

*Mike Berman's*

# WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

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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**

34% of registered voters say the country is headed in the right direction.  
53% of registered voters say the country is on the wrong track.

	<u>Right track</u>	<u>Wrong track</u>
Democrats	61%	24%
Republicans	13%	73%
Independents	28%	59%

[Econ/Yougov 2/22/21]

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The U.S. economy shrank by 3.5% in 2020. This is the worst year of economic growth since 1946. It is the first time the economy has contracted since 2009. [WP 1/28/21]

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Life expectancy in the United States fell by an entire year in the first half of 2020. Based on data from the CDC, this level of decline has not been seen since World War II. In the first half of the year the expected life span for Americans overall was 77.8 years, down from 78.8 in 2019.

The life expectancy of men was 75.1 years and of women, 80.5 years. For Black people life expectancy dropped from 74.7 to 72. For Hispanics it dropped 1.9 years from 81.8 to 79.9 years. It dropped 0.8 years for white people to 78 years.

Be mindful of the fact that these changes reflect changes for the first 6 months of 2020. [NBC.com, AP 2/18/21]

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36% of Black Americans and 46% of whites say relations between whites and Blacks are at least somewhat good. Overall, a majority of Americans, by a

54% to 44% margin, said relations between Blacks and whites were bad. [NPR 1/22/21]

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Roughly 81,000 Americans died from drug overdoses between June 2019 and June 2020 – a 21% jump over the same period the year before. [CDC 12/17/20]

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More than 2 million firearms were bought in January according to federal gun background-check data. That is the third-highest one-month total on record. Sales surged after the assault on the U.S. Capitol early in the month.

Nearly 23 million firearms were bought in 2020, a 64% jump from the previous year. Sales spike after mass shootings such as Sandy Hook or events like the killing of George Floyd.

Reports from first time buyers are that they no longer trust police departments to protect them.

The following are the ten states with the largest increase in estimated firearm sales comparing January 2020 with January 2021: Michigan 306%, New Jersey 248%, D.C. 202%, Utah 150%, Idaho 135%, Maryland 134%, Montana 117%, Georgia 117%, Alaska 107%, Minnesota 104%. [WP 2/3/21]

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20% of Americans trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time.

84% of Americans say, “politicians have too much power & influence in today’s economy.”

56% of Americans believe “journalists and reporters are purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations.”

[Bruce Mehlman, Mehlman Castagnetti, Rosen & Thomas – Cross Roads - bruce@mc-dc.com 2/1/21]

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The following is from a February 10<sup>th</sup> column by David Winston of the Winston Group entitled, *Anger has been the drug of choice for our political system for too long.*

“Media outlets today, with few exceptions, want their audiences angry – the angrier the better – and focuses on grievances, even to the point of manufacturing a grievance if you don’t have one. They think it’s good for business, seemingly missing the role they’re playing in stoking division and distrust...”

“We live in a political system that constantly strokes anger, taking it up a notch year after year and discouraging a focus on ideas and legislating. The players on all sides need to step back and examine their own conduct in a system that rewards the worst in politics as it divides us by class, geography, race, religion and education.”

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Eleven members of the U.S. Congress identify as LGBTQ; two are members of the U.S. Senate and nine are members of the U.S. House. [WW]

An estimated 5.6% of Americans identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer – LBGTQ. That is up from 3.5% in 2012 and 4.5% in 2017, the last year Gallup polled on this issue. This is a growth of 60% since 2012.

Of the 5.6 % who identify as LBGTQ – 54.6% identify as bisexual, 24.5% as gay, 11.7% as lesbians, 11.3% as transgender, and 3% use another term to describe their identify. (Some respondents chose more than one category.)

Women are 30% more likely than men to identify as LGBTQ.

16% of those age 18-23 consider themselves something other than heterosexual. This is true of only 2% of Americans 56 and older.

50.5% of LGBTQ adults identified as single and never married.

The results of this latest poll were based on more than 15,000 interviews conducted with adults 18 and older during 2020 and obviously does not include those who are not public about their orientation.

According to Gallup editor Jeffrey Jones, surveying sexual orientation and gender identity is inherently imprecise, given shifting definitions various levels of outness and willingness to talk about these issues. [Gallup Report – NBCnews.com 2/24/21]

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## **Vernon E. Jordan Jr.**

Vernon E. Jordan Jr. was special. He was kind, generous, thoughtful, smart, attentive, wise, influential, charming, affable, a quintessential insider, and politically astute.

When speaking with you he always gave you his full attention, his eyes never left your eyes.

We never did business together that I recall but there were a number of occasions on which I sought his advice. It always hit the spot.

In recent years I most often saw Vernon on Saturday mornings in the Season's restaurant at the Four Seasons Hotel.

When Vernon entered the room, he was greeted by every member of the wait staff he encountered. He always greeted a variety of guests as he headed to "his" table in a far corner of the restaurant.

When a woman he knew rose to greet him as he came in, he greeted her warmly. When Vernon shook your hand, it was firm but gentle.

At least three times in the last several years, Debbie and I and Jim and Heather Johnson attended Sunday services at the Rankin Memorial Chapel at Howard University. Every one of the 1500 seats in the Chapel was filled.

Vernon delivered the sermons. I have heard many sermons at synagogues and churches over the years but nothing like we heard on those days. Every word was carefully chosen and fully enunciated.

The following is a quote from the sermon that Vernon gave at the Chapel in 2019.

"We live in an age of immediacy – immediate deliveries, immediate communication. But the work of justice takes time. There will be moments of doubt and difficulty. And that means you need to find your rock, your inspiration...And just as the Lord will carry us, we must be prepared to carry one another, and lift up one another and our community."

Vernon will be missed. I will miss him.

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## **Employment**

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for February 2021 is 6.2%. That unemployment rate is lower than the 6.9% in October, and the 6.7% in November and December, and greater than the 3.5% unemployment rate of a year ago. (Federal Reserve Chair Jerome H. Powell said that the real unemployment rate in January 2021 – 6.3% as reported by the Labor Department – was in fact closer to 10%.) [WP 2/11/21]

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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 11.1%, down from 12.1% in October, and 12.0% in November, and up from 7.0% a year ago.

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10 million people were unemployed in February and 379,000 jobs were created in that month. These jobs are primarily in restaurants and bars.

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is 61.4%, the same as January 2021. [BLS 2/20]

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### The Demographics of Unemployment for December 2020

#### Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women –5.2% (up from last month)

Men –5.7% (down from last month)

#### Unemployment by Race

White – 5.6% (down from last month)

Black – 9.9% (up from last month)

Hispanic – 8.5% (down from last month)

Asian –5.1% (down from last month)

#### Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

Less than high school –10.1% (up from last month)

High School –7.2% (up from last month)

Some college –5.9% (down from last month)  
Bachelor’s Degree or higher – 3.8% (down from last month)

In December, 32 states had unemployment rates below the national average of 6.7%. 17 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 in December is Hawaii at 10.3%.

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In 2019 the average large company CEO made 320 times the compensation of a typical worker. [Economic Policy Institute 8/18/20]

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275,000 people left the workforce in January. Overall, 24 million women have exited the workforce since last February, compared with 1.8 million men. [NBC news 2/7/21]

Among employees who saw at least some benefit from remote work, 34% are men but only 9% of women said they were promoted. [NYT 2/7/21]

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### **This and That**

66% of mothers say that they, rather than their partners, are chiefly responsible for childcare. 24% of fathers make the same claim. [NYT 2/7/21]

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In 2019, an average of \$11,000 per year per person was spent on health care in the United States, far more than any other industrial country. [Axios AM 2/27/21]

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At the end of 2019, women made up the majority of students in U.S. medical schools. 50.5% of students in medical schools were women and 49.5% men. In the medical profession overall, male doctors outnumber female doctors 64% to 36%.

While medical schools are experiencing an increase in applicants and new enrollees, the country continues to face a projected shortage of 122,000 doctors by 2032. [WP 12/23/19]

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Healthcare is the fastest-growing sector of the U.S. economy employing over 18 million workers. Women represent nearly 80% of the healthcare work force. [CDC.gov 2/6/21]

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It appears that the more educated people are, the more likely they are to believe that QAnon claims are either very accurate or somewhat accurate. 27% of those with postgraduate degrees have those views. That compares to 20% of those with a bachelor's degree and 14% of those with less than a college degree. [Political Playbook 2/6/21]

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45% of all U.S. workers in 2019 were included in the category of the lowest-income workers, earning less than \$30,000 a year. [Axios Market 2/10/21]

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39% of respondents (15% were very likely and 24% somewhat likely) say they will consider buying or leasing an electric vehicle. 49% (19% not very likely and 30% not at all likely) are not likely to consider buying such a vehicle.

50% will consider buying a hybrid vehicle while 38% will not consider the same. [Morningconsult.com 1/25/21]

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There have been four Black governors in American history – all men. [Grandjay]

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What would life be like in these crazy times without email, texting, Twitter, Facetime, Skype, Zoom, WebEx/Cisco, and whatever other form of communication one might use? [WW]

The use of Zoom has exploded from 10 million users in 2017 to 300 million during the pandemic.

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“That’s a great question.” How many hundreds of times have you heard one person or another use that phrase to describe a question they have received from a journalist on TV when you think, “Why is that such a great question?” [WW]

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Sometimes delivery of the U.S. mail takes a while, as previously reported. Here are some additional examples:

Debbie Cowan mailed a letter to her grandson Max on December 17 – it arrived on February 9, 2021 – 54 days in transit.

Nancy Alexander (my sister) mailed a letter to me on January 23 – 2-day priority mail – it arrived on February 3 – 10 days in transit.

Debbie received both her January 25, 2021 and her February 15 & 22, 2021 copy of the New Yorker magazine on February 11, 2021. [WW]

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General Motors will sell only zero-emission vehicles by 2035. This decision, especially if followed by auto makers in the U.S. and Europe, will have a negative impact on industries involved in supplying parts to makers and the oil and gas sector. [NYT 1/28/21]

The following are 15 interesting predictions relating to the current gas/diesel engine.

- Auto repair shops will disappear.
- A gas/diesel engine has 20,000 individual parts. An electric motor has 20.
- Electric cars are sold with lifetime guarantees and are repaired only by dealers. It takes only 10 minutes to remove and replace an electric motor.
- Faulty electric motors are not repaired in the dealership but are sent to a regional repair shop that repairs them with ROBOTS.
- Your electric motor malfunction light goes on...so you drive up to what looks like a car wash, and your car is towed through while you have a cup of coffee. Then your car comes out on the other side with a new electric motor or component.
- Gas stations will go away. Street corners will have meters that disperse electricity. Companies will install electrical recharging stations...in fact, they’ve already started in the developed world.

- The coal industries will go away. Gasoline/oil companies will go away.
- Drilling for oil will stop. So, say goodbye in OPEC. The Middle East is in trouble.
- UBER is just a software tool (they don't own any cars) and is now the biggest taxi company in the world. (Ask any taxi driver if they saw that coming.)
- Autonomous cars. In 2018 the first self-driving cars were already here. In the next few years, the entire auto industry will be disrupted. You won't own a car anymore, instead you will call a car with your phone, it will show up at your location and drive you to your destination. You will not need to find a parking space. You will pay only for the 'driven distance' and you can be productive while driving. The very young children of today will never get a driver's license and they will never own a car.
- About 1.2 million people die each year in car accidents (worldwide). That includes distracted or drunk drivers... We currently have one accident every 60,000 miles driven. However, with autonomous driving that will drop to 1 accident every 6 million miles. That will save a million plus lives, worldwide each year.
- Look at what Volvo is doing right now. No more internal combustion engines in their vehicles starting with the 2020 models. They are using all-electric or hybrid only (with the intent of phasing out hybrid models in the not too distant future).
- Many engineers from Volkswagen and Audi are completely terrified of Tesla. That was unheard of only a few years ago.
- Insurance companies will have massive trouble too because, without accidents, the costs of insurance will become cheaper. Their car insurance business model will disappear.
- Electric cars will become mainstream by about 2030. Cities will be less noisy because all new cars will run ONLY on electricity.

[Author unknown]

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The United States government was able to land a vehicle on Mars—where the temperatures are -81 degrees Fahrenheit—after traveling 300,000,000 miles. But the state of Texas was not able to prevent their electrical system from failing during a temperature of +40 degrees. [WW]

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Nearly 17 million children do not have the high-speed internet they need to connect to virtual learning. [AT&T 1/29/21]

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Super Bowl 55 averaged 96.4 million multiplatform viewers, the smallest overall Super Bowl audience in 14 years. Last year’s Super Bowl averaged roughly 102 million viewers. [Morning Media 2/10/21]

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Approximately 12.6 million households took in pets between March and December 2020. [NYT 2/21/21]

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Less than 20% of the world’s population lives in free countries. [World View Newsletter 3/3/21]

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### **A Last look at President Trump?**

The following is the final FiveThirtyEight report of Reg/likely voters as to the approval/disapproval of President Trump (as of January 20, 2021).

FiveThirtyEight (Reg/Likely voters)	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
	38.6%	57.9%

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In both the 2016 election victory and the 2020 election loss, Trump received fewer votes than his opponent.

<u>2016</u>	<u>2020</u>
Clinton - 65,853,514	Biden - 81,283,098
Trump - 62,981,828	Trump - 74,222,958
2,871,686 net deficit	7,060,140 net deficit

Total: 9,931,826 net deficits

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As of January 20, 2021, the Washington Post Fact Checker says that President Trump had made more than 30,573 false or misleading claims.

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Trump granted 237 pardons and commutations in his 4 years in office: 143 pardons and 94 commutations. 74 of the pardons and 70 of the commutations came within the last 24 hours of Trump’s term. Only 25 of the pardons came through the regular Justice Department process. [NYT 1/26/21]

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President Trump and Melania Trump had the COVID vaccine before leaving the White House without announcing it publicly. [Axios Alerts 3/1/21]

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Trump has started a leadership PAC called “Save America”. Brad Pascale, a former Trump campaign manager, will run it.

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47% believe Trump was one of the worst presidents in history. This includes 83% of Democrats, 43% of Independents, and 13% of Republicans.

16% believe he is one of the best presidents in history including 33% of Republicans, 17% of Independents, and 9% of Democrats. [NPR 1/19/21]

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When asked, “Would you like to see Trump continue to be a major national political figure for many years to come?”, 57% of Republicans and those who Lean R said yes.

	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Total	68%	29%
Republicans/Lean R	40%	57%
Conservative R	30%	68%
Moderate/Liberal R	56%	41%
Democrat/Lean D	93%	7%
Conserve/Moderate D	90%	9%
Liberal D	96%	x

[PEW 1/6-12/21]

During President Trump’s tenure, 5 federal agencies grew - Treasury, Defense, Homeland Security, Veterans Affairs, and Commerce (always grows during the census).

11 federal agencies shrank. Listed in order of percent of decrease: Labor, State, Education, Interior, Agriculture, EPA, Energy, HHS, HUD, Transportation, and Justice. [NYT 2/1/21]

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### 2020 Election

Spending on the 2020 election reached \$14.4 billion. This was more than double the amount that was spent on the then record-breaking 2016 president election. [Open Secrets 2/11/21]

The six national fundraising committees of the Democratic and Republican parties raised a combined \$2.650 billion. The three Republican committees raised a combined \$1.510 billion and the three Democratic committees raised a combined \$1.140 billion.

RNC	<u>\$890,495,917</u>
DNC	\$490,635,675

NRSC	<u>\$338,263,383</u>
DSCC	\$303,878,609

NRCC	\$280,911,947
DCCC	<u>\$345,783,544</u>

[Ballotpedia 2/17/2021]

Only 16 Congressional districts in the 2020 election backed a presidential nominee of one party and a House candidate from the other party. Thus just 4% of districts split their tickets which is the smallest share in the last 70 years.

Over the past 20 years the share of districts splitting their House and presidential results between the two major parties has regularly fallen below 20% and 2020 was the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive cycle it fell below 10%.

Of the 16 seats, Republicans won 9, while Democrats won 7.  
[FiveThirtyEight]

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In 2020, 54% voted in person, 28% voted on election day, 26% voted early in person, and 46% voted by mail/absentee. The following shows the changes in the voting process since 1996.

	<u>1996</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2020</u>
On Election Day	89%	86%	79%	69%	67%	60%	28%
Early in-person	3%	4%	8%	14%	14%	19%	26%
Absentee by mail	8%	10%	13%	16%	19%	21%	46%

[MIT Election Lab 1/22/21]

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In the 2020 general elections, 94% of incumbents nationwide won re-election. This includes races in which incumbents were unopposed. [Ballotpedia 1/21]

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The 2020 election was the ninth consecutive presidential election in which the national popular vote margin was smaller than 10 percentage points. [FiveThirtyEight 2/2/21]

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197.9 million people live in counties won by President Biden in the 2020 election and 130.3 million people live in counties won by then President Trump, a difference of 67.6 million people. [Brooking 1/21/21]

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There are 3143 counties in the United States. From 1980 to 2016, 19 counties voted for the winner of the presidential election every single time. The most impressive of these was Valencia County, New Mexico which voted for the victor in every presidential election from 1952 to 2016.

In 2020, 18 of these 19 “bellwether counties” voted for former President Donald Trump. Only Clallam County in Washington, voted for President Joe Biden. [FiveThirtyEight – Politics Podcast]

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### **Odd 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.

I saw a bank sign that said “24 Hour Banking” but I don’t have that much time.

Always remember my grandfather’s last words “A truck...”

Half of all marriages end in divorce – and then there are the really unhappy ones.

If I could say a few words, I would be a better public speaker.

You know what they say: you can lead a herring to water, but you have to walk really fast or he’ll die.

If you want to receive emails about my upcoming shows, please give me money so I can buy a computer.

When you first entered the restaurant, I thought you were handsome. And then you spoke.

I hope that someday you’ll know the indescribable joy of having children and of paying someone else to raise them.

## **THINGS**

Don’t be worried about your smartphone or TV spying on you. Your vacuum cleaner has been collecting dirt on you for years.

If you can’t think of a word say, “I forgot the English word for it.” That way people will think you’re bilingual instead of an idiot.

I’m at a place in my life where errands are starting to count as going out.

I’m getting tired of being part of a major historical event.

I don’t always go the extra mile, but when I do it’s because I missed my exit.

## **OTHER THINGS**

A Goldfish has a memory span of three seconds.

A “jiffy” is an actual unit of time for 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a second.

Almonds are a member of the peach family.

In the last 4,000 years, no new animals have been domesticated.

If the population of China walked past you, in single file, the line would never end because of the rate of reproduction.

Why does “fat chance” and “slim chance” mean the same thing.

Why are they called “stands” when they are made for sitting?

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### **INSULTS**

“In order to avoid being called a flirt, she always yielded easily.”

-Charles, Count Talleyrand

“He loves nature in spite of what it did to him.”

-Forrest Tucker

“Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it.”

-Mark Twain

“Her mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork.”

-Mae West

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### **QUOTES**

“Instant information leads to premature decisions.”

-Tony Podesta

“To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.”

-Douglas Adams

“Napping is not what lazy people do. It’s what people who are really effective and creative and self-regulating and conscientious do.”



-Sara Mednick,  
Professor of cognitive science at UC Irvine

“It is not by merely living that people enter into history. Rather, it is by what we do, or fail to do, that we are remembered by all. Our legacy is a history of doers.”

-George Berman (my father),  
President, Duluth Jewish Federation  
Jewish Fellowship News December 1978

“By this summer, the only things that will matter politically: vaccines and the economy. Impeachment will not.”

-Amy Walter on Twitter,  
3:12 p.m. 2/13/21

“Impeachment is a congressional process to remove high public officials if they, regardless of motive or even capacity to form intent, pose substantial risk of injury to society.”

-Barbara Radnofsky’s  
“A citizen’s guide to Impeachment”  
(thanks to David Werbel)

“One positive aspect of social media is that it gives minorities a space. I hope that this dynamic will take off from social media to real life.”

Lena Mahfouf,  
Social media star

“My whole life is like a dream. I tell you, if I were not a Supreme, I would want to be a Supreme.”

Mary Wilson,  
A founding member of the Supremes

“That sense of mastery over nature has been so seriously challenged by this pandemic.”

-Drew Gilpin Faust,  
Historian and former president of Harvard University

“Utter no falsehood, invent no lies, and cause no hurt to anyone.”

-Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,  
The Promised Messiah

“I’ve said It so many times but take your life into your own hands. Don’t let other people direct you. Know what you want. I really believe in that.”

-Martha Stewart

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### **Riddles**

[The answers to these riddles can be found on page 19]

1. What can run but never walks, has a mouth but never talks, has a head but never weeps, has a bed but never sleeps?
2. What can fill a room but takes up no space?
3. If you drop me, I’m sure to crack, but give me a smile and I’ll always smile back. What am I?
4. The more you take, the more you leave behind. What are they?
5. I turn once, what is out will not get in. I turn again, what is in will not get out. What am I?

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### **President Biden**

President Biden set out to pass the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan as his first major legislative endeavor and pulled it off in time to help those who would lose their unemployment benefits on March 14.

No Republicans supported the legislation in the House or Senate on the grounds that it cost too much and much of it was unneeded. In 2017, the Republicans in the House and Senate passed a \$1.5 trillion tax cut, no Democrats voted for it.

As of March 4<sup>th</sup>, Biden’s approval rating based on Real Clear Politics:

	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
Over all	55.3%	39.9%
On the economy	53.5%	40.5%
On Foreign policy	52.8%	39.6%

Gallup now does monthly or semi-monthly surveys of all adults. WW will include a periodic polling summary—Registered and Likely Voters—by FiveThirtyEight. In the first survey after Biden came into office is reported below.

	Gallup (All Adults)		FiveThirtyEight (Reg/Likely voters)	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
2/18/21	56%	40%	54.4%	37.8%

As of his 45<sup>th</sup> day in office, March 5<sup>th</sup>, this is how President Biden's approval rating matches up with the last five presidents on their 45<sup>th</sup> day in office.

Trump 44.1%	Obama 59.7%	GWBush 57.8%
Biden 53.6%	Biden 53.6%	Biden 53.6%
Clinton 60.1%	GHW Bush 62%	
Biden 53.6%	Biden 53.6%	

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### **Answers to the Riddles.**

1. A river; 2. Light; 3. A mirror; 4. Footsteps; 5. A key

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Vice President Harris cast her first tie breaking vote in the United States Senate on her 15<sup>th</sup> day in office, February 5<sup>th</sup>. Since then, she has cast a second and third tie breaking vote. She has now cast more tie breaking votes than 19 of the previous vice presidents.

12 vice presidents, including Biden, Quayle, Rockefeller, Ford, and Lyndon Johnson, never cast a tie breaking vote.

4 vice presidents including Mondale, Hobart and Wilson and Truman each cast 1 tie breaking vote.

3 vice presidents including Agnew, Dawes, and Adlai Stevenson cast 2 tie breaking votes.

Starting with the most, here is a list of the VPs and their number of tie breaking votes: 31-John Calhoun; 29-John Adams; 19-George Dallas; 18-Schuyler Colfax; 14-George Clinton and Richard Johnson; 13-Mike Pence; 10-Breckinridge; 9-Gerry and Marshal; 8-Barkley, Nixon, Cheney; 7-Hamlin and GHW Bush; 6-

Tompkins and Wheeler; 4-Van Buren, Morton, Sherman, Wallace, Humphrey, and Gore; 3-Jefferson, Burr, Filmore, Arthur, Curtis, and Garner.

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“For the first time, we now have had four presidents in a row who have lost both of their parties’ Senate and House majorities during their White House tenures. Two of them (Bill Clinton and Barack Obama) lost both majorities in their first midterm election; one (Donald Trump) lost them over the course of four years and two elections; and the other (George W. Bush) took six years and a second midterm election to see the whole thing go up in smoke.” [Charlie Cook 2/9/21]

Will Joe Biden be the 5<sup>th</sup> president to so? (WW)

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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 cannot be used on judicial nominees, 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.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supreme Ct</u>	<u>Appeals Ct</u>	<u>District Ct</u>	<u>Int’l Trade</u>
Biden -					
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	

[USCourts/Wikipedia/List of federal judges appointed Joe Biden]

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As of January 25, 2021, there are 829 active federal judges.

- Barack Obama (D) appointed 316 (38%)
- Donald Trump (R) appointed 232 (28%)
- George W. Bush (R) appointed 163 (20%)
- Bill Clinton (D) appointed 88 (11%)

- Ronald Reagan (R) appointed 16 (1.9%)
- George H.W. Bush (R) appointed 13 (1.69%)
- Jimmy Carter (D) appointed (1) (0.1%)

[Ballotpedia 3/3/21]

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## 2022 Election

In 2021, Republicans will have full control of the legislative and executive branches in 24 states. Democrats will have full control of the legislative and executive branches in 15 states. [Axios AM 2/25/21]

\* \* \* \* \*

The 117<sup>th</sup> Congress

## Congress

Approval of the Congress has grown since shortly after the election.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 3/2/21	29.7%	60.0%
Real Clear Pol. 2/22/21	26.3%	60.0%
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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Data for the generic congressional ballot is not yet available.

## THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The 2020 census data will not be available until September 30, 2021. The legal deadline was March 31, 2021. This change of date could result in chaos in states facing tight redistricting deadlines for Congress as well as state and local offices. [NPR 2/12/21]

WW uses David Wasserman and the Cook Political Report for the House chart. Because of the situation described in the paragraph above, no chart for 2022 had been produced as of March 7<sup>th</sup>.

There are 118 women serving as voting members of the House of Representatives at the onset of the Congress comprising 27.3% of House members. Of these, 89 are Democrats (unchanged since 2019) and 29 Republicans (up from 13 in the last Congress).

2022  
Democrats 222  
Republicans 213

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Only once in more than 80 years has the party in the White House not lost seats in its first midterm election. [Amy Walter, Cook Political Report 2/24/21]

\* \* \* \* \*

On June 26, 2018, there was a Democratic primary in the 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of New York. Joe Crowley was completing his 10<sup>th</sup> term as a member of the House of Representatives. He was number 4 in the Democratic leadership in the House.

He did not take seriously a challenge from a local progressive, a member of the Democratic Socialists, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Crowley spent \$1,500,000 on the race and Ocasio-Cortez less than \$300,000.

By the time Crowley realized that he was in trouble it was too late. Ocasio-Cortez won with 57% of the vote – 16,898 votes to 12,880 votes.

Since then, having been re-elected, Ocasio-Cortez (known as AOC) has moved onto center stage.

As prominent as AOC has become, all is not perfect. As the House was organizing in 2021, AOC requested assignment to the Energy and Commerce Committee. AOC did not work the issue by personally asking for support. Rep. Kathleen Rice did personally campaign for the assignment. Rice was selected by a 46-13 vote. It was a secret vote. Would the result have been the same if the vote were public?

The recent storm in Texas is an example of how AOC operates. She announced on Twitter a spur-of-the-moment relief effort to benefit five Texas relief organizations. She then traveled to Houston to volunteer at the Houston Food

Bank with her colleague Rep. Sylvia Garcia. To date, her effort has raised over \$5 million for the food banks. [WW]

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## **THE SENATE**

At the start of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress there were 26 women serving in the U.S. Senate, a historic high. That number dropped to 24 when Senator Kamala Harris became Vice President and Sen. Kelly Loeffler lost the Georgia runoff.

Of the 24 female senators, 16 are Democrats and 8 are Republicans.

There were a number of times in the past when the Senate was evenly split.

- The Senate was evenly split for a 5-month period from January to June 2001.
- The Senate was evenly split, 48 to 48, during 5 separate periods in 1953 and 1954.
- The Democratic and Republican caucuses were even at 37 to 37 in 1881. In addition, there was 1 independent who caucused with the Democrats and 1 independent who caucused with the Republicans. [Ballotpedia 1/23/21]

The U.S. Senate has the fewest split delegations (GOP/DEM) since direct elections began in 1913 with the adoption of the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

In the 2021-22 session of Congress there are only 6 states that now have U.S. senators of different parties.

In the 2019-20 session of Congress there were once again 9 split delegations.

In the 1979-80 session of Congress there were 27 split delegations, the largest number of split delegations.

In the 1961-60 session of Congress there were 25 split delegations.

In the 1955-56 session of Congress there were 9 split delegations.

[PEW 2/11/21]

13 of the Senators who are part of the United States Senate today, who sat as jurors in the impeachment of Donald Trump, were also members of the Senate during Bill Clinton’s impeachment trial in 1999. In the Clinton trial,

- The 7 Democrats all voted Not Guilty on both charges.
- 6 of the 7 Republicans voted Guilty on both charges.
- 1 of the Republicans voted Not Guilty on the charge of perjury but Guilty on the charge of obstruction.

[NBC Magazine 2/12/21]

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[WW uses Jessica Taylor of the Cook Political Report and Inside Elections for the Senate chart below. When those two organizations do not agree, WW uses Sabato as a tie breaker.]

Republicans – 50  
 Democrats – 48  
 Independents – 2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independent</u>
Seats not up in 2022	34	30	2
Safe in 2022	10	15	
	Padilla	Murkowski	
	Bennet	AL – open	
	Blumenthal	Boozman	
	Schatz	Grassley	
	Duckworth	Crapo	
	Van Hollen	Young	
	Schumer	Moran	
	Wyden	Paul	
	Leahy	Kennedy	
	Murray	MO- open	
		Hoeven	
		Lankford	
		Scott	
		Thune	
		Lee	
Likely	2	2	
	Hassan	Rubio	
	Cortez Masto	OH – open	



Lean	2	1
	Kelly	Johnson
	Warnock	
Toss Up	0	2
		NC – open
		PA – open

Senators Leahy (age 81), Grassley (age 87), and Johnson (65) have said they will make announcements later in 2021 as to whether they will run for re-election. [WW]

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When all is said and done, chances are that the Democrats could lose their control of the House and Senate in the 2022 election. [WW]

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### **2024 Election**

The following people have indicated or been named as someone thinking about or planning to run for president in 2024.

- Donald Trump
- Kristi Noem – Governor of South Dakota
- Nikki Haley – Former governor of South Carolina
- Mike Pompeo – Former secretary of state
- Ben Sasse – U.S. Senator
- Ron DeSantis – Governor of Florida
- Tom Cotton – U.S. Senator
- Josh Hawley – U.S. Senator
- Rick Scott – U.S. Senator
- Ted Cruz – U.S. Senator
- Mike Pence – Former Vice President

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### **Women Will Get It Done**

Sonceria “Ann” Berry has been sworn in as the 35<sup>th</sup> Secretary of the Senate. She is the first Black woman to hold this position. Most recently she was Deputy

Chief of Staff to Senator Patrick Leahy, who currently serves as President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

During her 40 years in Washington, Berry also worked for Senators Heflin, Carper, Edwards, Moynihan, and Jones.

Rosalind Brewer is the new CEO of Walgreens. She will be the only Black woman leading a Fortune 500 company. She previously served as the COO of Starbucks. [Axios Market Watch 1/27/21]

Suzanne Clark will take over as president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in March. Clark will become the first woman to lead the group in its century long existence. [Politico 2/10/21]

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Only 32 out of the 377 venture-backed firms that filed for IPOs between 2016 and 2020 had a female CEO. [WP 2/7/21]

Professor Deborah Archer will be the first black woman to lead the 101-year-old American Civil Liberties Union. [PBS 2/1/21]

Nigerian economist Ngozi-Iweala is the first African and the first woman to head the World Trade Organization. [AXIOS PM 2/15/21]

Chloe Zhao is the first Asian woman to win the Golden Globe for best director. She is also the first woman to be named best director since Barbara Streisand won for “Yentl” 40 years ago. [The 19<sup>th</sup> 3/1/21]

On February 7, 2021, Sarah Thomas was the first woman to referee a Super Bowl game. [NYT 2/7/21]

On February 21, the Boy Scouts of America welcomed the first female Eagle Scout. [Scouting.org]

In 1964, Geraldine “Jerrie” Mock became the first woman pilot to fly solo around the world. Jerrie flew from Columbus, Ohio in a single engine Cessna 180 called the “Spirit of Columbus.” She would return to Columbus 29 days later after making 21 stops, including in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Thailand, marking a significant milestone for both aviation and women. [PunchBowl News 3/1/27]

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The new Senate Sergeant at Arms team is led by Lt. General (retired) Karen Gibson as Senate Sergeant at Arms and has a new Deputy and new Chief of Staff. They are the first all-female leadership team since the position was created in 1789. [Schumer press release – 3/3/21]

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The 10 women who are the members of the Fabulous Ladies book club in Ruidoso, New Mexico were meeting in their usual restaurant until February 20, 2020. After that, their gatherings were moved online.

One of the members learned through her husband, a doctor, that the state's health department had free vaccine doses but needed help getting them out of vials and into arms.

On January 3, 2021, the group opened a pop-up clinic and by January 23<sup>rd</sup> had administered 2,417 vaccine doses. The shots are administered by medical personnel but the members of the club handle everything else from managing the stock of vaccines to serving as greeters.

One of the book club members said the following, “After months of hunkering down and feeling helpless, we welcomed a chance to actively help end this nightmare.” [WP 1/27/21]

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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 or watching that you think WW readers might like?

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Rock Me on the Water:  
1974 - The Year Los Angeles Transformed  
Movies, Music, Television and Politics  
by Ronald Brownstein

In this exceptional cultural history, *Atlantic* Senior Editor Ronald Brownstein—“one of America's best political journalists (*The Economist*)—tells the kaleidoscopic story of one monumental year that marked the city of Los Angeles’ creative peak, a glittering moment when popular culture was ahead of politics in predicting what America would become.

Los Angeles in 1974 exerted more influence over popular culture than any other city in America. Los Angeles that year, in fact, dominated popular culture more than it ever had before, or would again. Working in film, recording, and television studios around Sunset Boulevard, living in Brentwood and Beverly Hills or amid the flickering lights of the Hollywood Hills, a cluster of transformative talents produced an explosion in popular culture which reflected the demographic, social, and cultural realities of a changing America. At a time when Richard Nixon won two presidential elections with a message of backlash against the social changes unleashed by the sixties, popular culture was ahead of politics in predicting what America would become. The early 1970s in Los Angeles was the time and the place where conservatives definitively lost the battle to control popular culture.

*Rock Me on the Water* traces the confluence of movies, music, television, and politics in Los Angeles month by month through that transformative, magical year. Ronald Brownstein reveals how 1974 represented a confrontation between a massive younger generation intent on change, and a political order rooted in the status quo. Today, we are again witnessing a generational cultural divide. Brownstein shows how the voices resistant to change may win the political battle for a time, but they cannot hold back the future.

EVERY DAY IS A GIFT,  
By Tammy Duckworth,  
Soldier, Senator, Mother

Tammy Duckworth takes readers through the amazing—and amazingly true—stories from her incomparable life. In November of 2004, an Iraqi RPG blew through the cockpit of Tammy Duckworth's U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter. The explosion, which destroyed her legs and mangled her right arm, was a turning point in her life. But as Duckworth shows in *EVERY DAY IS A GIFT*, that moment was just one in a lifetime of extraordinary turns.

The biracial daughter of an American father and a Thai-Chinese mother, Duckworth faced discrimination, poverty, and the horrors of war—all before the

age of 16. As a child, she dodged bullets as her family fled war-torn Phnom Penh. As a teenager, she sold roses by the side of the road to save her family from hunger and homelessness in Hawaii. Through these experiences, she developed a fierce resilience that would prove invaluable in the years to come.

Duckworth joined the Army, becoming one of a handful of female helicopter pilots at the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She served eight months in Iraq before an insurgent's RPG shot down her helicopter, an attack that took her legs—and nearly took her life. She then spent thirteen months recovering at Walter Reed, learning to walk again on prosthetic legs and planning her return to the cockpit. But Duckworth found a new mission after meeting her state's senators, Barack Obama and Dick Durbin. After winning two terms as a U.S. Representative, she won election to the U.S. Senate in 2016. And she and her husband Bryan fulfilled another dream when she gave birth to two daughters, becoming the first sitting senator to give birth.

From childhood to motherhood and beyond, *EVERY DAY IS A GIFT* is the remarkable story of one of America's most dedicated public servants.

### **The Politics Industry** **Katherine M. Gehl & Michael E. Porter**

The truth is, the American political system is working *exactly* how it is designed to work, and it isn't designed or optimized today to work for us—for ordinary citizens.

Most people believe that our political system is a public institution with high-minded principles and impartial rules derived from the Constitution. In reality, it has become a private industry dominated by a textbook duopoly—the Democrats and the Republicans—and plagued and perverted by unhealthy competition between the players. Tragically, it has therefore become incapable of delivering solutions to America's key economic and social challenges. In fact, there's virtually no connection between our political leaders solving problems and getting reelected.

In *The Politics Industry*, business leader and path-breaking political innovator Katherine Gehl and world-renowned business strategist Michael Porter take a radical new approach. They ingeniously apply the tools of business analysis—and Porter's distinctive Five Forces framework—to show how the political system functions just as every other competitive industry does, and how the duopoly has led to the devastating outcomes we see today.

Using this competition lens, Gehl and Porter identify the most powerful lever for change—a strategy comprised of a clear set of choices in two key areas: how our elections work and how we make our laws. Their bracing assessment and practical recommendations cut through the endless debate about various proposed fixes, such as term limits and campaign finance reform. The result: true political innovation.

*The Politics Industry* is an original and completely nonpartisan guide that will open your eyes to the true dynamics and profound challenges of the American political system and provide real solutions for reshaping the system for the benefit of all.

*Mike*

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