

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 200

May 21, 2022

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

Note: I have no record as to when the first issue of the Washington Watch was published. It was then called the Kirkpatrick and Lockhart’s Washington Watch, named after the law firm of which I was a part at the time. For some reason, I retained a copy of issue #4. It was published on July 27, 1987.

Beginning in 1998, WW began writing about restaurants. These are not typical restaurant reviews because they describe the food eaten but do not comment on the quality of the food. But if the food is not good, the restaurant is not reviewed. And whenever possible they include a review of the restrooms.

Through this current issue, #200, 407 restaurants will have been reviewed in 57 cities (plus 1 airport and 1 railway station), 21 states, and 7 countries.

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State of the Nation

27% of registered voters say the country is headed in the right direction.
62% of registered voters say the country is on the wrong track.

| | <u>Right track</u> | <u>Wrong track</u> |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Male | 30% | 60% |
| Female | 22% | 63% |
| Democrats | 50% | 37% |
| Republicans | 10% | 86% |
| Independents | 18% | 71% |
| Urban | 37% | 52% |
| Suburban | 22% | 62% |
| Rural | 19% | 71% |

[Econ/YouGov 5/3/22]

16% of registered voters say the country is headed in the right direction.
75% of registered voters say the country is on the wrong track. [NBCNews survey, 5/10/22]

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The length of time that it took for the current Supreme Court Justices and Ketanji Brown Jackson (who will be seated after the court adjourns for the year) to

be confirmed, from the day they were nominated by the president to the day they were confirmed by the U.S. Senate, ranged from 99 days to 27 days. We have no data on the number of hours of questioning for Kagan and Sotomayor.

| | <u>Nomination to Confirmation</u> | <u>Hours spent being questioned during Senate Judiciary hear</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Clarence Thomas | 99 days | 25 hours |
| Brett Kavanaugh | 88 days | 48 hours |
| Elena Kagan | 87 days | ----- |
| Samuel Alito | 82 days | 18 hours |
| Stephen Breyer | 73 days | 20 hours |
| Sonia Sotomayor | 66 days | ---- |
| Neil Gorsuch | 65 days | 20 hours |
| John Roberts | 39 days | 20 hours |
| Ketanji Jackson | 39 days | 22 hours |
| Amy Coney Barrett | 27 days | 20 hours |

[Wikipedia.org 4/8/22]

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Americans cumulatively owe about \$1.75 trillion in student loans. Federal loans account for 93% of that total. In 2010 Americans overwhelmingly (65%) believed that parents and students should pay for college. However, starting in 2015 the public was evenly divided at 50%. Over time, a greater percentage of Americans have supported a greater role for government. [Brookings 4/14/22]

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In 2019 the murder rate in the United States was 5 murders per 100,000 people. By 2021 that number has grown to an estimated 6.9 murders per 100,000 people. [NYT 4/17/22]

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33% of American kids living in lower income households do not have access to a family computer as compared to only 6% of those living in high income families.

Additionally, 40% of American kids living in lower income households do not have access to a tablet as opposed to 19% of kids living in high income households. (Lower income <\$35,000; Higher income > \$100,000.) [Statista 4/14/22]

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Drug overdose deaths in the United States reached the highest point ever recorded in the year ending in November 2021 – 106, 850 deaths. Deaths are up nearly 50% per year since the start of the Covid pandemic. [NYT 4/24/22]

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629,898 abortions in 2019 in the United States were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [CDC 11/26/21]

Medication abortions rose to more than 54% of U.S. abortions in 2020. [WP 5/5/22]

By 51% to 31%, Americans do not want Roe v Wade overturned. [Yahoo/YouGov 5/6/22]

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In 1995, 60% of us said abortion should be legal in all/most cases while 38% said abortion should be illegal in all/most cases. Today those numbers are about the same 60 to 61% and 38 to 37%.

Among those who say abortion should be legal in all/most cases

| | Dem/Lean Dem | Rep/Lean Rep | |
|------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 2007 | 63% | 39% | |
| 2022 | 80% | 38% | [PEW 3/13/22] |

* * * * *

In the most recent NBC News poll (5/10/22) Americans think abortions should be:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Always legal | 37% |
| Legal most of the time | 23% |
| Illegal, with exceptions | 32% |
| Illegal without any exceptions | 5% |
| Not sure | 3% |

65% favor allowing same-sex marriages
20% oppose allowing same-sex marriages

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Between 2019 and 2020, the firearm homicide rate increased about 35%. In 2020, counties with the highest poverty level had firearm homicide rates 4.5 times as high and firearm suicide rates 1.3 times as high as counties with the lowest poverty levels. [CDC 5/11/22]

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In the year 2022, babies of color and babies in families with low income are more likely to have experiences that produce chronic stress. In the United States 50.7% of babies are children of color; 18.6% of babies live in poverty. [Zero to Three 5/3/22]

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A majority of Americans favor the death penalty for people convicted of murder. [NYT 4/16/22]

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Which political party, Democrat or Republican, do you trust to do a better job handling the following issues?

| | <u>Democrats</u> | <u>Republicans</u> |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| The economy | 36 | 50 |
| Equal treatment of racial and ethnic groups | 51 | 31 |
| Crime | 35 | 47 |
| Education and schools | 47 | 39 |
| Equal treatment of groups regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity | 55 | 36 |
| Immigration | 40 | 43 |
| Inflation | 31 | 50 |

[ABC/WP 4/28/22]

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More than 55% of Americans think the United States should do more in support of Ukraine. 76% favor more humanitarian support; 67% favor increasing economic sanctions; 55% favor more military support. On the other hand, 72% oppose direct military action. [ABC/WP 4/28/22]

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About Walter F. Mondale

On May 1, 2022, there was a (much delayed) memorial service for Walter F. Mondale in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Among the speakers was Jon Meacham a prominent historian and presidential biographer. The following is an excerpt from his remarks.

One of Mondale's favorite verses of scripture tells us much. "I have fought the good fight," St. Paul wrote. "I have finished the race; I have kept the faith."

The first part of that chapter from Paul is quoted less often but is worth remembering. "Preach the word," the apostle wrote, "be prepared in season and out of season."

In season and out of season – justice knows no season. Truth knows no season. Freedom knows no season. Fairness knows no season.

Walter Mondale knew that. He lived according to that. And today we salute him for that.

There are children in America today who will not go hungry because of Fritz Mondale. There are black people in America today who can vote, and work and live more freely and fairly because of Fritz Mondale. There are women in America today who see no limit to their dreams because of Fritz Mondale. There are safer cars in America today, rivers of clean water in America today, enclaves of untouched wildlife in America today because of Fritz Mondale.

He never stopped believing in this country. He never stopped fighting for its people. And he never stopped defending democracy.

He never stopped. Nor, in his memory, should we.

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2022 is 3.6%. That unemployment rate is the same as the 3.6% rate of March 2022 and substantially less than the 6.0% unemployment rate of April 2021.

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 April was 7.0% down from 6.9% in March and less than 10.3% a year earlier.

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in April is 62.2%, down from 62.4% in March 2022.

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The Demographics of Unemployment for April 2022

Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women –2.8% (same as last month)

Men –3.1% (same as last month)

Unemployment by Race

White – 3.2% (same as last month)

Black –5.9% (down from last month)

Hispanic – 4.1% (down from last month)

Asian –3.1% (up last month)

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

Less than high school –5.4% (up from last month)

High School –3.8% (down from last month)

Some college –3.1% (up from last month)

Bachelor's Degree or higher – 2.0% (same as last month)

In March 2022, 25 states had unemployment rates below the national average of 3.6%. 25 states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, had unemployment rates that were above the national average. 2 states, Maine and Missouri, had unemployment rates that were the same as the national average.

The state/territory with the highest unemployment rate in February was Puerto Rico at 6.8%.

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This and That

Earth's Population Statistics in Perspective

The population of Earth is around 7.8 billion. To most people that is an overwhelming figure. However, if you condensed 7.8 billion into 100 persons, and then into various percentage statistics, the resulting analysis is relatively much easier to comprehend.

Out of 100

11 are in Europe
5 are in North America
9 are in South America
15 are in Africa
60 are in Asia

49 live in the countryside / 51 live in cities

75 have mobile phones / 25 do not

30 have internet access / 70 do not have the availability to go online

7 received a university education / 93 did not attend college
83 can read/17 are illiterate

33 are Christians/ 22 are Muslims/14 are Hindus/7 are Buddhists
12 are others religions/12 have no religious beliefs

26 live less than 14 years/66 die between 15-64 of age/
8 are over 65 years old

If you have your own home, eat full meals, drink clean water, have a mobile phone, can use the internet, attend college, you are in the minuscule privileged lot. Less than 8%. [Times-Gazette Hillsboro, Ohio]

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“If you don’t know a handful of women who’ve had an abortion, you’re not morally righteous or statistically anomalous; you’re just not the kind of person women trust with their secrets.” Emily Porter, MD

* * * * *

Around a quarter of U.S. adults (23%) use Twitter, according to our early 2021 survey. [Pew Research Center]

Facebook has 23 times the annual revenue of Twitter and nearly two billion daily users to Twitter’s 217 million. [NYT 4/24/22]

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The average American spent 23 minutes per day reading in 2004. In 2019, that number had declined to just 16 minutes per day.

The sale of printed books rose from 580 million in 2012 to 826 million in 2021. [statista.com 4/22/22] [Thanks to Jay Berman.]

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Odds and Ends

In 2016, 9% of marriages involved couples from opposite political parties, according to the Institute for Family Studies; by 2020, that had slid to just 4%. [NYT 5/7/22]

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Here are some ways to practice amazing grace at work:

1. Assume positive intent
2. Just ask
3. When shit happens, shine – and swarm
4. Words matter
5. Say it don’t write it

[Jim at Axios]

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

If you are an average American, in your whole life, you will spend an average of 6 months waiting at red lights.

It's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.

Maine is the only state whose name is just one syllable.

The average person's left hand does 56% of the typing.

The winter of 1932 was so cold that Niagara Falls froze completely solid.

There are 293 ways to make change for a dollar.

If love is blind, why is lingerie so popular?

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Quotes

“You only find out who is swimming naked when the tide goes out.”

Warren Buffett

“The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.”

Dolly Parton

“Not in doing what you like, but in liking what you do is the secret of happiness.”

J.M. Barrie

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”

Albert Einstein

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Quotes by Mother Teresa

“Together we can do great things.”

“Life is a challenge: we must take it.”

“Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”

“If you are discouraged, it is a sign of pride because it shows you trust in your own powers.”

“Life's a song, sing it.”

“Spread the love of God through your life but only use words when necessary.”

“Loneliness is the most terrible form of poverty.”

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President Biden

(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> |
|-------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| MAY’22 | 39/56 | xxx | xxx | xxx | xxx |
| APR’22 | xxx | 42/52 | 41/59 | 45/53 | 40/51 |
| APR’22 | xxx | xxx | xxx | xxx | 35/55 |
| MAR’22 | xxx | xxx | xxx | xxx | 40/54 |
| MAR’22 | 41/54 | xxx | xxx | 45/54 | 38/55 |
| FEB’22 | xxx | 38/57 | 42/57 | xxx | 37/56 |
| JAN’22 | 44/54 | xxx | xxx | 47/52 | 35/54 |
| DEC’21 | xxx | xxx | 48/52 | 47/51 | xxx |
| NOV’21 | xxx | xxx | 45/54 | xxx | xxx |
| NOV’21 | xxx | 38/57 | 48/52 | 44/54 | 38/53 |
| OCT’21 | 45/52 | xxx | xxx | xxx | 40/51 |
| OCT’21 | xxx | xxx | 50/50 | 46/53 | 40/53 |
| SEPT’21 | xxx | xxx | xxx | 50/49 | 44/50 |
| SEPT’21 | XXX | 44/51A | 52/48 | XXX | XXX |
| AUG’21 | 49/48A | xxx | xxx | 53/46 | 47/44 |
| JULY’21 | CNBC | xxx | xxx | xxx | xxx |
| JULY’21 | 48/45A | xxx | xxx | xxx | xxx |

| <u>Date</u> | <u>ECON/YOUGOV</u> | <u>POL/MORNCON</u> |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| MAY’22 | 42/51 | 42/55 |
| APR’22 | 46/50 | 41/55 |
| APR’22 | xxx | 42/55 |
| APR’22 | 43/51 | 45/52 |
| APR’22 | 46/49 | 41/55 |
| MAR’22 | 43/50 | xxx |
| MAR’22 | 45/49 | 42/54 |

| | | |
|---------|-------|-------|
| MAR'22 | 41/53 | 42/55 |
| MAR'22 | 44/49 | 45/51 |
| FEB'22 | 42/53 | 43/53 |
| FEB'22 | 41/51 | 41/56 |
| FEB'22 | 45/49 | xxx |
| JAN'22 | xxx | 43/54 |
| JAN'22 | 41/51 | 42/55 |
| JAN'22 | 42/53 | xxx |
| JAN'22 | 45/51 | 40/56 |
| DEC'21 | 42/53 | 46/51 |
| DEC'21 | xxx | 43/53 |
| NOV'21 | 44/50 | xxx |
| NOV'21 | 43/51 | 44/53 |
| NOV'21 | 45/49 | 46/51 |
| OCT'21 | xxx | 45/52 |
| OCT'21 | 42/51 | 46/51 |
| OCT'21 | 44/49 | 45/52 |
| SEPT'21 | 46/48 | 47/50 |
| AUG'21 | 47/46 | 47/49 |
| AUG'21 | 48/46 | 50/48 |
| AUG'21 | 47/47 | 51/46 |
| AUG'21 | 49/44 | 52/46 |
| JULY'21 | 49/45 | 52/45 |
| JULY'21 | 50/43 | 52/44 |

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As of May 3, 2022, the following is Biden's approval rating based on Real Clear Politics.

| | <u>Approval</u> | <u>Disapproval</u> | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------|
| Over all | 42.5% | 52.7% | 5/5/22 |
| On the economy | 37.0% | 59.1 % | 5/3/22 |
| On foreign policy | 41.0% | 52.3% | 5/3/22 |

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

| <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> |
| 4/19/22 | 41% | 56% | 42.4% | 53.1% |
| 3/18/22 | 42% | 54% | 42.1% | 52.8% |
| 2/17/22 | 41% | 55% | 41.4% | 53.0% |
| 1/16/22 | 40% | 56% | 42.5% | 52.1% |
| 12/16/21 | 43% | 51% | 43.7% | 50.7% |
| 11/16/21 | 42% | 55% | 42.8% | 51.7% |
| 10/19/21 | 42% | 52% | 44.1% | 49.9% |
| 9/17/21 | 43% | 53% | 45.7% | 48.8% |
| 8/17/21 | 49% | 48% | 48.5% | 45.9% |
| 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% |

Using Gallup (all adults) as the marker – Biden’s approval rating has fallen by 16 points in the last year and his disapproval has grown by a similar amount.

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Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date

As of May 1, 2022, the United States Senate has confirmed 60 federal judges nominated by President Biden. One Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 15 judges for the United States Courts of Appeals, and 44 judges for the United States District Courts.

There are currently 5 vacancies on the U.S. Courts of Appeals, 68 vacancies on the U.S. District Courts, and 2 vacancies in the United States Court of International Trade.

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 – 1+ year | 60 | 1 | 15 | 44 | |
| 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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There are roughly 4,000 politically appointed positions in the executive branch and independent agencies, including more than 1,200 that require Senate confirmation.

The Washington Post and the Partnership for Public Service are tracking 799 of those 1200 positions.

- 350 have been confirmed by the Senate
- 157 nominees are being considered by the Senate
- 2 picks are awaiting formal nomination
- 109 positions have no Biden nominee
- 181 appointees are serving in termed positions or were held over from previous administrations [WP 5/2/22]

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The following are the favorability ratings for a variety of political leaders based on the Real Clear Politics averages for 5/3/22.

| | <u>Favorable</u> | <u>Unfavorable</u> |
|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Biden | 43.7 | 51.7 |
| Harris | 42.2 | 52.0 |
| Pelosi | 34.2 | 56.8 |
| McConnell | 25.3 | 56.3 |
| McCarthy | 23.3 | 41.7 |

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2022 Election

In this election:

36 of the 50 states will hold gubernatorial elections.

Currently there are 23 Democratic governors and 27 Republican governors. Democrats are defending 16 governorships while Republicans are defending 20.

34 out of 100 U.S. Senate seats are up for election this year + 2 special elections one in Oklahoma and one in California

Some states will soon have their primary elections to determine each party's nominees for the November general election.

60% of Republicans/Republican-leaning independents back Donald Trump as their leader while 34% prefer a new direction.

53% of Democrats/Democrat leaning independents back Joe Biden as their leader while 38% prefer a new direction. [ABC/WP 4/28/22]

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The 117th Congress

Congress

The current congressional leaders have realized that giving lawmakers the chance to fund projects for their communities back home is actually a great way to get votes for legislation. Below is information about the earmarks in the \$1.5 trillion government spending bill signed by President Biden

There were nearly 5,000 earmarks totaling \$9 billion included in that bill.

- 3,682 earmarks totaling \$5 billion – Democrats
- 1,014 earmarks totaling \$3.4 billion – Republicans
- 266 earmarks totaling \$609 million - Bipartisan

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Approval of the Congress is down roughly 10% from where it was a year ago and disapproval is up a similar amount.

| | <u>Approve</u> | <u>Disapprove</u> |
|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Real Clear Pol. 5/3/22 | 24.2% | 66.0% |
| Real Clear Pol. 3/2/22 | 21.8% | 67.8% |
| Real Clear Pol. 2/1/22 | 21% | 67.2% |
| Real Clear Pol. 12/21/21 | 23% | 65.8% |

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| Real Clear Pol. 11/30/21 | 22.2% | 68.6% |
| Real Clear Pol. 10/12/21 | 25.0% | 65.8% |
| Real Clear Pol. 9/1/21 | 28.5% | 60.3% |
| 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% |

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Americans are split 46% to 46% as to whether they prefer a Congress controlled by Republicans or Democrats. [NBCNews 5/10/22]

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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 – 209 seats
 Vacancies - 5 seats

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As of April 5, 2022, there are currently 48 seats in which House incumbents have announced they are not running for re-election because they are either running for another office or retiring. 18 of those seats are currently held by Republicans and 30 by Democrats.

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The dates have now been set for the special election to fill the seat of Congressman Don Young who, at the time of his death, was the longest serving Republican member of the House of Representatives: June 11 and August 16.

51 people have filed to be on the ballot for the June 11th special election to serve out the balance of this year.

The top four candidates of the June 11th election will face off on August 16, 2022, the primary date for the November general election. For the first time, Alaska will use Ranked Choice Voting this year.

One of the most well-known candidates is Sarah Palin, former governor, and former vice-presidential candidate

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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

Six U.S. Senators are retiring from public office; 1 Democrat and 5 Republicans. None are running for other office.

| | <u>Democrats</u> | <u>Republicans</u> | <u>Independent</u> |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Seats not up in 2022 | 34 | 30 | 2 |
| Safe in 2022 | 9 | 14 | |
| | Padilla | Murkowski | |
| | | AL – open | |
| | Blumenthal | Boozman | |
| | Schatz | Grassley | |
| | Duckworth | Crapo | |
| | Van Hollen | Young | |
| | Schumer | Moran | |
| | Wyden | Paul | |
| | OPEN (Leahy) | Kennedy | |
| | Murray | Hoeven | |
| | | Lankford | |
| | | Scott | |
| | | Thune | |
| | | Lee | |
| Likely | 1 | 3 | |
| | Bennet | Rubio | |
| | | MO – open | |
| | | OH - open | |

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lean | 1 Hassan | 1 NC - open |
| Toss Up | 3 Cortez Masto Warnock Kelly | 2 Johnson PA - open |

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Vice President Kamala Harris is the 49th Vice President of the United States. She has now cast 18 tie breaking votes in the Senate. Only 3 Vice Presidents, have cast more tie breaking votes – all of them in office before 1849; John C. Calhoun - 31 tie breakers, John Adams – 29 tie breakers, and George M. Dallas – 19 tie breakers.

Schuyler Colfax (in office 1869-73) also cast 18 tie breakers. [Wikipedia]

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2024 Election

87% of Americans live in a county that has voted for the same party in the past three presidential elections.

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

For the Republican nomination

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

Tim Scott – U.S. Senator

Mike Pence – Former Vice President
Chris Christie – Former Governor New Jersey

For the Democrat nomination if Biden does not run

Kamala Harris – Vice President
Pete Buttigieg – Secretary of Transportation
Elizabeth Warren – U.S. Senator
Amy Klobuchar – U.S. Senator
Roy Cooper – Governor of North Carolina
Mitch Landrieu – former Mayor of New Orleans (now working to
implement infrastructure bill)
Gina Raimondo – Secretary of Commerce, former Governor of Rhode Island
Gretchen Whitmer – Governor of Michigan
Phil Murphy – Governor of New Jersey
J.B. Pritzker – Governor of Illinois
Stacey Abrams – currently running for Governor of Georgia
Gavin Newsom – Governor of California
Cory Booker – U.S. Senator
Sherrod Brown – U.S. Senator

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Women Will Get It Done

Women’s labor force participation rose to 57.4% in 2019 from about 43% in 1970. [NYT 5/8/22]

27% of the cadets the Naval Academy, 22% of the cadets of the Airforce Academy, and 22% of the cadets at West Point are women.

Economist Lisa Cook is the first Black woman on the Federal Reserve Board. Her confirmation came in a 50-50 vote in the Senate with Vice President Harris issuing the tie-breaking vote. No Republicans voted for Cook. [WP 5/10/22]

Women comprised 45% of all new Fortune 500 board appointments in 2021, a new high. Overall, the percentage of women on boards has slowly risen to 29% from 19% in 2015. [Axios Markets 5/4/22]

Jacky Hunt-Brosierma, a 46-year-old from Arizona (a South African native) who runs on a blade (a carbon-fiber prosthesis) because of an amputation, has just run 104 marathons in 104 days. [Mike Allen, Axios AM 4/29/22]

Samia Suluhu Hassan, who had been Tanzania's first female vice president, was elevated to president last spring becoming the country's first female leader. She is currently the only female head of government in Africa. [NYT 4/16/22]

Sunisa Lee of Auburn University is the first women's all-around Olympic gold medalist to compete in college gymnastics in the United States [NYT 4/16/22]

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson was confirmed to the Supreme Court, becoming the first Black woman to ascend to the nation's highest court in its 233-year history. When she joins the court, later this year, for the first time in history, white men will be in the minority on the nine-justice Supreme Court. Jackson will join one other Black justice (Clarence Thomas) and three other female justices (Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Amy Coney Barrett).

Jackson will replace Justice Steve Breyer for whom she once clerked. [Wake Up to Politics 4/8/22]

Among women ages 18-49 in 11 developed nations, the United States had the highest maternal mortality rate by far of 23.8 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. There were 55.3 deaths per 100,000 births for Black women, 19.1 deaths per 100,000 for white woman and 18.2 deaths per 100,000 for Hispanic women. [C-SPAN Axios Vitals 4/5/22]

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Frontier Airlines hired Emily Howell Warner in 1973, making her the first permanent female pilot for a U.S. passenger airline. [NYT 4/24/22] (In 2020, according to the FAA, 7% of the 103,879 commercial airlines are women.)

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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?

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THIS WILL NOT PASS
Trump, Biden, and the Battle for America's Future
by Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns
May 3, 2022

The shocking, definitive account of the 2020 election and the first year of the Biden presidency by two *New York Times* reporters, exposing the deep fissures within both parties as the country approaches a political breaking point.

This is the authoritative account of an eighteen-month crisis in American democracy that will be seared into the country's political memory for decades to come. With stunning, in-the-room detail, *New York Times* reporters Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns show how both our political parties confronted a series of national traumas, including the coronavirus pandemic, the January 6 attack on the Capitol, and the political brinksmanship of President Biden's first year in the White House.

From Donald Trump's assault on the 2020 election and his ongoing campaign of vengeance against his fellow Republicans, to the behind-the-scenes story of Biden's selection of Kamala Harris as his running mate and his bitter struggles to unite the Democratic Party, this book exposes the degree to which the two-party system has been strained to the point of disintegration. More than at any time in recent history, the long-established traditions and institutions of American politics are under siege as a set of aging political leaders struggle to hold together a changing country.

Martin and Burns break news on most every page, drawing on hundreds of interviews and never-before-seen documents and recordings from the highest levels of government. The book asks the vitally important (and disturbing) question: can American democracy, as we know it, ever work again?

* * * * *

The Palace Papers:
Inside the House of Windsor—
the Truth and the Turmoil
by Tina Brown
April 26, 2022

“Never again” became Queen Elizabeth II's mantra shortly after Princess Diana's tragic death. More specifically, there could never be “another Diana”—a member

of the family whose global popularity upstaged, outshone, and posed an existential threat to the British monarchy.

Picking up where Tina Brown's masterful *The Diana Chronicles* left off, *The Palace Papers* reveals how the royal family reinvented itself after the traumatic years when Diana's blazing celebrity ripped through the House of Windsor like a comet.

Brown takes readers on a tour de force journey through the scandals, love affairs, power plays, and betrayals that have buffeted the monarchy over the last twenty-five years. We see the Queen's stoic resolve after the passing of Princess Margaret, the Queen Mother, and Prince Philip, her partner for seven decades, and how she triumphs in her Jubilee years even as family troubles rage around her. Brown explores Prince Charles's determination to make Camilla Parker Bowles his wife, the tension between William and Harry on "different paths," the ascendance of Kate Middleton, the downfall of Prince Andrew, and Harry and Meghan's stunning decision to step back as senior royals. Despite the fragile monarchy's best efforts, "never again" seems fast approaching.

Tina Brown has been observing and chronicling the British monarchy for three decades, and her sweeping account is full of powerful revelations, newly reported details, and searing insight gleaned from remarkable access to royal insiders. Stylish, witty, and erudite, *The Palace Papers* will irrevocably change how the world perceives and understands the royal family.

* * * * *

I'm Not Scared, You're Scared
Seth Meyers – Author
Rob Sayegh – Illustrator
March 15, 2022

When you're a bear who is easily scared, it's hard to have friends. Fortunately, Bear has one: Rabbit, who is very brave. One day, Rabbit urges Bear to face his fears and embark on an adventure together. However, things don't entirely go as planned, and the two friends learn the true meaning of bravery.

Equal parts hilarious and touching, this funny tale of adventure, bravery, and daring rescue will both inspire the adventurous spirit in all of us and make us laugh

along the way. With the unfailingly witty voice of one of America's favorite comedians, Seth Meyers's debut picture book is bound for hilarity history.

* * * * *

Restaurants

Bistro Lepic
1736 Wisconsin Ave NW
Wash DC 20007
202-333-0111

Bev and Brady went with Debbie and I to Bistro Lepic for dinner on a weekday night.

There is seating on two floors, and I called ahead and requested a table on the first floor which was confirmed. Our table was at the very front of the restaurant to the left of the entry way next to an alcove which has a V-shaped window looking out on Wisconsin Avenue.

Our server was Julia, who is from Ukraine. The service was responsive and useful.

To begin our meal, Bev and Debbie had Salade d'endive au Roquefort – Endive and mache salad with apple, walnut & Roquefort. Brady ordered Escargots au Beurre D'ail-snails baked in garlic butter. I selected Tarte a' oignon – Onion tart with bacon, Gruyere, and baby green salad.

For main courses – Bev chose Foie de veau provencafe – Calf liver with capers, garlic, black olives & Jerez vinegar. Debbie ordered Truite meuniere amandine – Pan seared trout, roasted almond Spinach & pomme puree. Brady selected Medaillons de boeuf poeles – Seared beef medallions Creamy Polenta & mushroom jus. I chose a long-time favorite Confit de canard – Duck leg confit served with French fries.

For desserts Debbie, Bev and Brady chose Profiteroles. Bev and Brady selected vanilla ice cream filling and Debbie chose Hazelnut ice-cream. I selected Tarte chaude au chocolat – warm chocolate tart.

The portions of the various dishes were hardy.

The restaurant seats 79 people on the two floors. It is unclear whether that number includes the 12 folks who can be seated in an outside seating area that is covered, part of the street and blocked off from traffic.

The restrooms are on the second floor, so I did not check them out.

The restaurant opened 27 years ago and is going strong.

L'Ardente
200 Mass Ave NW
Washington DC 20001
202-448-0450

Michael and Sherry took Debbie and me to dinner at L'Ardente in celebration of my birthday.

The diners, the night we were there were a mix of people of every age and race and combinations thereof.

Because each of us or most of us shared every dish, the following is a list of all the dishes ordered, regardless of who ordered it.

Cavolfiori – Fried Cauliflower, Chili-Garlic Aioli

Margherita Pizza – Pomodoro, Fresh Mozzarella, Basil, Sicilian Oregano

Insalata Cesare – Little Gem Lettuce, Preserved Lemon, Anchovy dressing, Mint Breadcrumbs

Barbabietole – Beet “Crudo”, Cacao Nibs, Yuzu Dressing

Lasagna – 40 Layers/Short Rib Sugo/Truffle Mornay/Sottocenere Cheese

Whole Grilled Branzino/Fennel/Tomato/Olives/Salmoriglio Sauce

WW decided to have the four of us to rate a number of the dishes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th in order of our preference.

| | Mike M | Debbie | Sherry | Mike B |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Lasagna | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Whole grilled branzino | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Insalata Cesare | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Fried cauliflower | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Pizza | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

As a surprise birthday cake, we were served a Tiramisu Flambe – which is served as an upside down half globe of Valrhona chocolate with espresso-soaked lady finger and Marscapone inside. Rum is then poured over the sphere which is set on fire. If included in the list above, it would likely to number 1 on everyone’s list.

Before the Tiramisu was delivered, I had already ordered another dessert - Bread Pudding – Panettone, Hazelnut Almonds, Custard, Cinnamon Chocolate Sauce. I managed to consume a fair amount as did a few of the others.

The restaurant’s Cocktails list includes two that can be prepared without alcohol.

Our server was William who was assisted with the delivery of each dish by a number of hustling assistants.

The restaurant seats up to 170 people and on some nights has three seatings, raising the total number served to over 500 people.

The restaurant is loud, but we could hear each other.

There is a sign above the entryway to the hall, just off the dining room that leads to the restrooms, it says “Don’t Do Coke in Bathrooms”.

There are four, easily accessible, gender neutral, restrooms.

Three of the restrooms are identical. There is a square-shaped but relatively low, white ceramic commode with toilet paper in a device inserted into the wall.

There is a single white ceramic washbasin with gold fixtures and a wall hanging mirror. There is a small, gold waste container in the corner.

The walls are covered with light blue ceramic tiles and the floor is covered with large dark square floor tiles.

The fourth restroom has some additional items to make it handicapped accessible and useful for taking care of babies including a changing table that drops down from its wall-hanging position.

There are also, waist high and wall high, gold bars around the commode and along the wall to a full-length mirror.

The restaurant is not open for lunch...it opens for dinner at 5 p.m., 7 days a week.

The host greeting area, at the main entrance to the restaurant, is several steps above the dining room floor. There is a small lift to allow wheelchair users to access the dining room.

The restaurant opened October 5, 2021.

Eric Eben, the owner, and David Deshaies, the Chef of L'Ardente, also own and operate the Unconventional Diner and Central with Chef Chris Edwards.

Some odds and ends about dining at L'Ardente. There is a 20% service charge (tip) automatically added to all guest checks of 8 people or less with a 2-hour table time limit. The service charge is 25% for parties of 9 or more and a 3-hour table time limit. Notably, the 4 of us were at our table for more than two hours and no one suggested we had to move on.

* * * * *

SHOTO
1100 15th St. NW
Midtown Center
Washington DC 20005
202-796-0011

Debbie and I went there with Amy and Peter at Amy's suggestion on a Tuesday night.

The restaurant opened February 11 of this year and is in the same building – the old Washington Post Building – as Dauphines (WW #196, 12/11/21). SHOTO is on the other side of the building. The entrance to SHOTO is on L street.

SHOTO includes a restaurant, bar, lounge, terrace, and private dining area. It showcases the unique flavors of modern Japanese-influenced cuisine.

We had a table for four in the front window to the right of the entryway. Debbie and Amy were on a couch for two at one side of the table looking into the restaurant and Peter and I were in heavy chairs at the other side of the table looking out to the street. There is a designed wall that separates the dining area from the entry.

It is quite loud in the main room.

Dishes are prepared in three separate areas of the restaurant, a principal kitchen, a sushi bar, and the island robata grill.

There are 70 items on the menu and if you don't want to spend your evening making selections off the a la carte menu there are two opportunities to have the executive chef make those choices for you.

There is what is described as the "Signature Selection" at \$115/person and the "Premium Selection" at \$195/person. Everyone, in your party must choose the same form of ordering. So, if everyone chooses Premium everyone will have access to the same dishes the chef selects. We ordered the Premium menu. Our check for the evening, including the gratuity was \$990.

Our server, Su, was very patient and helpful in describing the various dishes including dealing with the fact that I cannot eat raw fish or meat.

Here is the list of foods that were selected for us which were delivered whenever they were ready.

Age watarigani fried – softshell crab with yuzu koshu mayo;

Wagyu beef – grilled A5 wagyu with chilli miso, mayo yuzu kosho and chives;

Kureson to kyyuri no salad – watercress salad with wasabi cucumber dressing and avocado;

Yakitori-negima yaki – chicken with scallion and Yakatori glaze;

Hotate no ume shiso yaki – grilled scallops with shiso and plum butter;

Gin-dara no saikyo miso yaki – black cod marinated in saikyo miso wrapped in hoba leaf with wasabi sauce;

Ebi no tempura – rock shrimp tempura with lime salt and chilli;

Lobster no tempura – lobster 1.5 lb with yuzu mayo and ponzu;

Suzuki no miso yaki – grilled Chilean seabass with spicy jalapeno and cress;

Yaki toumoro koshi – sweetcorn with shiso butter and shichimi pepper;

Shitake to wafu bata – shiitake mushroom with wafu butter;

Hamachi – yellowtail;

Negi toro maki – fatty tuna roll and finely diced scallions.

When the sushi and sashimi were served, I was brought a cooked option.

A dessert was delivered for the table – a large bowl full of various fruits, several sorbets, ice creams and SHOTO Chocolate in a package.

The restaurant seats up to 150 people at a time. There are often 2 seatings a night and as many as 3 seatings on weekends.

If you take anything home with you, included in your packaging is a card that says the following

To avoid food poisoning, please:

- * Ensure that this food is refrigerated within a maximum of 2 hours
- * Consume raw food within 2 hours;
- * Reheat the food to piping hot before consuming;
- * Food should be consumed within 24 hours;
- * Discard food after 48 hours.

SHOTO Washington DC is not responsible for any food consumed off premises.

Mike

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