

DC Wrap: Johnson blasts Dems for what he called a move to gain “absolute power” and lift the filibuster

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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

For over a year, Democrats have been saying anyone who questions election integrity is paramount to treason. Today, President Biden did just that by questioning the legitimacy of future elections if the Democrats' bill is not passed in the Senate.

- U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, blasting Biden for his speech yesterday on the major voting rights legislation.

“This recovery wouldn't have been possible without Democrats & the Biden admin. The American Rescue Plan saved our economy.”

- U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, touting Dems work to pass bills as voting rights legislation is stalled in the Senate.

This week's news

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, last night blasted his Dem colleagues over what he called a move to gain “absolute power” by lifting the 60-vote filibuster rule to pass voting rights legislation.

Dems failed to overcome that 60-vote barrier in a 51-49 vote to move forward with a House-approved bill including the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the For the People Act. Republicans sealed the fate of the legislation in a 52-48 vote that would have allowed Dems to try to push the voting rights legislation through on a simple

majority later in the night. U.S. Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W.Vir., and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., were the only Dems to break rank.

Johnson in a release after the votes slammed some of his Dem colleagues for voting to abolish the filibuster despite supporting the Senate rule earlier in their careers.

“So why do Democrats now want to destroy the filibuster? It’s not about preserving voting rights, those rights are well established and protected,” he said. “It’s because they want absolute power in the face of bad poll numbers and their own tax-and-spend policies.”

Baldwin, D-Madison, in a floor speech called the voting rights legislation an effort to protect democracy and criticized Republicans for halting the bills.

“Too many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle refuse to stand up for democracy and choose to stand on the side of Donald Trump and his big lie and the 2002 election being stolen from him,” she said.

The For the People Act would have required states to provide ballot drop boxes for voters in federal elections. A Waukesha judge last week ruled drop boxes are not allowed to be used in Wisconsin elections.

The John Lewis Voting Rights Act would have restored several provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court during the Obama administration.

See the Senate filibuster [roll call](#).

See the Senate voting rights [roll call](#).

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher introduced legislation to impose sanctions on the International Olympic Committee president and others after Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai disappeared last year.

The Allouez Republican introduced the Free Peng Shuai Act as Beijing Olympic organizing committee officials say any speech or acts that violate Chinese laws and regulations are subject to punishment. Gallagher in a release said the International Olympic Committee knows of the issue and is complicit in the Chinese Communist Party’s human rights abuses. He added Shuai’s disappearance is an example of the dangers facing Olympic athletes as they prepare to head for China.

“Boycotting the Olympics is not enough,” he said. “It’s time to sanction IOC President Thomas Bach and any other IOC official who helped cover up Peng’s disappearance,” said Rep. Gallagher.

See the [release](#).

- U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman spoke on the House floor to urge the Biden administration to increase the distribution of monoclonal antibody treatments for COVID-19 in Wisconsin.

According to the FDA, monoclonal antibodies are “laboratory-made proteins that mimic the immune system’s ability to fight off harmful pathogens such as viruses.”

The Glenbeulah Republican criticized the Biden administration for not providing the treatment to patients, arguing that it is “an extremely effective tool” against the virus that could lighten the strain on hospitals.

“The Biden Administration is failing America by not providing enough monoclonal antibodies to patients who need them. I’m committed to working tirelessly with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and my congressional colleagues to ensure treatments readily available for those who need them,” Grothman said.

Grothman cosponsored the Treatment Restoration for Emergency Antibodies Therapeutics Act, which would revoke the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services’ policy preventing hospitals from ordering mAb treatments directly from manufacturers.

He also noted that he had personally spoken to constituents who recovered from COVID-19 symptoms within 24 hours after mAb treatment.

— Dem U.S. Senate candidate Alex Lasry says he would put his assets into a blind trust if elected.

Lasry, who’s on leave from his job with the Milwaukee Bucks, filed a financial disclosure in August that showed he had assets worth between \$61.4 million and more than \$80 million.

More than \$50 million of that is Lasry’s ownership stake in the Milwaukee Bucks, which is in a trust.

On top of his personal holdings, Lasry is also a partner in a series of investments worth between \$82.2 million and \$192.1 million.

Lasry also called for every member of Congress and Senate-confirmed appointees to be required to either divest or put their assets in a blind trust.

See the [release](#).

Posts of the week

We are in a public health crisis and it risks lives when there is a shortage of blood supply. That's why I am calling on the [@US_FDA](#) to update its outdated and discriminatory blood donor deferral policies that prevent gay and bisexual men from being part of the solution.

pic.twitter.com/yXx3MPI0nK

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [January 19, 2022](#)

Joined the Greater Eagle Missionary Baptist Church MLK Day worship in Racine last night.

A powerful celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King who worked to make sure all Americans are judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. pic.twitter.com/v3Mf5uwUr9

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [January 17, 2022](#)

"The time is always right to do what is right."

On [#MLKDay](#) and every day, we remember the life and leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We must honor his legacy by continuing to work to

protect the sacred right to vote and to secure his vision of justice & equality for all. pic.twitter.com/DajvtKKsMt

— Archive: Rep. Ron Kind (@RepRonKind) [January 17, 2022](#)

On this day of action, we honor the life and legacy of Dr. King — recommitting ourselves to daily the fight for justice.

It's time for Congress to pass the [#VotingRightsAct](#).
pic.twitter.com/ISfFjvEJKm

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [January 17, 2022](#)

This is what victory looks like [@hughhewitt](#). pic.twitter.com/PnhppfPhyf

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [January 14, 2022](#)

ICYMI

[Gateway declines local NAACP's request to uninvite Steil from MLK event](#)

[What's in the voting rights bills being debated in Congress?](#)

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