

Mike Berman's

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*Any statements in this issue of the Watch which are not sourced are mine and identified by “WW”.

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State of the Nation

21% of registered voters say the country is headed in the right direction. 73% of registered voters say the country is on the wrong track. The wrong track number is up 13 points from a 10/31/20 survey.

	<u>Right track</u>	<u>Wrong track</u>
Democrats	37%	57%
Republicans	7%	90%
Independents	13%	79%

73% believe the nation will remain divided over the next four years while 24% think it will be able to unite.

By 53% to 44%, voters say they are worried and pessimistic about the nation’s future. This is the first time since 1998 those who are “worried and pessimistic” outnumber those who are “hopeful and optimistic”. [NBC/1/13/21]

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Nearly 60% of Americans withdrew or borrowed money from their IRA or 401(k) during the coronavirus pandemic. Nearly 32% of respondents said they withdrew \$75,000 or more from a retirement account, while 58% of those who took loans borrowed between \$50,000 and \$100,000. [Kiplinger Personal Finance]

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January 15, 2021 marked the one-year anniversary of the date that the Virginia Legislature made Virginia the 38th state to approve the Equal Rights Amendment. [Grandjay]

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Newly released Census Bureau population estimates through mid-year 2020 reveal record lows in U.S. Population growth, annually and for the 2010 - 2020 decade.

From July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2020 the nation grew by just 0.35%, the lowest single year growth rate since the beginning of the 20th century.

As of April 1, 2020, the estimated population in the United States is 329.2 million people. If those numbers stay, it will be the lowest decade of growth in U.S. history, 6.6%. (See Congress section of newsletter for potential reapportionment impact.) [Brookings 12/22/20]

The United States will become a 'minority white' country in 2045. During that year Whites will comprise 49.7% of the population, 24.6% Hispanics, 13.1% for Blacks, 7.9% of Asians, and 3.8% for multiracial populations. [Brookings 3/14/18]

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31% of registered voters think the economy will get better over the next year while 35% say it will get worse and 33% say it will remain the same.

Is the overtaking of the U.S. Capitol the start of a major increase in violent political protests and riots in the United States or it will prove to be an isolated incident? 49% say it represents a major increase in violent political protests and riots while 45% say it is an isolated incident. [NBC/1/13/21]

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2020 is 6.7%. That unemployment rate is lower than the 8.4% in August, 7.9% in September, 6.9% in October, the same as the 6.7% in November, and greater than the 3.6% unemployment rate of a year ago.

If one considers the total number of unemployed + those marginally attached to the labor force + those working part-time who want full-time work, the unemployment rate is 11.7%, down from 14.2% in August, 12.8% in September, 12.1% in October, and 12.0% in November, and up from 6.8% a year ago.

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10.7 million people were unemployed in December and no jobs were created in that month. In fact, 140,000 jobs were lost, all of them held by women.

The number of unemployment claims filed in the week of January 4th jumped to 965,000, a jump of 181,000 from the week before. [WP 1/14/21]

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is 61.5%, the same as last month. [BLS 1/20]

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The Demographics of Unemployment for December 2020

Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women –5.7% (up from last month)

Men –5.8% (down from last month)

Unemployment by Race

White – 6.0% (up from last month)

Black – 9.9% (down from last month)

Hispanic – 9.3% (up from last month)

Asian –5.9% (down from last month)

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

Less than high school –9.8% (up from last month)

High School –7.8% (as last month)

Some college – 6.3% (same as last month)

Bachelor's Degree or higher – 3.8% (down from last month)

In November, 34 states had unemployment rates below the national average of 6.9%. 15 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had unemployment rates that were above the national average. The unemployment rate in one state is even with the national average.

The state with the highest unemployment rate is New Jersey at 10.2%.

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Employers of half of the private-sector workers in America – 55 million people – do not offer a retirement savings vehicle. [NYT 12/27/20]

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This and That

I mailed a card in an envelope by first class mail to a friend in Massachusetts. It was post marked on December 9th, 2020. He received it on Thursday, January 7, 2021 – 29 days later. John and Mary Podesta mailed a

package by first class mail to Minnesota on December 13, 2020. It arrived on January 15, 2021 – 33 days later.

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The median age of all U.S. homebuyers has risen from 31 in 1981 to 47 in 2019. [Axios Markets 12/21/20]

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Researchers have found that 97.5 Fahrenheit is the new normal body temperature, down from the standard 98.6 established in 1867. [NYT 1/11/21]

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Some things about the tax code

More than a third of the U.S. middle class gets more in government benefits than they pay in taxes.

In 1979, the middle 60% of earners paid about 45% of overall taxes collected by the IRS and got 27% of means tested benefits.

In 2016, the middle 60% of earners paid just 31% of taxes and paid a lot more of the benefits including 49% of those distributed on a means tested basis.

Between 1979 and 2016, the middle class share of U.S. pretax income fell from 51% to 40%.

The top 20% of earners now shoulder 69% of the tax burden, up from 53% in 1979. Their share of income also rose to 59%, up from 47%.

Between 1979 and 2016, the share of adults paying no income tax increased from 22% to 40%. [WP 1/2/21]

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U.S. greenhouse gas emission fell more than 10 percent in 2020, reaching their lowest level in three decades as the coronavirus slowed the economy. [NYT 1/12/21]

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The Census Bureau has stopped trying to produce a count of unauthorized immigrants, ending the agency's role in President Trump's bid to alter census

numbers used for reallocating seats in the House of Representatives. [NPR 1/13/31]

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Americans increasingly get news on varied digital devices.

	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Net</u>
A smartphone, computer, or tablet	60%	26%	86%
Television	40%	28%	68%
Radio	16%	34%	50%
Print Publication	10%	22%	32%

52% of Americans prefer to get news on a digital platform. 35% prefer television, 7% prefer radio and 5% prefer print publications. [PEW 1/12/21]

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Odds and Ends

“Paraprosdokians” are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected and is frequently humorous. Here are a half dozen examples from comedians and writers.

- My husband can't stand to see trash and garbage lying around the house – he can't stand the competition. – Phyllis Diller
- There are three kinds of people in the world – those who can count, and those who can't. – Unknown
- I can picture in my mind a world without war, a world without hate. And I can picture us attacking that world because they'd never expect it. – Jack Handey
- The company accountant is shy and retiring. He's shy a quarter of a million dollars. That's why he's retiring. – Milton Berle
- I'm a very tolerant man, except when it comes to holding a grudge. – Robin Williams
- Giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I've done it thousands of times. – Mark Twain
- Nostalgia isn't what it used to be. – Peter De Vries

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About Words

“Dreamt” is the only English word that ends in the letters “mt”.

No word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver, or purple.

“Stewardesses” is the longest word typed with only the left and “lollipop” with your right.

The sentence: “The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog” uses every letter of the alphabet.

The words ‘racecar’, ‘kayak’ and ‘level’ are the same whether they are read left to right or right to left (palindromes).

There are only four words in the English language which end in “dous”:
tremendous, horrendous, stupendous, and hazardous.

There are only two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order: “absetemious” and “facetious.”

Typewriter is the longest word that can be made using the letters on only one row of the keyboard.

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INSULTS

From an era before 4-letter words

“I feel so miserable without you; it’s almost like having you here.”

-Steven Bishop

“He is a self-made man and worships his creator.”

-John Bright

“I’ve just learned about his illness. Let’s hope it’s nothing trivial.”

-Irvin S. Cobb

“He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others.”

-Samuel Johnson

“He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up.”

-Paul Keating

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QUOTES

“I have no trouble with my enemies...but my damn friends...my goddamn friends...they’re the ones that keep me walking the floor nights.”

-Warren G. Harding

“We have to turn to our many talented girls and women to tackle the challenges we face today.”

-Mariya Gabriel, a Bulgarian politician

“It’s not the going, it is the leaving.”

-Norman Lear

“Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.”

-Maya Angelou

“I have no special talent. I am passionately curious.”

-Albert Einstein

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President Biden

As of January 13, 2021, 44% of registered voters have a very/somewhat positive view of Biden while 40% have a somewhat/very negative view of the then president-elect.

Vice president-elect Kamala Harris received a very/somewhat positive view of 41% and a 41% somewhat/very negative view.

60% of voters approve of Biden’s handling of the transition and his preparations for becoming president. 32% disapprove.

37% of Americans are confident that Biden has the right set of goals and policies to be president. 25% are somewhat confident about his goals or policies. 38% are not at all confident about his goals and policies.

43% of Americans are confident that Biden has the right set of personal characteristics to be president while 56% are only somewhat or not at all confident.

39% like Biden personally and approve most policies.

16% like Biden personally but disapprove of many policies.

7% don't like Biden personally and approve of many policies.

32% don't like Biden personally and disapprove many policies.

[NBC/1/13/21]

49% of Americans have a great deal or a good amount of confidence in Biden being able to make the right decisions for the country's future. 50% are less confident with 31% being not at all confident. [WP/ABC 1/13/21]

President Biden has selected a transgender person, Dr. Rachel Levine, to be the assistant Secretary of Health. If approved, Levine would be the first ever Senate-confirmed trans official in U.S. history. [19th 1/19/21]

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President Biden's Cabinet

If all of President Biden's nominees to his Cabinet are confirmed, 12 of the 24 offices he has designated as Cabinet-level, will be held by women. It will be the first gender-balanced Cabinet in U.S. history

Up until now, the most women to serve in a presidential cabinet at the same time were 8 in Bill Clinton's first administration and then 8 during Barack Obama's administration.

Three high-profile cabinet-level positions will be occupied by women for the first time: Vice President, Secretary of the Treasury, and Director of National Intelligence.

The proposed Cabinet also includes a number of other firsts.

- A majority of members are not white.
- VP Harris will be the first Black person and the first South Asian American to serve as vice president.
- Lloyd Austin would be the first Black Secretary of Defense

- Xavier Becerra and Alejandro Mayorkas will be the first Latinos to lead DHHS and DHS.
- Deb Haaland would be the first Indigenous person to lead the Department of Interior.
- CEA Chair-designated Cecilia Rouse, OMB Director designate Neera Tanden, and USTR-designate Katherine Tai would be the first women of color in their respective roles.

The proposed cabinet includes six Black people, four Latinos, three Asians, and one Native American.

But all is not perfect...the so-called “inner Cabinet” VP, AG, Sec of State, Defense, and Treasury is 3/5th white and 3/5th male. And we have never had a female Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or Chief of Staff. [FiveThirtyEight 1/11/21]

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President Trump

As of January 13th the NBC/survey of registered voters found 43% approving the job he has done while 55% disapprove the job he has done. As of the same date a WashPost/ABC poll of adults found that 38% approve of the job that President Trump was doing while 60% disapprove.

On the economy, Trump gets a positive grade of 53% approval and a 44% disapproval grade. Although 3,000,000 jobs were lost during President Trump’s years in office.

However, on foreign policy he gets a failing grade of 41% to 55%. [CNN 1/14/21]

The following are the final Gallup survey and the final FiveThirtyEight survey of likely voters for as well as the FiveThirtyEight survey for 2021 on approval/disapproval of President Trump.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Gallup (All Adults)</u>		<u>FiveThirtyEight (Reg/Likely voters)</u>	
	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
1/15/21	34%	62%	38.0%	58.0%
12/17/20	39%	57%	43.6%	52.5%

11/19/20	43%	55%	44.3%	52.4%
10/27/20	43%	55%	43.4%	53.7%

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The following question was put to people who said they had voted for Trump.

When it comes to your vote for Donald Trump, have his actions and statements related to the events at the U.S. Capitol last week...

- reinforced your vote for Trump? 28%
- made you regret your vote for Trump? 5%
- not changed how you feel about your vote either way? 66%

[NBC/1/13/21]

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How does President Trump measure up against the five presidents who preceded him, i.e., will he turn out to be the best or worst between them? (The order below is based on the best scores.)

	<u>Best -better than most</u>	<u>Worst - Not as good</u>
Reagan	11% - 44%	9% - 28%
Clinton	16% - 40%	18% - 24%
Obama	21% - 34%	26% - 18%
GHWBush	7% - 48%	6% - 31%
Trump	19% - 21%	49% - 9%
GWBush	2% - 18%	48% - 30%

[NBC/1/13/21]

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47% of U.S. adults think that Donald Trump is one of the worst presidents in history; this includes 43% of Independents. 16% say he will be remembered as one of the best presidents in U.S. history. [NPR/PBS/Marist 1/13/21]

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As of January 11, 2021, the Washington Post Fact Checker says that President Trump has made more than 30,000 false or misleading claims.

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Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date

Because the U.S. Senate will be in Democratic hands in 2021 and the filibuster is no more, President Biden will be able to begin affecting the federal judiciary at an early date. The chart below reflects the number of Article III court judges appointed by all U.S. presidents since Jimmy Carter.

The longest serving active federal judge, Carmen Cerezo was appointed by Jimmy Carter in 1980. He serves on the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supreme Ct</u>	<u>Appeals Ct</u>	<u>District Ct</u>	<u>Int'l Trade</u>
Trump – 4 years	234	3	54	174	3
Obama – 8 years	325	2	55	268	
GW Bush – 8 years	325	2	62	261	
Clinton – 8 years	373	2	66	305	
GHW Bush – 4 years	192	2	42	148	
Reagan – 8 years	376	4	83	290	
Carter – 4 years	261	0	59	203	

There are currently several nominations awaiting Senate action, 1 seat in the District Courts, 1 seat on the courts of appeals, and 1 seat on the Court of International Trade.

There are also currently 2 vacancies of the courts of appeals, 43 vacancies on the U.S. District Courts, and 1 vacancy on the Court of International Trade. The list of others likely to retire in the short run (next year or two) is quite small – 5 as of 1/7/21. [USCourts/Wikipedia/List of federal judges appointed by Donald Trump]

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Disassembling

On January 5, 2021, Trump administration officials auctioned off oil and gas leases in Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, capping Republicans decades long quest to drill in one of the nation’s most vast unspoiled wild places. The move marks one of the most significant environmental rollbacks the president has accomplished in his term.

With lackluster oil prices and a large number of banks saying they would not finance Arctic Energy projects; major oil companies did not try to buy the leases. The sales netted a tiny fraction of what Republicans initially predicted it would yield. [WP1/6/21]

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The EPA has finalized a rule to limit what research it can use to craft public health protections, a move opponents argue is aimed at crippling the agency’s ability to more aggressively regulate the nation’s air and water. [WP 1/4/21]

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The DHHS has issued a rule that government scientists at the FDA and CDCP could face reassignment every five years. Under the rule, more than a dozen senior officials could leave their positions as early as this year. Because this rule concerns agency practices and procedures it is not subject to normal rules of notice and comment. [NYT 1/15/21]

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Who are the Democrats, Republicans, and Independents?

WW was able to access NBC/WSJ data of thousands of interviews in 2010 and 2020.

Based on this survey research the chart below shows who the Democrats, Republicans, and Independents were in 2010 when the turnout of voting age people was 37.8 percent (90,682,000 voters) and who the Democrats, Republicans, and Independents were a decade later in 2020 when the turnout of voting age people was 66.7 percent (158,240,000 voters). (Differences of less than 3.0% are not significant.)

	<u>D 2010</u>	<u>D2020</u>	<u>R2010</u>	<u>R2020</u>	<u>I2010</u>	<u>I2020</u>
Men	42%	39%	50%	54%	57%	56%
Women	58%	61%	50%	46%	43%	44%
18-34	24%	29%	20%	20%	25%	30%
35-49	23%	21%	26%	25%	24%	26%
50-64	34%	29%	34%	36%	34%	29%
65 & over	17%	29%	19%	18%	15%	14%
White/non His	60%	62%	87%	86%	71%	71%
Black	19%	21%	1%	2%	6%	10%

Hispanic	11%	12%	5	7%	8%	11%
Asian	3%	2%	2%	1%	4%	2%
Professional	26%	27%	27%	21%	24%	25%
White collar	14%	20%	15%	19%	15%	22%
Blue collar	14%	12%	16%	23%	18%	17%
HS or less	31%	24%	27%	34%	30%	25%
Some Coll	30%	31%	35%	33%	35%	35%
Coll Grad	22%	24%	25%	22%	21%	24%
Postgrad	16%	20%	3%	11%	13%	19%
Union HH	26%	23%	17%	20%	17%	20%

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Registered Voters: 2016 and 2020

Among Registered Voters, there are no significant differences between 2016 and 2020 in any of the categories above or among urban, suburban, or small towns, except for 3-point differences among professional and white-collar workers.

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The 2020 General Election

As may be obvious, WW is a fan of everyone and everything connected to the Cook Political Report. The following is a paragraph taken from the January 12, 2021 edition of Charlie Cook’s piece for the National Journal.

“There are plenty of morals in this story. One is that the American people should never again elect a president who has never worked or served in government in any capacity, has virtually no sense of history, and hasn’t the faintest notion of concepts like separation of powers or federalism. It’s hard to expect someone to abide by norms if they have little or no knowledge of or appreciation for them to begin with. A high school American government class could have opened up new vistas of knowledge for the current occupant of the Oval Office.”

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58% have confidence that the results of the presidential election were counted accurately. 39% say they were not counted accurately.

61% say that Joe Biden won the presidency legitimately. While 35% say he did not win the presidency legitimately.

At first glance that 35% figure may seem a little disquieting but...In January 2001, following the election of George W. Bush, the NBC/WSJ survey asked whether George Bush won the presidency legitimately. 55% said Bush won the presidency legitimately while 39% said he did not win the presidency legitimately. [NBC 1/13/21]

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Americans are split on whether it is necessary for the federal government to conduct an investigation into the 2020 election. 48% say it is necessary while 50% say it is not necessary. [NBC/W1/13/21]

There are two sets of statistics and facts about the 2020 elections that WW finds interesting and useful. One set is from the Cook Political Report and the other from the Winston Group.

36 Facts About the 2020 elections

The following are summaries of 19 facts from the Cook Political Report. [The whole list can be found at Cook Political Report – Facts about the 2020 election.]

2. Trump came within 65,009 votes of winning 270 Electoral votes outright.
4. Biden carried 85% of counties with a Whole Foods Market and 32% of counties with a Cracker Barrel Old Country Store – Trump carried 74% of Cracker Barrel counties and 22% of Whole Foods counties.
6. 158.4 million Americans voted in the presidential election, more than 21 million more than 2016.
11. Joe Biden carried 224 of 435 congressional districts, down slightly from the 230 districts Trump carried in 2016. Had every state allocated its electoral votes by district in the same manner as Maine and Nebraska, Biden would have won the Electoral college 277 to 261 instead of 306 to 222.

SENATE

14. The Republican who ran the most behind Trump was Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, whose winning margin was 4.4 points less than Trump, but he nonetheless sailed to a very comfortable 20-point win.

17. The most expensive Senate race was North Carolina, where a total of \$263,675,801 was spent on TV ads. Democrats spent \$151,694,974 while Republicans spent \$111,980, 827. Iowa was second with \$217,043,080 spent in total. Democrats outspent Republicans by \$39.6 million.

18. In Montana, the Democrats spent about \$323 per vote in comparison to the Republicans who spent \$193 per vote.

20. In Colorado, one of the two states Democrats have flipped so far, Republicans outspent Democrats per vote \$31 to \$29.

21. In all competitive Senate races (excluding both Georgia races) Democrats spent an average of \$94 per vote, while Republicans spent \$60 per vote.

HOUSE

22. In January, House Democrats will represent 51% of all House seats, but just 16% of the nation's land area – the smallest geographical footprint of any majority in modern history.

23. All 13 of the Republicans who have been certified as the winners in Democratic-held districts were women and/or minorities. Of the 46 freshman Republicans entering the House, 18 are women – increasing the Republicans' current tally from 13 to 29.

24. The top three most expensive House races of 2020 – in terms of both candidate and outside spending – are California's 25th District (\$37.9 million), New Mexico's 2nd District (\$36.7 million), and Texas's 22nd District (\$34.1 million).

26. Democrats would likely have lost their House majority in 2020 had it not been for lawsuits that overturned GOP-drawn congressional maps prior to 2016 (Florida and Virginia), 2018 (Pennsylvania), and 2020 (North Carolina).

27. According to 538's Nathaniel Rakich, there have only been three federal elections in the last century decided by less than 20 votes.

28. There will be at most 17 congressional districts that split their tickets between the presidential and congressional ballots, the fewest in the past century (there were 35 such districts in 2016 and 83 in 2008).

31. There are 8 districts that have elected four different members to the House in the past 5 elections.

GOVERNORS

32. There are now only 10 states that have a governor of a different party from the state's presidential results. In 2008, that number was 18.

33. Republicans now have 27 governors in the country, compared to 23 for Democrats after flipping one state (Montana) this year. When President Obama left office, Democrats were down to holding just 16 governors' mansions, compared to 33 for Republicans.

36. There are now just 11 states that have divided control between the governor and state legislature. 24 states have complete GOP control, while 15 states have complete Democratic control.

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Seven Key Statistics from the 2020 election - Winston Group

While Republicans should always support election integrity in the voting process, many people have had difficulty in understanding how President Trump could have lost at the presidential level while Congressional Republicans won seats on a widespread scale, contributing to the theory that the election was stolen or rigged.

Here are seven statistics from the 2020 election that should help explain this gap between the congressional and presidential vote:

1. House Republicans outperformed President Trump, getting 47.7 percent of the vote nationally to his 46.8 percent.
2. House Republicans got a higher percentage of the vote than the president in 34 of 50 states.

3. House Republicans got more raw vote than the president in 24 of 50 states, even though turnout for the presidential race was 5.86 million votes larger.
4. In terms of the percentage of the congressional vote, House Republicans won the key states of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Georgia, but lost North Carolina. If President Trump had been able to replicate that result, he would have won the electoral college.
5. In Georgia and Wisconsin, House Republicans got more raw votes than the president.
6. At a national level, House Republicans performed better with Hispanics, college graduates, and independents compared to the presidential result.
7. In 15 out of the 34 Senate races in November (not including the multi-candidate GA Senate race), Republican Senate candidates got a higher percentage of the vote than President Trump. [Winston Group 1/8/21]

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Voters approved 74% of statewide constitutional amendments in 2020. This involved approval of 62 of the 84 proposed statewide amendments. Of the 84 proposed amendments, state legislatures referred 69 to the ballot and petition drives were used by the other 15. [Ballotpedia 12/18/20]

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In 2020 the total number of recall efforts (recalls of elected officials) was 226, the third most since 2012. Only 29 recalls were successful. The average number of successful recalls per cycle since 2012 is 45. [Ballotpedia 1/11/21]

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315 state legislative seats changed party hands. 215 were Democratic seats and 78 were Republican seats. [Ballotpedia 1/14/21]

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While Joe Biden won the election by a margin of 7.1 million votes, the Democrats lost 13 seats in the House of Representatives. More Democrats than Republicans who voted in the presidential contest failed to vote for their candidate for the House. The total vote cast for Democratic House candidates fell short of the Biden vote by 3.9 million. The total vote cast for Republican House candidates fell short of the Trump vote by 1.4 million votes.

Democrats need to find the answer to this puzzle. [Brookings 12/21/20]

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Five times since 1920, the winning presidential candidate's party lost seats but kept its majority.

1960 – John Kennedy (D) won the White House and the party lost a net 21 House races.

1992 – Bill Clinton (D) won the White House and the party lost a net 9 House races.

2000 – George W Bush (R) won the White House and the party lost a net 2 House races.

2016 – Donald Trump (R) won the White House and the party lost a net 6 House races.

2000 – Joe Biden (D) won the White House and the party lost at least a net 13 House races. [Ballotpedia 12/21/20]

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Congress

When the analysis of the census data is complete, ten congressional seats will change hands. Eight states will gain one to three seats and ten states will lose one seat each.

Winners are Texas +3, Florida +2 and Arizona, Montana, Colorado, North Carolina, and Oregon +1 each.

The following states will lose 1 seat each, Alabama, California (the first time it has lost a seat), Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Rhode Island.

Approval of the Congress is about where it was shortly after the election.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 1/5/21	18.7%	70.3%
Real Clear Pol. 11/10/20	18.0%	70.3%
Real Clear Pol. 10/6/20	19.3%	69.0%

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Here is the general religious breakdown of the current Congress. 88.1% Christian (55.4% Protestant, 29.8% Catholic, 1.7% Mormon, 1.3% Orthodox Christian), 6.2% Jewish, 0.4% Buddhist, 0.6% Muslim, 0.4% Hindu, 0.6% Unitarian, 0.02%, Unaffiliated, 0.02%, Other, 3.4% Dk/refused. [PEW 1/9/21]

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If the ultimate membership of the House of Representatives ends up being 222 Democrats and 213 Republicans, it will be the smallest majority in the House since 2001 when Republicans had a similar majority. For the Democrats, it will be its smallest majority since 1893. [Politico/Morning Consult]

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2020

Democrats 222

Republicans 212

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was elected to a fourth, nonconsecutive term as Speaker of the House, in a 216-209 vote. Two Democrat members voted for other Democrats and three other centrist Democrat members who did not vote for Pelosi in 2019, voted present. [Bloomberg]

27 of the 60 incoming new members of the House are women. There are 29 Republican women in the House in this Congress as compared to 13 in the last Congress. The previous record of Republican women in the House was 25 in 2005.

There are 89 Democrat women in the House including 9 new women members.

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Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, starting her second term in Congress and having made quite a public splash, lost a secret ballot for membership on the powerful Energy and Commerce Committee. She lost 46-13 to a fellow New Yorker, Rep. Kathleen Rice. Scuttlebutt is that she lost in the House Democratic Steering Committee because she did not personally ask for votes and because some members fear she'll support a primary against them from the left. [WW]

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Allocation of Seats in the U.S House of Representatives

Along with Delaware, Wyoming is the only other state whose representation has held steady at one member since 1913. Idaho and New Hampshire have remained at two.

North and South Dakota's delegations have shrunk by 67% since 1913, going from three representatives to one.

Missouri had the sixth-most representatives in 1913. Today it has the nation's 18th largest delegations.

Michigan is the only state to gain and lose at least five representatives since 1913.

New York's 13th District is the nation's smallest at 10.2 square miles.

Pennsylvania has shed seats in nine straight censuses after reaching a peak of 36 in 1913-23. It is projected to lose one of its 18 remaining seats this cycle.

Delaware has gone 197 years – longer than any other state – without a change in its number of representatives. The First State had two representatives from 1813-23 and has had one since.

Virginia fielded the largest House delegation until 1813. New York (1813-1973) and California (1973 – present) have held that distinction since.

Florida's delegation grew from 4 to 27 representatives in just nine census cycles.

Texas is projected to gain up to three congressional seats following 2020 census reapportionment. It would be the Lone Star State's eighth consecutive cycle with a gain.

Twelve states delegations have been cut by at least 50 percent since 1913.

The equal proportions method, which gives one seat to each state and uses a mathematical formula to divide the remaining 385, has been used since 1940.

By federal law, individual census records are not publicly available until 72 years after they are collected.

In 1913 there were roughly 210,000 constituents per representative. Today, there are about 750,000.

Alaska, which has one representative, is the largest US congressional district by land area.

California jumped eight seats after the 1960 census, the largest single-cycle gain in the last century. [American University Magazine Fall 2020]

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THE SENATE

Republicans – 50

Democrats – 48

Independents – 2

Control of the United State Senate, which has been under the control of the Republicans since 2015, has returned to the Democrats with the election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

Given the 50/50 split in membership between the two parties (2 Independents caucus with the Democrats). Vice President Harris may have to spend more time in the Senate than she might otherwise prefer.

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Women Will Get It Done

A woman, who is a Senate aide, is responsible for the fact that the three boxes containing the electoral votes, were secured when the rioters burst into the Capital Building. She directed other staffers to gather the boxes and transport them to a secure location, returning them to the Senate Chamber when the House and Senate were able to continue their joint session some seven hours later. [19th – 1/11/21]

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Women make up just over a quarter of all members of the 117th Congress – the highest percentage in U.S. history and a considerable increase from a decade ago.

Counting the House and the Senate – 144 of 539 seats – 27% are held by women. That is a 50% increase from 10 years ago when 96 women were serving in the 112th Congress. This of course is well below the female share of the U.S. population. [PEW 1/15/21]

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Women account for 24% of federal judges appointed by Trump. The following are the presidents in the order of the percentage of women federal judges appointed by each of the presidents.

- Barack Obama – 42%
- Donald Trump – 24%
- Bill Clinton – 28%
- George W Bush – 22%
- George H.W. Bush – 19%
- Jimmy Carter – 16%
- Ronald Reagan – 8%

[PEW 1/13/21]

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French microbiologist Emmanuelle Charpentier and American biochemist Jennifer Doudna received the 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry in December for their groundbreaking work. They met at a conference in 2011, agreed to collaborate on an intersection of their gene research, and have now received one of the highest honors for their development of CRISPR, a groundbreaking gene editing technique with wide-ranging uses across biology and medicine.

They are respectively the sixth and seventh women to receive the Nobel Prize for Chemistry of the 187 total prize winners in Chemistry in the 105-year history of the Nobel Prize. The duo also won a Breakthrough Prize, called “the Oscars of Science”, and \$3 million each for their work in 2015.

Dr. Jinelle Wint, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs at Stowers Institute for Medical Research in Kansas City, MO, told the *New York Times* that aspiring women scientists should be empowered to think “that they, too, can be in the next Nobel Prize winners of the future.” [GenderAvenger]

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“If one man can destroy everything, why can’t one girl change it.”
Malala Yousafzai, activist for female education

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Inventions by Women
(Thanks to Peter Hart)

Although Alice Parker’s invention in 1919 of a gas-powered central heater was never manufactured, her idea was the first that allowed for using natural gas to heat a home, inspiring the central heating systems of today.

Kevlar, the life-saving material that is 5 times stronger than steel and is used to make bulletproof vests, was invented in 1965 by Stephanie Kwolek.

Dr. Grace Murray Hopper was a computer scientist who invented COBOL which is the first user-friendly computer software system in the 1940s. She was also a rear admiral in the U.S. Navy and the first person to use the reference to a glitch in a computer system when she literally found a bug (moth) causing problems with her computer.

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**WW Recommends Books
& other things**

In this new feature of the Washington Watch, WW will primarily suggest books you may find interesting but now and then it may also mention a TV program, and other things. I welcome your suggestions and your input. What have you been reading that you think WW readers might like?

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KEEP SHARP:
Build a Better Brain at Any Age
By Sanjay Gupta, MD

Throughout our life, we look for ways to keep our mind sharp and effortlessly productive. Now, globetrotting neurosurgeon Dr. Sanjay Gupta offers insights from top scientists all over the world, whose cutting-edge research can help you heighten and protect brain function and maintain cognitive health at any age.

Keep Sharp debunks common myths about aging and cognitive decline,

explores whether there's a "best" diet or exercise regimen for the brain, and explains whether it's healthier to play video games that test memory and processing speed, or to engage in more social interaction. Discover what we can learn from "super-brained" people who are in their eighties and nineties with no signs of slowing down—and whether there are truly any benefits to drugs, supplements, and vitamins. Dr. Gupta also addresses brain disease, particularly Alzheimer's, answers all your questions about the signs and symptoms, and shows how to ward against it and stay healthy while caring for a partner in cognitive decline. He likewise provides you with a personalized twelve-week program featuring practical strategies to strengthen your brain every day. *Keep Sharp* is the only owner's manual you'll need to keep your brain young and healthy regardless of your age!

1620:
A Critical Response to the 1619 Project
By Peter W. Wood

When and where was America founded? Was it in Virginia in 1619, when a pirate ship landed a group of captive Africans at Jamestown? So asserted the New York Times in August 2019 when it announced its 1619 Project. The Times set out to transform history by tracing American institutions, culture, and prosperity to that pirate ship and the exploitation of African Americans that followed. A controversy erupted, with historians pushing back against what they say is a false narrative conjured out of racial grievance.

This book sums up what the critics have said and argues that the proper starting point for the American story is 1620, with the signing of the Mayflower Compact aboard ship before the Pilgrims set foot in the Massachusetts wilderness. A nation as complex as ours, of course, has many starting points, most notably the Declaration of Independence in 1776. But the quintessential ideas of American self-government and ordered liberty grew from the deliberate actions of the Mayflower immigrants in 1620.

Schools across the country have already adopted the Times' radical revision of history as part of their curricula. The stakes are high. Should children be taught that our nation is a four-hundred-year-old system of racist oppression? Or should they learn that what has always made America exceptional is our pursuit of liberty and justice for all?

Mike

325 7th St, NW, STE 825
Washington, DC 20004
202-728-1100
mberman@dubersteingroup.com