

*Mike Berman's*

# WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 193

August 14, 2021

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Washington, DC

\*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**

35% of registered voters say the country is headed in the right direction.  
54% of registered voters say the country is on the wrong track.

	<u>Right track</u>	<u>Wrong track</u>
Democrats	61%	27%
Republicans	13%	81%
Independents	25%	60%

[Econ/Yougov 8/3/21]

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Americans were more pessimistic (55%) than optimistic (45%) toward the end of July 2021. This was a big change since the end of April when Americans were more optimistic (64%) than pessimistic (36%). [ABC News/Ipsos Poll – based on the Knowledge Panel]

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There are about 4 million married Americans ages 18 and over who live apart from their spouses, up from 2.7 million in 2000. This does not include unmarried couples who are dealing with distance. [Axios What’s Next 7/27/21]

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56% of Americans think that major technology companies should face more government regulation and 68% believe that these firms have too much power.

37% of U.S. adults say it would be “mostly a good thing” if the government were to take steps to reduce the size of major technology companies. 29% say it would be “mostly a bad thing”. 31% do not think it would make much of a difference.

Interestingly, 44% of those who are Conservative Rep/Lean Rep and 48% of Liberal Dem/Lean Dem think it would be mostly a good thing if the government were to take steps to reduce the size of major technology companies. [PEW 7/20/21]

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49% of Americans including, 58% of Republicans. 51% of Democrats and 36% of Independents, 57% of men, and 42% of women, believe that the United States dealt with COVID better than other countries. [Winning the Issues 7/21/21]

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How much confidence do Americans have in each of the following institutions that are a part of American Society? The list below is the percentage of Americans who have a great deal/quite a lot of confidence in each of these institutions.

	All <u>Adults</u>	White <u>Adults</u>	Black <u>Adults</u>	Hispanic <u>Adults</u>
Small business	70%	74%	55%	56%
The military	69%	73	57	63
The police	51%	56	27	49
The medical system	44%	45	42	44
The presidency	38%	35	46	46
The church or organized religion	37%	37	35	43
The U.S. Supreme Court	36%	35	24	47
Banks	33%	31	35	44
The public schools	32%	28	28	50
Large Technology Companies	29%	24	25	43
Organized Labor	28%	24	28	39
Newspapers	21%	21	24	24
Criminal Justice System	20%	17	11	35
Big Business	18%	14	19	28
Television News	16%	13	28	21
Congress	12%	6	15	31

[Gallup 6/1-7/5/21]

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Gun owners and non-owners differ over most gun policies with notable exceptions.

	All <u>Adults</u>	Gun <u>owners</u>	Non-gun <u>owners</u>
Preventing people with mental illness from purchasing guns	87%	87%	88%
Making private gun sales and gun	81	72	87

show sales subject to background checks			
Creating federal government database to track gun sales	66	46	77
Banning high-capacity magazines that hold more than 10 rounds	64	40	74
Banning assault-style weapons	63	37	74
Allowing people to carry concealed guns in more places	43	70	30
Allowing teachers and school officials to carry guns in K-12 schools	43	63	33
Shortening waiting period for people who want to buy guns legally	35	49	28
Allowing people to carry concealed weapons with a permit	20	35	13

Three-in-ten U.S. adults say they own a gun.

	Personally <u>own gun</u>	Don't own gun but <u>someone in household does</u>
All adults	30%	11%
Men	39	4
Women	22	16
White	36	11
Black	24	13
Hispanic	18	8
Asian	10	10
Ages 18-29	18	17
30-49	32	9
50-64	33	9
65+	32	10
Urban	20	9
Suburban	29	11
Rural	41	11
Rep/Lean Rep	44	10
Dem/Lean Dem	20	11

[PEW 8/4/21]

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## Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for July 2021 is 5.4%. That unemployment rate is lower than the 5.9% in June and substantially less than the 10.5% unemployment rate of July 2020.

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 in July was 9.2%, down from 9.8% in June and substantially less than 16.8% a year earlier.

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is 61.6%, down from 61.7% in June 2021.

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### The Demographics of Unemployment for July 2021

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

Women –4.5% (down from last month)

Men –4.9% (down from last month)

#### Unemployment by Race

White – 4.8% (down from last month)

Black – 8.2% (down from last month)

Hispanic – 6.6% (down from last month)

Asian –5.3% (down from last month)

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

Less than high school –9.5% (down from last month)

High School –6.3% (down from last month)

Some college –5.0% (down from last month)

Bachelor's Degree or higher – 3.1% (down from last month)

In June, 33 states had unemployment rates below the national average of 5.9%. 18 states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, had unemployment rates that were above the national average. One state had an unemployment rate that was the same as the national average.

The state with the highest unemployment rate in June was Puerto Rico at 8.1%. [BLS 6/21]

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40% of employed adults said they would prefer working 4 days per week for at least 10 hours per day. 35% of working Americans said they would rather stick to a traditional five-day workweek consisting of 8-hour days. [Morning Consult 7/13/21]

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### **This and That**

The following are the percentage of adults who recently sent money to another person electronically using the listed payment app.

PayPal – 26%

Venmo – 16%

Cash App – 16%

Zelle – 16%

Amazon Pay – 10%

Apple Cash – 8%

Google Pay – 6%

Facebook Pay – 4%

[Washington Post 7/25/21]

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Political parties traditionally kick their defeated presidential nominees to the curb as they look to the next election cycle. Especially a defeated one-term president e.g., George H.W. Bush. John Kerry, Mitt Romney, and Hillary Clinton all became afterthoughts after their election loss.

But that has not been the case with Donald Trump, who so much of the Republican party continues to embrace, defend, and idolize. [Meet the Press: First Read, NBC news. 7/27/21]

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As of July 21, 2021, 37 Vice Presidents of the United States had cast a total of 276 tie breaking votes in the U.S. Senate. Vice President Harris has cast 8 tie breaking votes so far. This makes her eleventh on the list of Vice Presidents who have cast the most tie breaking votes.

The most tie breaking votes were cast by John C. Calhoun who cast 31 tie breaking votes. Three other Vice Presidents cast 8 tie breaking votes during their tenure, Albin Barkley, Richard Nixon, and Dick Cheney. Harris's predecessor, Mike Pence, cast 13 tie breaking votes during his tenure.

12 Vice Presidents did not cast a single tie breaking vote. Four Vice Presidents cast a single tie breaking vote...Wilson, Hobart, Truman, and Mondale.

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The American Association for Public Opinion Research did a study in which it found that "surveys overstated the margin between President Biden and former president Donald Trump by 3.9 points in the national popular vote and 4.3% in state polls." The report goes on to say, "Most pre-election polls lack the precision necessary to predict the outcome of semi-close contests." [WP 7/19/21]

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Jack Martin of the Martin+Crumpton Group produces a periodic publication called "Perspectives." I find the current issue dated August 4<sup>th</sup> to be particularly on point. Each of the following points is based on recent public polling.

How concerned are you, if at all, about the coronavirus or Covid-19 outbreak?

Concerned 68.69%  
Not concerned 31.31%

Share of groups who said they believe the economy will get "much" or "somewhat" worse over the next year:

61% of Republicans  
17% of Democrats  
38% of Independents

Who, among the unvaccinated, is likely or unlikely get a Covid-19 vaccine?

Likely – 33% of Democrats and 21% of Republicans  
Not very likely - 19% of Democrats and 30% of Republicans  
Not at all likely – 12% of Democrats and 45% of Republicans

Do you strongly approve of government vaccine mandates?

In April/May:	In June/July:
81% of Democrats	84% of Democrats
42% of Republicans	45% of Republicans

[Perspectives 8/3/21]

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### **Odds and Ends**

42% of Americans say they personally know someone who is transgender and about 26% say they know someone who prefers to use gender neutral pronouns such as “they” instead of “he” or “she”.

50% of Americans say they would feel very or somewhat comfortable using a gender-neutral pronouns if asked to do so. 48% say they would feel very or somewhat uncomfortable doing so. Not surprisingly, age is a big driver of whether a person is comfortable or uncomfortable.

Those who are comfortable:

- 61% of those age 18-29
- 53% of those age 30-49
- 46% of those age 50-64
- 41% of those age 65+
- 31% of those who are Rep/Lean Rep
- 67% of those who are Dem/Lean Dem

56% believe that whether someone is a man or woman is determined by the sex they were assigned at birth, with 41% saying that a person’s gender can be different from the sex assigned at birth. [PEW Research 7/27/21]

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Since 2007, The Supreme Court of the United States has released opinions in 1062 cases. It reversed a lower court decision 751 times (70.7%) while affirming lower court decisions 303 times (28.5%).

During its most recent term, SCOTUS issued opinions in 69 cases. It reversed 55 lower court decisions (79.7%) and affirmed 14. 16 of the of the cases this term originated in the 9<sup>th</sup> circuit. 15 of those cases were reversed.

Since 2007 the 9<sup>th</sup> circuit has had 164 cases reversed and 43 cases affirmed. That is the most in both categories of any other circuit court. [SCOTUS 7/16/21]

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The estimated number of drug overdose deaths reached 93,331 in 2020. More than 900,000 people have died of overdoses since the U.S. drug epidemic began in about 1999. Opioids continued to drive the death toll as they have for years; 69,710 deaths in 2020, up from 50,963 in 2019. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – WP 7/15/21]

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The following percentages of U.S. adults get news from:  
Facebook – 36%; YouTube - 23%; Twitter -15%; Instagram -11%; Reddit - 6%;  
Snap Chat - 4%; LinkedIn - 4%; TikTok - 3%; What’s App – 3%; Tumbler – 1%;  
Twitch – 1%. [PEW 8/3-9/7/21]

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There will be an estimated 2.5 million weddings in 2022, which is the most the United States has seen since 1984. There were about 2.1 million weddings per year before the pandemic and just 1.2 million weddings in 2020, due to cancellations. [Wedding Report, a market research firm]

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### In Memorium

Albert Eisele

Born – June 28, 1936

Died – June 29, 2021

Funeral Service – Saturday, September 11, 2021

10:30 a.m.

Holy Trinity Catholic Church

3513 N Street NW

Washington, DC 20007

Reception to follow at the National Press Club

529 14<sup>th</sup> St NW

I don’t recall when Al and I met. I assume it was when he came to Washington as a correspondent for the Ridder newspaper chain, which he joined following the start of his career at the St Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch.

Regardless of when we met, I got to know Al particularly well when he signed up to be Vice President Mondale’s Press Secretary and I was Mondale’s

Counsel and Deputy Chief of Staff. There is no way to measure the number of hours we interacted with each other over the next four years.

We were in touch thereafter but never as frequently as during the four years in the VP office.

In 1981, Al helped found the nonpartisan Center for National Policy.

From 1983 to 1989, he served as assistant to the CEO of Control Data Corp.

In 1989 he founded Cornerstone Associates, an international consulting firm that helped bring former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to Minnesota in 1990.

In 1972, Al published a dual biography of Humphrey and McCarthy entitled, “Almost to the Presidency.”

In 1994 he helped to start The Hill newspaper, a venture he undertook with former New York Times reporter Martin Tolchin and publisher Jerry Finkelstein. He became the editor of The Hill, which became known as a must-read for Washington Insiders. As a founding editor of The Hill, he frequently provided political commentary on C-SPAN and other media outlets.

When he retired Al told the Hill, “Journalism is still about people more than it is about process and policy. In Washington, it is about the interaction, about how people vie for power, seek power, misuse power, accumulate power and sometimes lose power, and the reluctant letting go of power.”

Bob Cusack, The Hill’s editor in chief, said, “Al was an institution at The Hill.” “I can’t tell you how many lawmakers asked about him over the years. He was a mentor to so many journalists and one of the nicest people I’ve ever met. We will all miss, Al.”

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## QUOTES

“There are known knowns – there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns – that is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don’t know we don’t know.”

Donald Rumsfeld in 2002 when talking about Saddam Hussein, as reported to WW by Joel Jankowsky

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“We cannot improve on the system of government handed down to us by the founders of the Republic. There is no way to improve upon that. But what we can do is to find new ways to implement that system and realize our destiny.”

Barbara Jordan

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“No intelligent idea can gain general acceptance unless some stupidity is mixed in with it.”

Fernando Pessoa

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“True patriotism springs from a belief in the dignity of the individual, freedom, and equality not only for Americans but for all people on earth, universal brotherhood and good will, and a constant striving toward the principles and ideals on which this country was founded.”

Eleanor Roosevelt’s Book of Common-Sense Etiquette

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“You are the ultimate knuckleheads.”

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy

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“We have two ears and one mouth... Therefore we should spend twice as much time listening as talking. “

Bob Dole,

Former Senate Majority Leader and Former Republican Presidential Nominee

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### **Some questions**

Why do we say “after dark” when it really is “after light”?

Why doesn’t glue stick to the inside of the bottle?

If all the world’s a stage, where is the audience sitting?

Why do we put suits in garment bags and garments in a suitcase?

How come abbreviated is such a long word?

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## **Riddles**

- 1) Which of the following words don't belong in the group and why?  
CORSET, COSTER, SECTOR, ESCORT, COURTS
- 2) When John was six years old, he hammered a nail into his favorite tree to mark his height. Ten years later at age sixteen, John returned to see how much higher the nail was. If the tree grew by five centimeters each year how much higher would the nail be?
- 3) Lily is a Lilypad in a small pond. Lily doubles her size each day. On the 20<sup>th</sup> day she covers the whole pond. On what day was Lily half the size of the pond?
- 4) What common English verb becomes its own past tense by rearranging its letters?
- 5) When asked how old she was, Suzie replied, "In two years I will be twice as old as I was five years ago." How old is she?
- 6) Lighter than what I am made of. More of me is hidden than is seen. What am I?
- 7) Different lights do make me strange, thus into different sizes. I will change. What am I?

Answers can be found on page 12

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## **President Biden**

Women in the Biden White House earn 99 cents for every \$1 earned by men.

On average, women earn \$93,752 in the Biden White House while men earn \$94,639. This compares to the Obama White House when women earned between 84 and 89 cents for each \$1 earned by a man. In 2020 women in the Trump White House earned 69 cents for every \$1 earned by a man. [The 19<sup>th</sup> 7/1/21]

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(The following is based on registered voters unless indicated otherwise.)

President Biden’s job approval ratings

<u>Date</u>	<u>NBC</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN</u>	<u>FOX</u>	<u>QUINNIPIAC</u>
AUG’21					47/44
JULY’21	<u>CNBC</u>	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
JULY,21	48/45A				
JUNE’21	xxx	xxx	xxx	56/43	xxx
MAY’21	xxx	xxx	xxx	54/42	49/41
APR’21	51/43	52/42	52/45	54/43	48/42

<u>Date</u>	<u>AP-NORC</u>	<u>ECON/YOUGOV</u>	<u>POL/MORNCON</u>
AUG’21		49/44	52/46
JULY’21	59/41	49/45	52/45
JULY’21	xxx	50/43	52/44
JUNE’21	55/44	52/44	53/44
	xxx	51/43	52/43
MAY’21	xxx	52/42	55/41
APR’21	63/36 A	xxx	xxx

As of August 5, the following is Biden’s approval rating based on Real Clear Politics:

	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
Over all	50.2	43.9%
On the economy	51.3%	45.0%
On foreign policy	48.3%	44.0%

Gallup now does monthly or semi-monthly surveys of all adults. WW will include a periodic polling summary—Registered and Likely Voters—by FiveThirtyEight.

	Gallup (All Adults)		FiveThirtyEight (Reg/Likely voters)	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
7/21/21	50%	45%	52.1%	42.6%
6/18/21	56%	42%	51.8%	42.4%
5/18/21	54%	40%	52.7%	40.7%
4/21/21	57%	40%	53.4%	40.1%

3/15/21	54%	42%	53.8%	40.2%
2/18/21	56%	40%	54.4%	37.8%

\* \* \* \* \*

In an August 6<sup>th</sup> piece by Amy Walter, Publisher and Editor-in Chief of the Cook Political Report, Walter points out that Biden’s job approval has dropped anywhere from 3 to 10 points since April. She further reports that Americans feel less confident about Biden’s handling of the economy. [CookPoliticalReport]

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### **Answers to Riddles**

- 1) Courts. All of the others are anagrams of each other.
- 2) The nail would be at the same height since trees grow at their tops.
- 3) Day 19, it’s not 10 because on day 20 she doubled from day 19, so 19 must be half the size of the pond.
- 4) Eat and Ate
- 5) She’s 12.
- 6) An iceberg
- 7) I am the pupil of an eye.

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### **Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date**

President Biden has been able to affect the federal judiciary early.

As of August 7, 2021, 9 judges nominated by Biden have been confirmed, 4 to the Courts of Appeals, and 5 to the District Courts.

There are currently an additional 76 vacancies in Article III courts; 6 in the U.S. Courts of Appeals, 71 in the U.S. District Courts, and 2 in the in the U.S. Courts of International Trade.

President Biden has nominated an additional 24 individuals, 18 to the district and 6 to the circuit courts.

The chart below reflects the number of Article III court judges appointed by every U.S. president since Jimmy Carter.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supreme Ct</u>	<u>Appeals Ct</u>	<u>District Ct</u>	<u>Int'l Trade</u>
Biden – 7 months	9	0	4	5	
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 by Joe Biden]

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### **2022 Election**

It is a little early to predict the outcome of the 2022 election. Control of both the Senate and the House are in play. As it stands today, the Democrats could lose both.

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### **The 117<sup>th</sup> Congress Congress**

Approval of the Congress was growing after the election. Since mid-May it has dropped but seems to be starting upward again.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 8/3/21	31.4%	59.6%
Real Clear Pol. 6/15/21	28.8%	60.5%
Real Clear Pol. 5/18/21	35%	56.3%
Real Clear Pol. 5/4/21	36.3%	55.5%
Real Clear Pol. 4/6/21	34.3%	57.0%
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%

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## THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Washington Watch uses the Cook Political Report for its report on elections in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Currently:  
Democrats - 221 seats  
Republicans - 212 seats  
Vacancies - 2 seats (FL-20, OH-15)

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Newt Gingrich resigned from the House in November 1998 but at least one of his many actions continues to have impact on the House of Representatives.

In the good old days, large numbers of members of the House lived in the District of Columbia area. Gingrich declared that folks should be living back in their districts and that changed the connection many of the members of the House had with each other. Among other things, their children no longer went to school with each other. This affected how the members dealt with each other.

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What might the future hold for...

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of U.S. House of Representatives  
New York's 14<sup>th</sup> district

First elected at age 29, Ocasio-Cortez is the youngest woman ever elected to the House of Representatives. She was first elected in the 2018 election by defeating incumbent Joe Crowley the Democratic Caucus chair in the Democratic primary by a vote of 15,897 to 11,761. She easily won the general election with 78% of the vote.

By January 2020, Ocasio-Cortez had created a political action committee called Courage to Change, designed to support progressives running for office.

She was re-elected in 2020, capturing 69% of the vote in the general election.

In February 2021, Ocasio-Cortez helped raise money to give food, water and shelter to Texans affected by the power crisis. She raised \$2 million on her first

day and \$5 million by the end of the third week of February. She also traveled to Houston to help volunteers with recovery.

From the date she was sworn in, Ocasio-Cortez has generated more media attention than many of the candidates running for president in 2020.

She formally nominated Senator Bernie Sanders at the Democratic National Convention.

Ocasio-Cortez is a member of the Financial Services committee and of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

WW asked a number of knowledgeable people, whether in their experience, had any other member of the House gained so much public prominence having served for only one session plus 7 months.

I received the following from someone who WW thinks is one of the most expert about the House. “I’m unaware of a comparable scenario.” [WW]

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### **THE SENATE**

[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 Murray	Kennedy MO – open Hoeven Lankford Scott Thune Lee
Likely	0	2 Rubio Ohio - open
Lean	4 Kelly Warnock Hassan Cortez Masto	1 Johnson
Toss Up	0	2 NC - open PA – open

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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 (Announced she will not run if Trump runs)  
 Mike Pompeo – Former Secretary of State  
 Larry Hogan – Governor of Maryland  
 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

Chris Christie – Former Governor New Jersey

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

Allyson Felix, by winning her 11<sup>th</sup> Olympic medal, has now received more Olympic medals than any other track and field athlete in history, male or female. The previous holder of this record was Carl Lewis, the sprinting icon who hit the 10-medal level in 1996. [WP 8/7/21]

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If American women were a country, they would have the fifth highest medal total. [JB]

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On Tuesday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, sportscasting history was made when for the first time, an all-female team provided coverage of a major league baseball game. [NPR 7/20/21]

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Women make up a little more than one-third of the one million professionally active physicians in the United States according to March 2019 data from the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The percentage of women who are active physicians in the U.S. has more than doubled in the last 20 years. In 2000, 23.1% of physicians were women. By 2007 that number had grown to 28.3% and by 2019 it had grown to 36.3% of active physicians. [www.aamc.org]

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Ur Mendoza Jaddou is the first female to lead the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. [Public Policy Law 360 7/30/21]

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Daisy Veerasingham is the new president and CEO of The Associated Press. She is the first woman, first person of color, and first international citizen to lead the organization. [Morning Media Newsfeed 8/4/21]

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## WW Recommends Books & Other Things

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

Zero Fail:  
The Rise and Fall of the Secret Service  
By Carol Leonnig

The first definitive account of the rise and fall of the Secret Service, from the Kennedy assassination to the alarming mismanagement of the Obama and Trump years, right up to the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6—by the Pulitzer Prize winner and #1 *New York Times* bestselling co-author of *A Very Stable Genius* and *I Alone Can Fix It*

Carol Leonnig has been reporting on the Secret Service for *The Washington Post* for most of the last decade, bringing to light the secrets, scandals, and shortcomings that plague the agency today—from a toxic work culture to dangerously outdated equipment to the deep resentment within the ranks at key agency leaders, who put protecting the agency's once-hallowed image before fixing its flaws. But the Secret Service wasn't always so troubled.

The Secret Service was born in 1865, in the wake of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, but its story begins in earnest in 1963, with the death of John F. Kennedy. Shocked into reform by its failure to protect the president on that fateful day in Dallas, this once-sleepy agency was radically transformed into an elite, highly trained unit that would redeem itself several times, most famously in 1981 by thwarting an assassination attempt against Ronald Reagan. But this reputation for courage and excellence would not last forever. By Barack Obama's presidency, the once-proud Secret Service was running on fumes and beset by mistakes and alarming lapses in judgment: break-ins at the White House, an armed gunman firing into the windows of the residence while confused agents stood by, and a massive prostitution scandal among agents in Cartagena, to name just a few. With Donald Trump's arrival, a series of promised reforms were cast aside, as a president disdainful of public service instead abused the Secret Service to rack up political and personal gains.

To explore these problems in the ranks, Leonnig interviewed dozens of current and former agents, government officials, and whistleblowers who put their jobs on the line to speak out about a hobbled agency that's in desperate need of reform. "I will be forever grateful to them for risking their careers," she writes, "not because they wanted to share tantalizing gossip about presidents and their families, but because they know that the Service is broken and needs fixing. By telling their story, they hope to revive the Service they love."

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## **Restaurants**

Since 1998 when WW began including writeups of restaurants that WW "liked", WW has written about 398 restaurants in 8 countries, 21 states + DC, 57 cities, National Airport, and Amtrak.

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Recently a WW reader sent me a note asking what cooked food I would order for pure enjoyment. The answer is easy – Fried Calamari. It is sometimes called Crispy Calamari Fritti (The Palm); Fried Calamari (Old Anglers Inn); Pan Fried Calamari (Capital Grille – Chevy Chase) Calamari Fritti (I Ricchi); Cornmeal crusted Calamarie (Matisse).

1310 Kitchen & Bar also offers Grilled Calamari – however that is not the same as various "meal covered calamari before cooking".

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The Old Angler's Inn  
10801 Macarthur Blvd  
Potomac, Maryland 20854  
301-365- 2425

Rita and Bob and Debbie and I had dinner at the Inn, outside, on a weekday night. Rita made the reservation. As we walked in from the parking area, there were a number of people waiting in line to be seated, but our 6:30 p.m. reservation was immediately honored.

The Inn has been in operation since 1860 and for the last sixty-three years has been under the stewardship of the Reges family. The current owner is Mark Reges.

Rita ordered the Beet Salad – Goat Cheese, Arugula, Walnut, Mint, Balsamic-Fig dressing along with Seared Amish Chicken – Carrot puree, Roasted mixed potatoes with spring herbs and Burrata.

Debbie ordered Warm Ahi Tuna Nicoise-Style Salad – Nicoise Olives, Green Beans, Grape Tomatoes, Artichoke, Finger Potato, Boiled eggs, Wasabi Sauce.

Bob ordered Gazpacho and Pan Seared Rockfish – Heirloom Tomato, Olive Oil, Pickled Red Onion, Sea Salt, Balsamic Glaze.

I started with the Beet Salad and then followed with the OAI Crab Cake Sandwich – Toasted Brioche Bun, House-made Tartare Sauce, Lettuce, Tomato, onion, and French Fries.

Early on when ordering we ordered Fried Calamari for the table. But it was delayed even though we asked our server and others for it a couple of times. At one point the owner stopped by and we explained the delay, so he canceled the charge.

For dessert, Rita, Debbie, and I ordered espresso ice cream.

The Inn is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. On the other five days of the week, formal dining is served from 12:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. So-called casual dining in what is called the Beer Garden, is available on Friday from 3 – 9 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 12-9 p.m.

In the so-called Beer Garden, offerings include various burgers and sandwiches, onion soup, Caesar salad and fries.

The men's room is inside the regular restaurant up a small flight of stairs across from the bar. The walls and floor are covered with large tiles with the walls lighter than the floor. There is a small commode room with appropriate bars and handles. Over the commode is a sign that says, "You flush it you fish it." SENSITIVE PLUMBING: "Don't flush ANY feminine hygiene products, paper towels, wipes, tissues, your hopes and dreams, and our money." [WW has not seen anything quite like this sign in any of the near 400 restaurants that have been described in the WW].

There is a white ceramic wall hanging urinal just outside the commode room followed by two free standing white ceramic wash basins fronted by wall hanging Mirrors. There is another urinal just past the wash basins.

Guests are limited to an hour and a half at their table after having been seated. There is a \$5 surcharge for sanitation and outdoor cleaning due to Covid-19.

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La Bise  
800 Connecticut Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
202-463-8700

While La Bise has replaced the Oval Room, one is reminded of the latter if one gets a phone call from Bise to confirm your reservation. If incoming telephone calls are identified with a notice on your TV set, the call from La Bise says the call is from the Oval Room.

La Bise is described as a modern French brasserie.

There is a large patio, which increases the total seating of the restaurant weather permitting. On the night we were there, only two patio tables were occupied tables.

Debbie, Nathan, and I went to La Bise for the first time on a Wednesday night.

As you enter the restaurant there is a greeter station straight ahead. To the right there is a room that seats up to 35 people at various tables. To the left of the greeters there is a bar at which to 8 people can enjoy dinner or a drink as they choose.

Just past the bar is an entry way to the kitchen and to the restrooms. Then you come to the second dining room that seats up to 60 people.

This is the room in which Debbie, Nathan, and I were seated at a table for four.

As you enter this room, to the right is a padded multi-colored bench that stretches the length of the wall and continues along the next wall. This bench and the chairs facing it can seat up to 18 people.

In the center of the room is a single round table that seat up to 6 people. There are a couple of booths that will seat up to 4 people. At one of the booths were seated two adults and their young children.

Debbie ordered Butter-Poached Maine Lobster – Summer corn, celery, preserved lemon, sauce Americaine; followed by Heirloom Tomato Tart – Moon Valley Farm tomatoes, burrata, herbed biscuit, basil pesto. For dessert she ordered Coconut Souffle – Rum Crème Anglaise.

Nathan started with Chilled Melon Soup – Bayonne ham, local cucumber, melon, basil followed by Steak Frites – House made French fries, local greens, roasted garlic butter, sauce bearnaise. For dessert he ordered Corn Custard – Vanilla-blueberry ice cream, puffed Sorghum, blueberry.

I started with the Poached Maine Lobster, followed by Amish Chicken – Chanterelle mushrooms, confit shallot, Croquette (with a bone in) sauce vin jaune. For dessert I ordered Earl Grey Chocolate Tart – Puffed rice, peaches, Chantilly cream.

The portions of each dish were just right, nothing was left uneaten by any of us.

Our server was Janea who was friendly and appropriately attentive. Dina is one of the people who works the floor, not as a server but weighing in where needed. Seeing all the notes I was making Dina asked what they were all about. I simply smiled.

I thought I recognized the older gentleman who appeared to be the manager and sommelier. I asked him for a list of places at which he had worked, and he mentioned a number of restaurants at which I had eaten.

If there is one detraction, the restaurant is quite noisy.

*Mike*

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