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MILWAUKEE - We lead this week with the passing of the latest COVID milestone of over 800,000 deaths. Is this an omen of human toll that awaits us in the coming Omicron surge? There is no doubt that Republican politics are making the pandemic much worse. This week, shamelessly playing to the know-nothing Trump base, Assembly Majority Leader Robin Vos blamed Wisconsin hospitals for the bed shortage because they are requiring their workers to be vaccinated. Next, our panel updates the Build Back Better debate in the U.S. Senate. Is the most sweeping social and economic reform in half a century dead or merely stalled? Also, as the Senate Parliamentarian prepares to strip the immigrant rights provisions of Build back Better, Voces de la Frontera and allies stage a series of protests. In a rare showing of Republican courage and regard for the truth, State Sen. Kathy Bernier makes national news by taking a stand against Robin Vos and his “big lie” henchman, disgraced former Supreme Court Justice Michael Gableman. In Democratic Party news, State Representative Gordon Hintz announces he will step down as Assembly Minority Leader. Who will replace him and what are the implications for 2022 and beyond? Finally, we shout out the UW-LaCrosse students and community leaders who held a successful event Monday urging serious university action on the climate crisis.

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