

DC Wrap: Baldwin's 2024 bid seen as crucial for Dem majority

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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

"The Mifepristone ruling is partisanship and religious zealotry masquerading as law. It is an assault on women, democracy, and the rule of law."

- U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, on a ruling by a federal judge in Texas blocking the FDA's approval of abortion drug mifepristone.

"The Biden administration relied on these special authorities to spend massive sums of taxpayer dollars and expand the size of the federal government, and now these gross abuses of executive power are coming to an end. Now we need accountability regarding the Chinese Communist Party's coverup of the origin of the pandemic, which the Biden administration is unacceptably slow to pursue."

- U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Allouez, responding to President Joe Biden signing the Pandemic is Over Act, repealing the public health emergency.

This week's news

— **U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, is a formal candidate for reelection in 2024, becoming a key part of Democrats' efforts to maintain control of the Senate.**

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Baldwin's announcement this week gives national Dems a two-term incumbent and

a proven fundraiser in a purple state that is expected to again be a key in the presidential race. Dems control 20 of the 34 Senate seats up next fall, with another three independents who caucus with the party.

Baldwin, meanwhile, outran the top of the ticket in 2018 as she secured a second term by nearly 11 points over then-GOP state Sen. Leah Vukmir. Fellow Dem Tony Evers eked out a 1-point win over Republican incumbent Gov. Scott Walker.

“I’m committed to making sure that working people, not just the big corporations and ultra-wealthy, have a fighter on their side,” Baldwin said in a statement. “With so much at stake, from families struggling with rising costs to a ban on reproductive freedom, Wisconsinites need someone who can fight and win.”

Republican Party of Wisconsin spokesperson Rachel Reisner pointed out Baldwin will likely have a tough time despite past performances, noting presidential races in Wisconsin of late have had very narrow margins.

“The Biden-Baldwin ticket will be on the hot seat with Wisconsin voters, in a state where four of the last six presidential elections were decided by less than 1% and Biden’s approval ratings are upside down,” she said.

Baldwin will be on the ballot with President Joe Biden.

“Baldwin has a lot of explaining to do after voting in lockstep with Joe Biden’s unpopular agenda over 95% of the time, complete with its inflationary spending that has pushed our economy to the tipping point,” Reisner added.

Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Ben Wikler in a series of tweets argued Baldwin is the most qualified candidate to take on whoever runs as a Republican.

“But we know the Wisconsin GOP,” he said. “You can bet it’ll be a MAGA extremist.”

Wikler touted Baldwin as a local, state and national hero who stands up for Wisconsinites at every corner of the state.

“She’s still making history, she’s still making a difference—and she’ll do even more in her third term,” he added. “The @WisDems will be putting it all on the line to ensure she wins.”

— The news comes as Republicans push to regain control of the Senate by

taking advantage of the 2024 electoral landscape, which puts 23 Dems on the ballot compared to just 11 Republicans.

The National Republican Senatorial Campaign and the Senate Leadership Fund seem to agree this cycle on how to make the most of their position. Leaders from both groups have signaled they are most interested in supporting candidates who prove they can at least win a primary.

They're banking on national fundraising and big donors to help those primary winners across the general election finish line. And they only need to pick up two seats to win back the majority, which would give the GOP congressional control if Republicans can also maintain a House majority.

Baldwin became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate from Wisconsin when she beat Republican Tommy Thompson in 2012. She also was the first openly gay member elected to the chamber.

So far, businessmen Eric Hovde, of Madison, and Scott Mayer, of Franklin, have said they are considering runs. Hovde came in second to Thompson in the 2012 GOP Senate primary and flirted with a gov bid last year.

National Republicans have also been trying to recruit U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Allouez, for a run.

A source close to former state Sen. Roger Roth said some have contacted the Appleton Republican about a possible bid. The former unsuccessful lieutenant governor candidate has some concerns about existing GOP infrastructure heading into 2024.

Baldwin finished 2022 with \$3 million in the bank, and first quarter reports are due Saturday to the FEC. According to Open Secrets, she raised and spent more than \$30 million for the 2018 cycle, while Vukmir pulled in less than \$5.8 million.

National Republican Senatorial Committee spokesperson Tate Mitchell called Baldwin "a reliable vote for the far left, not a senator Wisconsin can count on."

"Tammy Baldwin has voted against tougher penalties for violent criminals, stood with Democrats to destroy American energy independence, and rubber-stamped Joe Biden and Chuck Schumer's reckless spending at every turn," Mitchell said.

— U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson is slated to speak at the VaxCon23 anti-vaccination event in Wisconsin Dells this weekend.

The Oshkosh Republican is scheduled to speak Saturday on the Wisconsin United for Freedom group's webpage detailing the event at Chula Vista Resort. The group last month lobbied against a proposed Department of Health Services policy that would have added the meningococcal vaccine to the vaccine schedule.

According to its website, the group has also been "keeping up with Covid-19 policies and restrictions, focused on preventing schools from being used as medical facilities."

Johnson is expected to take the same stage as several doctors and physicians who have argued the COVID-19 vaccine has caused health issues in at least some of the population, an issue Johnson has also raised.

Dr. Ryan Cole, one of the event speakers, was charged in January by his home state's medical commission after he allegedly "made numerous false and misleading statements related to COVID-19 and treated patients with COVID-19 or seeking to prevent getting COVID-19 in a manner that was beneath the standard of care."

Johnson has also advocated for alternatives to COVID-19 vaccines to treat or prevent the disease, such as ivermectin and mouthwash.

[See the event details.](#)

[See the Washington Medical Commission statement.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, joined 68 other GOP members of Congress in urging a federal appeals court to leave in place a ruling suspending the FDA's approval of an abortion drug that's been on the market for 20 years.

The brief came before a federal appeals court ruled the pill can stay on the market, while ruling decisions related to the drug since 2016, such as allowing its use up to 10 weeks into pregnancy, can still be challenged.

The amicus brief says the 69 lawmakers are "committed to protecting women and girls from the harms of the abortion industry."

It argues the FDA failed to follow Congress' prescribed drug approval process in approving mifepristone.

"The FDA's lawless actions ultimately endanger women and girls seeking chemical abortions," they argued.

Grothman was the only Wisconsin lawmaker to sign onto the brief, along with 11 senators and 58 other members of the House.

Meanwhile, Wisconsin's Dem members of Congress Sen. Tammy Baldwin, of Madison, and Reps. Mark Pocan, of the town of Vermont, and Gwen Moore, of Milwaukee, this week joined a brief with 237 other Dems in Congress supporting the Biden administration's appeal of the Texas Court decision.

They argued the decision has no basis in law and poses a serious health risk by restricting access to abortion. They said the Supreme Court decision overturning the right to an abortion has resulted in delayed or denied abortions, in some cases for those who have pregnancy complications, and the Texas court decision would exacerbate those issues.

[Read the GOP brief.](#)

[See Dems' brief.](#)

— Wisconsin Dems this week criticized Republicans in the wake of another mass shooting, arguing they have not done enough to combat gun violence.

A gunman on Monday killed five people and injured several others at a bank in Louisville, Kentucky, and live-streamed the incident. The shooting comes just over two weeks since a shooter in Nashville killed three children and three adults at a Christian school.

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan in a tweet said "NRA-funded Republicans" refuse to act to address gun violence.

"My colleagues need to let go of the money & do the right thing. My thoughts are with the families whose loved ones were killed in Louisville," the town of Vermont Dem said.

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore criticized Republicans for not doing more on gun control in response to a report that gun deaths among children increased 50 percent from 2019 to 2021.

“The Republican Party continues to support endless, unrestricted access to guns as our nation’s children die from these weapons in record numbers. Their callousness and careless apathy is killing our babies,” the Milwaukee Dem said.

[See Pocan’s tweet.](#)

[See Moore’s tweet.](#)

Posts of the week

It was great to be at Wausau Fire Station #1 to see how federal resources are being used to add more trained firefighters to ensure our firefighters can continue responding to emergency calls and keep our families safe.

pic.twitter.com/gHFqcpFWuX

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [April 12, 2023](#)

Congratulations Caledonia Village President Thomas Weatherston on taking office yesterday. Looking forward to working together to help workers and families in Caledonia. pic.twitter.com/PAnFqaElwa

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [April 11, 2023](#)

Always thankful to meet with the Church Ambassador Network of [#FDL](#) about our faith and spreading the truth of Christ.

pic.twitter.com/Wlf2YFsr21

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [April 11, 2023](#)

I'm back home for town halls across the Wisconsin Second District this week.

Our Madison office is always busy helping constituents, so here's a throwback [#MagicMonday](#) with two of our great case workers who help folks navigate the Federal government! pic.twitter.com/mSuy6VY2ti

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [April 10, 2023](#)

Happy Easter Sunday! Today we celebrate the resurrection and that Christ is risen! pic.twitter.com/ZNRsJmWUNW

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [April 10, 2023](#)

Words cannot express the loss our community feels for the fallen officers from the Village of Cameron Police Department and Chetek Police Department.

My prayers go out to their families, loved ones, and the entire law enforcement community. pic.twitter.com/An8rVe21ba

— Rep. Tom Tiffany (@RepTiffany) [April 9, 2023](#)

Rep. Van Orden met with [@UWSystem](#) President Rothman and [#WI03](#)

school chancellors to discuss ways to serve college students and prospective students in the district. pic.twitter.com/ZVlwRgByDI

— Rep. Derrick Van Orden Press Office (@RepVanOrden) [April 12, 2023](#)

ICYMI

[The Hill: Ron Johnson says he decided to seek reelection to advocate for the 'vaccine injured'](#)

[WPR: Wisconsin congressman hopes third time's the charm for interstate logging bill](#)

[Spectrum News: Rep. Steil holds roundtable focused on rising interest rates](#)

[CBS 58: Members of Congress make bipartisan push to get Milwaukee more RNC security funding](#)