 300,000 doses of monoclonal antibody treatments provided to states this month is insufficient. The letter cites sotrovimab in particular.

“President Biden has promised to “crush the virus,” yet we are not seeing the Administration taking needed steps to expand availability of lifesaving treatments that help patients from becoming seriously ill,” Steil said in a statement.

[See the release.](#)

[See the letter.](#)

— Steil also announced this week that his campaign has more than \$1.3 million cash on hand after raising more than \$300,000 during the fourth quarter of 2021.

“I’m grateful for the continued encouragement and grassroots support our campaign continues to receive from people across Wisconsin. The energy is on our side. The policies of President Biden and Speaker Pelosi are clobbering families and workers across our state and nation,” Steil said.

“This November, we must take back the House to stop the out of control spending, prevent government overreach, and restore our way of life. Big Government policies have failed us. This fall is our chance to change course. I will continue to fight for Wisconsin, freedom, and opportunity for all.”

The Janesville Republican was elected to represent Wisconsin’s first district in 2019.

[See the release.](#)

— U.S. Reps. Kind, Tiffany and Grothman joined a bipartisan letter to Biden asking the administration to strengthen exports to help American farmers.

In the letter, Kind, Tiffany, Grothman and their colleagues ask that the administration provide temporary incentives for foreign shipping companies to fill containers with U.S. exports, allow vehicle weight limits to exceed 80,000 pounds and provide more readily available access to shipping and logistics equipment.

“Export supply chain challenges have caused difficulties for our farmers here in

Wisconsin as they continue to work to feed and fuel the world,” Kind said. “We need to take action to address this critical issue, and I look forward to working alongside the Administration to find solutions and provide relief to our hardworking agricultural producers.”

[See the letter.](#)

— Dem U.S. Senate candidate Sarah Godlewski rolled out a five-point plan for rural Wisconsin, including a call to make broadband internet a public utility.

Godlewski argued doing so would allow the Federal Communications Commission to regulate providers and stop price gouging.

The other planks of the package:

*improving access to quality medical care, including steps such as bringing federal investments to rural areas to stem the tide of hospital closures.

*expanding job and educational opportunities through initiatives such as expanding student loan forgiveness for rural teachers, increasing child care and boosting teacher pay.

*combating climate change by creating incentives for biofuels, carbon capture and crop rotation.

*investing in family farms by updating the farm bill and overhauling the milk pricing system to increase transparency and loosen restrictions.

See the [plan](#).

— Dem U.S. Senate candidate Tom Nelson is calling on the state party to organize a series of debates among those seeking the nomination to challenge U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh.

Nelson wrote in a letter to Chair Ben Wikler the primary race “shouldn’t be a coronation, shouldn’t be about who has the most money, shouldn’t be about who is leading in the polls.” Nelson has consistently trailed Mandela Barnes, Sarah Godlewski and Alex Lasry for resources.

A spokeswoman said the party hasn't organized debates before and currently doesn't have any plans to do it for the Senate primary.

Read the [letter](#).

— Marquette University and WTMJ-TV announced a series of televised debates this year in Milwaukee's mayoral race as well as the contests for gov and the U.S. Senate.

WisPolitics.com, 620 WTMJ and the Milwaukee Business Journal are also sponsoring the debates.

The debate lineup is:

- *March 27, two finalists in the race for Milwaukee mayor
- *July 17, Dem candidates for the U.S. Senate
- *July 24, GOP candidates in GOP primary for governor
- *Oct. 13, the Dem and GOP nominees for U.S. Senate
- *Oct. 20, the Dem and GOP nominees for gov.

Each of the debates will run from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

See the [release](#).

Posts of the week

I had a great day [@wrtpbigstep](#) in Milwaukee today with [@VP](#) as we stand on the side of delivering results for Wisconsin.

Creating jobs, rebuilding our water infrastructure, replacing lead pipes, protecting public health, and providing safe and clean drinking water to everyone. pic.twitter.com/CUI5AFf8ZG

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [January 25, 2022](#)

This week, I toured Precision Manufacturing in [#Fredonia](#) and saw another reason why [#WI](#) is a worldwide leader in manufacturing! [#WIWorking](#)
pic.twitter.com/IADJseJrq0

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [January 23, 2022](#)

Today, we heard from Deanna Branch whose son Aidan was impacted by the lead crisis. They, along w/other affected families, are why we need fed funds to remove lead pipes & to enact the Admin's Lead Action Plan. Every child deserves clean drinking water & a lead-free future. (1/3)
pic.twitter.com/ANv9suNNia

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [January 24, 2022](#)

Five police officers from the Janesville Police Department received promotions last week. Congratulations to these brave law enforcement officers. Thank you for all the work you do to keep our community safe!
pic.twitter.com/X3uThET7L8

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [January 25, 2022](#)

I had a great time meeting with folks from Dodge and Jefferson Counties today at my Mobile Office Hours. Thank you to everyone who showed up and asked thoughtful questions about the work I'm doing in Washington, DC on behalf of Southeast Wisconsin. pic.twitter.com/7EI6PTcR7q

— Rep. Scott Fitzgerald (@RepFitzgerald) [January 26, 2022](#)

Nearly 50 years after [#RoevWade](#) was decided, the right to choose is under attack once again.

We must pass the Women's Health Protection Act and remember that [#Roe](#) is the floor, not the ceiling. pic.twitter.com/jqshV4r4PJ

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [January 22, 2022](#)

PFAS contamination is a serious issue facing far too many Wisconsin families. That's why I'm glad to see the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law delivering the resources we need to help ensure clean, safe drinking water for all. <https://t.co/FJS2vc4clw>

— Archive: Rep. Ron Kind (@RepRonKind) [January 26, 2022](#)

ICYMI

[Northwoods Congressman wants to ban race-based coronavirus treatments](#)

[‘We just have to get rid of the lead’: Kamala Harris visits Milwaukee to highlight push to replace lead pipes](#)

[Rep. Pocan asks DOJ to probe fake Wisconsin electors in 2020 election](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson hosts COVID-19 panel focusing on vaccine skepticism; local doctors respond](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson: Society should provide opportunities for people to get jobs, but not responsible for child care](#)