

DC Wrap: Pocan says he wants to know Israel's endgame, urges White House to work toward ceasefire

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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

House Republicans wasted last week on bills that have no chance of becoming law. With 11 days left to fund the government, I urge my colleagues across to aisle to see reason. Wasting time in pursuit of cuts that harm ordinary citizens is not leadership—it's negligence.

– U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, in a [tweet](#) criticizing Republicans ahead of a potential government shutdown if lawmakers do not agree to a plan to keep the government funded by Nov. 17.

By sending \$100 million of “humanitarian assistance” to Gaza, the Biden Administration is opening the door for U.S. tax dollars to land in the hands of terrorists. Even the @USAID inspector general has said as much. @GOPOversight is investigating.

– House Oversight Committee member U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, in a [tweet](#) arguing President Joe Biden's push to send aid to civilians in the embattled region could be a mistake.

This week's news

— U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan says he's working on a letter to the White House asking the administration to press Israel to describe what the end of its war with Hamas will look like.

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The town of Vermont Dem in a WisPolitics Capitol Chats podcast this week said Israel's bombing campaign in Gaza, where many Palestinians live and where Hamas has been hiding many of the hostages taken during its Oct. 7 attack, is not a long-term solution. The attack that left more than 1,000 Israeli civilians dead prompted Israeli forces to respond with what Pocan called "wholesale bombing."

"What is the plan here? Because just blowing things up and killing kids isn't a plan," he said. "Like what does this look like? What does a victory look like? And what does this look like when it's all done?"

He said he's working on a letter with Dem U.S. Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, of-N.Y., and Betty McCollum, of-Minn.

The Gaza Health Ministry this week estimated more than 10,000 people have been killed in the area. There are more than 2.3 million people living in the Gaza Strip, and roughly half are under 18.

Pocan argued Israel "has every right" to go after the perpetrators of the October assault, but added "we just want it to be strategic and targeted towards Hamas."

The House Progressive Caucus chair emeritus argued the U.S. should be working to bring people together to bring peace and a ceasefire to the region. But he said with so much dysfunction in Congress, he's looking elsewhere for leadership.

"The White House really does have the gravitas to affect more," he said. "And I think that's why we're often out writing letters to the president trying to encourage him to do some of that."

While he said he never wants to see U.S. boots on the ground in the area, just like he opposes sending U.S. troops to Ukraine, he's worried the Israeli bombing campaigns could bring other parties into the conflict such as Hezbollah and Iran.

"And if that happens, then very likely we could be asked to be there," he said.

The U.S. sent two of its 11 aircraft carriers near the Middle East earlier this year.

The USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier strike group's deployment to the Mediterranean Sea was extended less than two weeks after the Hamas attack. The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower carrier strike group entered the Red Sea last week, marking the first time a U.S. aircraft carrier has operated in the Middle East since the USS Ronald Reagan departed in 2021.

The Eisenhower CSG was originally destined to relieve the Ford CSG, but Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin extended Ford's stay and announced the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, part of the Ford CSG, would move closer to Israel.

"So again, that's another incentive for the United States to say, 'look, this bombing is not accomplishing your goals. You're actually bringing in potentially other countries. It's time to have a regroup of what you're trying to do,'" he said. "And I don't think we've ever seen what they want to do."

Pocan also ripped a Republican plan that would cut IRS funding in an attempt to offset the \$14.3 billion in aid many House members want to send to Israel.

"It's a bad idea," he said. "But isn't it ironic that the very people who fund Republican campaigns are the wealthy donors that won't have IRS agents looking at their taxes owed? Gee, I'm sure there's nothing to do with that fact."

The Congressional Budget Office projected the proposal to cut IRS funding would grow the national debt by more than \$26 billion.

[Listen to the podcast.](#)

— Wisconsin House Republicans joined a successful effort to censure House Progressive Caucus member Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., for calling for the destruction of the State of Israel.

All six Wisconsin GOP members joined the 234-188 vote in favor of formally disapproving of Tlaib's comments on the Israel-Hamas conflict. Dem U.S. Reps. Gwen Moore, of Milwaukee, and Mark Pocan, of the town of Vermont, joined 184 Dems and four Republicans opposing the measure. Moore and Pocan are both Progressive Caucus members.

U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Glenbeulah, last week voted to table a separate resolution to censure Tlaib, but in a statement Grothman ripped Tlaib's "radical left-wing ideology including her bizarre support for Hamas and similar groups in the

Middle East.”

“However, I disagree with the tendency in recent years to censure, remove from committees, or expel people for their outlandish statements made outside of their official capacity as a Member of Congress,” Grothman added. “If the people of Michigan want to vote for a progressive, anti-Israel fanatic, that is their right.”

The censure resolution U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., introduced last week accused Tlaib of “leading an insurrection” in the Capitol complex. Greene pulled the resolution Tuesday night.

Moore in a statement defended Tlaib, noting she “is the only Palestinian-American in Congress and brings a valuable and often underrepresented perspective to our legislative body.”

“Her presence and voice in Congress enrich our national discourse, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the complex issues facing our world,” Moore said. “As members of Congress, we can vehemently disagree with a colleague’s viewpoints without resorting to a censure to express one’s disapproval.”

Tlaib, a Palestinian American, in a video earlier this month recalled the first half of a longtime Palestinian chant for freedom, “from the river to the sea,” which calls for Palestine to be free.

She defended the remark in a tweet shortly after, calling the phrase “an aspirational call for freedom, human rights, and peaceful coexistence, not death, destruction, or hate.”

The full resolution rips her for calling “for the destruction of the state of Israel and dangerously promoting false narratives regarding a brutal, large-scale terrorist attack against civilian targets inside the sovereign territory of a major non-NATO ally while hundreds of Israeli and American hostages remain in terrorist captivity.”

[See Grothman’s statement.](#)

[See Moore’s statement.](#)

[See the roll call.](#)

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, joined Senate Dems this week in

calling on President Biden to provide immediate funding to boost Israel's defense systems.

The group in a letter to Biden has also requested more information from the Biden administration about supporting an Israeli strategy to root out Iran-backed Hamas while taking all measures possible to protect civilians in Gaza.

The letter comes amid rising civilian casualties as Israel retaliates following Hamas' attacks last month.

The request follows Baldwin and fellow Dems calling for a temporary ceasefire in Gaza last week.

"We must not only do our part to provide urgently needed humanitarian relief to Gaza, but also insist that Israel take all necessary measures to help us facilitate such relief to the two million civilians living there, half of them children," the senators wrote.

[See Baldwin's release.](#)

[See the statement calling for a temporary ceasefire.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Derrick Van Orden this week slammed State Superintendent Jill Underly for hiring a longtime Dem operative to work in her office.

"Jill Underly just need a to change her job title to 'State Superintendent of Public Indoctrination' and call it a day," the Prairie du Chien Republican said in a tweet.

Underly announced this week the Department of Public Instruction had hired Sachin Chheda as executive director of the Office of the State Superintendent.

Chheda worked on Underly's 2021 campaign while he was still at Nation Consulting.

Chheda has also worked for the campaigns of liberal state Supreme Court Justice Janet Protasiewicz, Dem Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson, U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, and for the campaign and office of former Dem Gov. Jim Doyle.

Underly has said the change will help DPI fulfill its mission of "advancing equitable, transformative, and sustainable education in Wisconsin."

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

— U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany has introduced a bill he says would help reduce environmental damage at the U.S.-Mexico border by increasing penalties for those entering the country illegally who leave trash or cause other habitat damage.

The Trash Reduction and Suppressing Harm from Environmental Degradation Act would also require federal land managers to submit reports to Congress on the amount of waste collected on federal lands along the southern border.

Tiffany, R-Minocqua, said he has seen trash, clothes and human waste firsthand during visits to the border, arguing the issue needs “critical attention.”

“While the Biden administration turns a blind eye to the environmental consequences of illegal immigration, the TRASHED Border Act ensures there is greater transparency and accountability for illegals who litter on our public lands,” Tiffany said.

[See the release.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher introduced a bill to use remaining federal pandemic relief funds to replace Chinese-made telecommunications products with secure equipment to protect national security.

Fellow Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party Co-Chair Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill., is joining the Allouez Republican pushing the Defend our Networks Act. Gallagher in a statement said the measure would ensure small telecommunication providers have the resources they need to protect American national security and privacy.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is over, but the threats posed by Chinese telecommunications companies like Huawei and ZTE are not,” he said. “There are thousands of pieces of risky Chinese telecommunications equipment in U.S. networks and it’s imperative we act with a sense of urgency to remove them.”

[See the release.](#)

— NBC News’ Chuck Todd will talk about Wisconsin and the 2024 election at a WisPolitics DC breakfast later this month.

Todd, the network's chief political analyst and former moderator of "Meet the Press," is slated for a conversation on Nov. 29 at the Association of American Universities in Washington, D.C.

[See more details and register.](#)

— U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil- R-Janesville, and U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, are set to host a roundtable and press conference Friday on what they're calling the cartel crime wave in Wisconsin.

The event is scheduled to include Walworth County and Whitewater law enforcement members.

Posts of the week

Wishing my friend, and our governor, [@GovEvers](#) a very happy birthday!
pic.twitter.com/WTMuYwMqnH

— Rep. Mark Pocan (@RepMarkPocan) [November 5, 2023](#)

As a staunch defender of [#2A](#) rights, it was an honor to speak at the 2023 NRA [#WI](#) State Conference in [#FDL](#). [#WI06](#) pic.twitter.com/oiAIQMWXMR

— Rep. Glenn Grothman (@RepGrothman) [November 5, 2023](#)

I was happy to welcome [@MMAC_Chamber](#)'s new president, Dale Kooyenga, to Washington today to discuss our work to support Milwaukee businesses, create good-paying jobs, and move our Made in Wisconsin economy forward. pic.twitter.com/kP8zfUWmbI

— Sen. Tammy Baldwin (@SenatorBaldwin) [November 7, 2023](#)

Got to meet with Beloit YouthBuild leaders Emmanuel and Damarrion. Great to learn more about the skills taught in the program!

pic.twitter.com/QxbCDQJUuj

— Bryan Steil (@RepBryanSteil) [November 5, 2023](#)

This week, Rep. Gallagher met with Grace Stanke, Miss America 2023, a Wisconsin native and nuclear energy advocate, to discuss American leadership on advanced nuclear technologies to promote energy independence and protect national security. pic.twitter.com/4ddL9j2wwc

— Rep. Gallagher Press Office (@RepGallagher) [November 8, 2023](#)

ICYMI

[Daily Cardinal: Sen. Tammy Baldwin interrupted by pro-Palestine demonstrators during UW-Madison visit](#)

[Slate: Why This Swing-State Democrat Is Going After Netanyahu's Most Powerful Ally in D.C.](#)

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Wisconsin Republicans help pass doomed Israel aid bill with IRS cuts, setting up fight over Ukraine support](#)

[Roll Call: Speaker Johnson gets warm welcome from Senate GOP](#)