

DC Wrap: DC reporters say Trump could still be a problem for other Republican candidates; Republicans pass pistol brace ban resolution

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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

Corrupt totalitarians prosecute their predecessors and try to jail the primary challenger to their reelection. Didn't think I'd see that happen in America.

- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, in a [tweet](#) after former President Donald Trump was indicted over his handling of classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. Trump pleaded not guilty to 37 criminal charges this week.

Is, "I mistook national security documents for a lifetime supply of toilet paper," a valid legal defense?

- U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, in a [tweet](#) with a photo showing boxes of documents in a bathroom at Mar-a-Lago.

This week's news

— **DC reporters say former President Donald Trump's future frontrunner status is uncertain after being indicted over classified documents at Mar-a-Lago.**

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Recently retired Washington Bureau Chief for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Craig Gilbert at a WisPolitics breakfast in the nation's capital pointed out Trump's legal issues that arose ahead of the April Wisconsin Supreme Court election didn't seem to motivate Republican voters. Trump in March was charged with 34 counts of falsifying business records, allegedly as part of a conspiracy to undermine the integrity of 2016 election.

The charges stemmed from Trump's alleged role in a hush money payments to porn actress Stormy Daniels ahead of the election.

"I mean, the liberal candidate for the court won by as much or more than she was expected to win by, and there was no sign that that had a mobilizing effect on Republican voters," Gilbert said. "So I don't want to read too much into that. But I thought that was kind of an interesting data point."

DC Spectrum News reporter Taurean Small said Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and former Vice President Mike Pence could have issues differentiating themselves from Trump without pushing Trump voters away.

"And they won't outright rebuke Trump, but they will try to find a way to distance themselves from whatever Trump is," Small said.

With Republicans largely focused on who should run against President Joe Biden, Wall Street Journal White House reporter Annie Linskey pointed out how happy Biden is to see the Republican frontrunner in hot water.

"So the arraignment had occurred, and I have not seen Joe Biden in such a good mood in years," she said. "So sure, by that logic, whatever the White House is officially saying, and they are officially saying nothing, the president's demeanor, his reaction, I feel like really says it all."

The trio also discussed House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's troubles with far right members of his caucus, Biden's positives and negatives going into next year, Dem U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin's strong reelection position, potentially hot races in the 1st and 3rd CDs next year and the Midwest focus of both parties in 2024.

[Listen to the event.](#)

— A resolution pushing the Biden administration to rescind a pistol brace ban created earlier this year drew a party line split among Wisconsin's

House members.

The 219-210 vote against the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives' is symbolic, but Republicans are still calling for a real rule change. The ATF earlier this year promulgated a rule clarification that classifies any firearm equipped with a stabilizing brace in place of a shoulder stock that facilitates shoulder firing is a rifle subject to regulation under the National Firearms Act.

All Dems except U.S. Reps. Jared Golden, of Maine, and Mary Peltola, of Alaska, voted against the measure. Every Republican voted in favor.

The NFA classifies any firearm designed to be fired from the shoulder with a barrel over 16 inches as a short-barreled rifle, which requires special approval from the ATF to own. Many firearm owners have used pistol braces on AR-15 style weapons with short barrels to skirt the NFA.

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont, in an email to WisPolitics said the National Rifle Association is calling the shots for the GOP. He added the measure does nothing for the country, "and certainly doesn't make us safer."

"House Republicans were just trying to make it easier for bad actors to get the mass-shooter's weapon of choice," he said. "Anyone voting for this is a part of the problem of mass shootings."

Former Navy SEAL U.S. Rep. Derrick Van Orden, R-Prairie du Chien, in a tweet said the braces are designed to help those with disabilities exercise their Second Amendment rights.

"Stabilizing braces were designed to help disabled veterans fire large-format pistols, yet Biden's ATF issued a rule that resulted in their inability to shoot these firearms," he said.

[See the roll call.](#)

[See Van Orden's tweet.](#)

— Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party Chair Mike Gallagher wants to block private pensions from investing in foreign adversary-controlled companies.

The Protecting American's Retirement Savings Act would also block private pension plans under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act from investing in companies based in Iran, North Korea, Russia and China. It would also require plans to disclose existing investments in companies controlled by or based in foreign adversaries.

The Allouez Republican in a statement called the move “a no-brainer.”

“Americans’ 401(k)s and other employer retirement plans should not fuel our own destruction by funding adversary defense companies, nor should they be invested in companies that engage in gross human rights abuses like the ongoing Uyghur Genocide,” he said.

[See the statement.](#)

— House Ways and Means Committee member Gwen Moore ripped Republicans’ Tax Cuts for Working Families Act as the “2023 GOP Tax Scam 2.0.”

The bill aims to increase allowable tax deductions, and Republicans say it would put thousands of dollars back in the pockets of Americans to alleviate some of the inflation strain. Moore argued the Republicans are again using “their failed trickle-down economics theory to provide tax cuts that further enrich big corporations.”

Moore blasted the committee’s refusal to add her amendment, which would have increased eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit.

“Shamefully but unsurprisingly, Republicans used this mark-up to play political games, and I had to withdraw my amendment, because Republicans refused to consider my commonsense proposal claiming it wasn’t germane,” she said.

[See the statement.](#)

— Moore also celebrated Foster Youth Shadow Day at the Capitol as a way for members of Congress and foster youth delegates to gain insight into the child welfare system.

The Milwaukee Dem co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth in a statement touted the event as a wonderful, enriching opportunity. She added the experiences and conversations have helped shape her as a person and inform her

as a lawmaker.

“The Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth was created to help spearhead policies to support and lift up foster youth across the country,” she said. “As the Caucus Chairwoman, I am especially thrilled to lead this unique tradition, and I am grateful for the full support of my fellow co-chairs in securing this year’s opportunity for all Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth’s members to learn from our youth.”

Other co-chairs in the statement noted it’s important foster youth know they have advocates in the Capitol.

[See the statement.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Derrick Van Orden this week introduced a bill to hire 15 new rail investigators following a train derailment in western Wisconsin’s 3rd CD.

The Prairie du Chien Republican’s bill would authorize a \$3 million increase per year for the National Transportation Safety Board to hire the investigators. A train derailed in De Soto in April, sending two rail cars into the Mississippi River.

Van Orden said the bill will improve rail safety.

“Wisconsinites are still waiting for answers on what caused the train derailment in De Soto. This bill will help officials get to the bottom of derailments faster and make our communities safer,” Van Orden said.

[See the release.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan introduced a resolution to honor the 85th anniversary of the National Treasury Employees Union, founded in Wisconsin in 1938.

The NTEU currently represents about 150,000 workers employed by 34 federal agencies. The town of Vermont Dem in a statement said he’s a card-carrying union member who believes every worker should have the opportunity for union representation.

“NTEU members carry out essential functions of our government and are effective advocates for fair pay and benefits,” he said. “To the workers of the NTEU,

congratulations on your 85th anniversary!”

[See the statement.](#)

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, at the state Dem Party convention over the weekend said she is as hopeful for the party, state and country as ever because in Wisconsin, “we Dems know how to win.”

Baldwin, who is seeking reelection to a third term, said the state has been “knocked down more than a few times,” citing restrictions on abortion rights, collective bargaining and unfair maps.

“These rights these freedoms have all been attacked, curtailed or even taken away entirely by the far right wing,” Baldwin said.

Still, Baldwin praised incoming Justice Janet Protasiewicz’s Supreme Court victory as an important step in the right direction, though she added the party’s work is just getting started.

Baldwin also slammed book bans and recent GOP efforts to change how kids learn about race in schools.

She criticized Republicans for targeting the “freedom of our children to simply be who they are and go to school without fear of bullying and harassment from their peers or their politicians.”

Baldwin also slammed former GOP Gov. Scott Walker, former President Donald Trump, former Speaker Paul Ryan and the Republican Party for tax breaks she said benefited the wealthy and special interests.

“The inequality that we see across our state and across our country is not a mystery. This is not rocket science. We know how it’s worked for far too long,” she said. “Powerful special interests have been able to buy our elected officials, write our laws and make billions, reaping the rewards while our working families fall further and further behind.”

Baldwin also touted the Respect for Marriage Act she led, which established additional protections for gay and interracial marriages. She said she was told she wouldn’t be able to get Republicans on board for the legislation.

“But we did,” she said.

— Moore at the convention reveled in cheers as she touted Dem electoral and policy wins in Congress and across Wisconsin.

Moore, of Milwaukee, called on Dems in the crowd to stick together to not allow racism to divide Dems, arguing Republicans are trying to divide the party. She blasted Republicans for proposing a shared revenue funding deal with Milwaukee that required the city get rid of any offices focused on diversity, equity and inclusion. She argued adding work requirements to receive government assistance “is a dog whistle.”

“I guess they don’t want us to be woke, they want us to be asleep,” she said.

See full coverage [here](#).

— Pocan wished Dems a “happy indictment weekend,” calling Trump “moldy and crooked and crazy.”

“Indictments are like impeachments, apparently come in pairs for crooked ex-presidents.

Pocan said Dems have a “hell of a year coming up” in 2024, targeting U.S. Reps. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, and Derrick Van Orden.

“If I were insurrectionist/actor/author/Congressman Derrick Van Orden — and he does all of those things in that order, by the way — I would be shaking in my boots,” Pocan said.

See full coverage [here](#).

— RNC Chair Ronna McDaniel unveiled the official logo for the 2024 Republican National Convention slated to come to Milwaukee next summer at the Fiserv Forum.

McDaniel in a statement said the logo is meant to reflect the traditions of the Republican Party and the essence of Wisconsin’s most populous city.

[See the statement and logo.](#)

— Former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes' funding platform, The Long Run PAC, announced it's endorsing Baldwin and six other congressional candidates for 2024.

Barnes last year failed to stop U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, from winning a second term and has so far not announced if he will run again or for another seat.

[See the press release.](#)

Posts of the week

I was glad to attend the 2023 Campus Life Auction and Brat Fry to support [#WI](#)'s families and youth in [#SheboyganCounty](#).
pic.twitter.com/K1PEtbJLeS

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

Great to see so many people in West Bend for Breakfast on the Farm! A special thanks to the Roden family for hosting. Thanks for coming out!
pic.twitter.com/JYrgiSeVhC

— Rep. Scott Fitzgerald (@RepFitzgerald) [June 10, 2023](#)

The late, great Senator Wellstone was known for being a fierce advocate for working people, & today, I was honored to accept the [@steelworkers](#) Senator Paul D. Wellstone Award. I'll always fight for our workers & working families because we all do better when we all do better.
pic.twitter.com/D0bsF3l43z

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [June 13, 2023](#)

Thank you to all of our first responders for your hard work and dedication!
pic.twitter.com/fggOm7j1gj

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [June 9, 2023](#)

As Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, it was an honor to help host [#FosterYouthShadowDay](#), where members of Congress got to hear from former foster youth and learn how Congress can show up for the 407,000+ foster youth in the United States.
pic.twitter.com/2i4v42KGfg

— Rep. Gwen Moore (@RepGwenMoore) [June 14, 2023](#)

Our flag represents every American and symbolizes our unity as a nation.

Happy Flag Day! pic.twitter.com/BFtXfrSZ17

— Rep. Derrick Van Orden Press Office (@RepVanOrden) [June 14, 2023](#)

Glad to join [@MadisonBiz](#) for WI beer, WI cheese, and other tastes of Wisconsin here on the Hill! Great to see everything area businesses are doing for our community back home. pic.twitter.com/tjYcZTANug

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [June 13, 2023](#)

ICYMI

[WMTV: Flavored milk mandate pushed by WI GOP congressmembers](#)

[The Hill: GOP lawmaker drops f-bomb as moderates bash conservatives over revolt: 'A little spicy in there'](#)

[The Hill: Baldwin calls for LGBTQ info to be included in mental health data](#)

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Wisconsin Rep. Mike Gallagher says he will not run for Senate in 2024, leaving an open GOP field](#)

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: 'It is detrimental to what we're trying to do': Freedom Caucus protest paralyzes House GOP agenda](#)

[Channel 3000: For the Record: Rep. Grothman criticizes Biden for diverse judicial appointees](#)

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Notice anything missing in 2024 RNC logo? Check Wisconsin's thumb.](#)