

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 203

September 17, 2022

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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

26% of registered voters say the country is headed in the right direction.
60% of registered voters say the country is on the wrong track.

	<u>Right track</u>	<u>Wrong track</u>
Male	27%	63%
Female	25%	58%
Democrats	50%	50%
Republicans	9%	88%
Independents	16%	64%
Urban	36%	49%
Suburban	24%	67%
Rural	17%	66%

[Econ/YouGov 8/30/22]

In the previous issue of the Washington Watch, on August 13, 2022, Econ/YouGov reported that 22% of registered voters said the country was on the right track and 69% said it was on the wrong track.

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New cars sold in California after 2035 will have to be zero emissions. 35% of cars sold by 2026 must have zero emissions and by 2030 68% need to be zero emissions. So far this year, 16% of new cars sold in California have zero emissions. This compares with 6% of cars sold nationally. [Politics long game 8/26/22]

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In December 2000, 52% of registered voters had “a great deal” or “some confidence” in the United States Supreme Court while 13% had “little or no confidence” in the Court.

By December 2019, the number expressing “a great deal” or “some confidence” had fallen to 39% while the number expressing “little or no confidence” in the Court had grown to 17%.

Then, by August 2022 following the Supreme Court’s Roe v Wade decision the bottom fell out and those expressing “a great deal” or “some confidence” in the

Court fell to 27% and those expressing “little or no confidence” rose to 37%. [NBC 8/16/22]

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After the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, more than 70% of newly registered voters in Kansas were women, according to an analysis of the state’s registered voters list.

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In San Francisco, drug overdoses killed more than twice as many people as the coronavirus in 2020. [NYT 8/20/22]

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46% of U.S. teens say they use the internet “almost constantly”. This is almost double the 24% who reported that usage in 2014-2015. [Mike Allen Axios 8/13/22]

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There are 4 million fewer students in college now than there were 10 years ago. There has been a steady drop nationwide in the proportion of high school graduates enrolling in college in the fall after they finish school – from a high of 70% in 2016 to 63% in 2020.

Americans are increasingly dubious about the need to go to college. Fewer than 1 in 3 adults now say a degree is worth the cost. Since the start of the pandemic, the proportion of 14-18-year-olds who think education is necessary beyond high school has dropped from 60% to 45%. [USNEWS 8/10/22]

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The average life expectancy in the United States dropped by nearly two years from 78.8 years in 2019 to 77 years in 2020. It was the country’s lowest average in nearly two decades.

In eight states and the District of Columbia life expectancy fell by more than two years from 2019 to 2020.

Heading the list of those states was New York in which life expectancy dropped by 3 years resulting in a life expectancy of 77.7 years. The balance of the list of nine are decreases of: D.C – 2.7 years; Louisiana and New Jersey– 2.6 years;

Arizona and Mississippi – 2.5 years; New Mexico – 2.4 years and Illinois – 2.2 years and Texas – 2.1 years.

The other 40 states each lost a little, ending with Hawaii which lost the lowest amount of 0.2 years.

Deaths in the U.S. rose 19% from 2019 to 2020. [NBCNews 8/23/22]

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What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

	<u>% Citing Issue</u>
Inflation	17
Government/Leadership	17
Economy in General	12
Abortion Issues	8
Judicial System/Courts	6
Unifying the country	6
Immigration	6
Guns/Gun Control	5
Fuel/Oil Prices	5
Race/Racism	4
Crime	4

[Gallup 7/6/22]

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The U.S. Education system is a patchwork of local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and funding. (This report does not include private or charter schools or schools lacking their own school board.)

- The U.S. public school system is composed of 13,194 districts
- There are around 84,423 elected school board members (including vacancies)
- The average number of school board members per district ranges from 3.45 in West Virginia to 9.97 in Connecticut.
- Hawaii, with one overarching school district across seven islands, has nine board members.

Women makeup approximately 50.1% of the total U.S. population in 2019 while men make up approximately 48.9% of the population. How does that compare to the composition of school board members?

Nationwide, 52.15% of school board members are male, while 43.29% are female. (There is no gender information for the remaining school board members--around 4.5%.)

The five states with the highest percentage of male school board members are: Arkansas – 63.9%; Oklahoma – 63.65%; Tennessee – 63.57%; Texas – 63.35% - Nebraska – 60.74%.

The five states with the highest percentage of female school board members are: Florida – 59.02%; Alaska – 58.59%; Maryland - 56.98%; Arizona – 55.77%; Maine – 54.79%.

Every state has at least one school district – and most states have more than 100. Hawaii has one district; D.C. has one district covering 116 schools. Delaware, with 19, is the state with the fewest districts. Texas has the most districts at 1022 and California is in second place with 997 districts. [Ballotpedia 8/24/22]

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Are Americans ready for a Third Party?

Andrew Yang, a former candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, and Christine Todd Whitman, a former Republican governor of New Jersey, think the time is right for a third party.

They have founded the Forward Party. It stands for doing, not dividing.

Meanwhile, the share of Americans holding unfavorable views of both parties has grown from 6% in 1994 to 27% some 28 years later (2022).

Democratic party-leaners have grown more frustrated with the leadership of the party, rising from 28% in 2016 to 40% today while Republican party-leaners expressing frustration with the Republican party has declined from 52% in 2016 to 39% today.

Neither party is very popular with the public. Roughly 41% have a favorable view of the Democratic Party while only 37% have a favorable view of the Republican Party.

Democrats (38%) are more likely than Republicans (21%) to express a desire for more political parties. Among independents and those who do not identify with a party, 48% say that describes their views.

In 2016, 47% of Republicans and 35% of Democrats, thought those in the other party were more immoral than other Americans. Today, 72% of Republicans regard Democrats as more immoral and 63% of Democrats say the same about Republicans.

48% of independents, 38% of Democrats, and 21% of Republicans wish there were more political parties to choose from in this country.

In 2003, 56% of voters believed that the two existing parties did an adequate job of representing the American people. By 2021 this figure had dropped to 33% while the share who thought that a third major political party was needed to achieve adequate representation had risen from 40% to 62%. [Bill Galston/Brookings 8/12/22 – PEW 8/9/22]

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The Forward Party

The following are excerpts from a distribution by the new party.

The Forward Party stands for doing, not dividing. We're not building a copy of the current parties.

How we're different:

Diverse thinking isn't just Welcome, It's Required.

Bottom up, Not top down

No purity tests

More Listening, Less talking

Work together, not against

Grace and Tolerance

The Forward Party will approach each other with grace and tolerance, finding ways to pick people back up rather than knock them down.

One of the initial sites of the party's organization efforts is in Maine. If you want more information on the Forward Party, look to Wikipedia.

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August 2022 is 3.7%.

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 7.0 % in August and less than 8.8 % a year earlier. The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in August is 62.4%, up from 62.3% in July 2022.

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The Demographics of Unemployment for August 2022

Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women –2.8% (up from last month)

Men –3.1% (up as last month)

Unemployment by Race

White – 3.2% (up from last month)

Black –6.4% (up from last month)

Hispanic – 4.5% (up from last month)

Asian –2.8% (up from last month)

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

Less than high school –6.2% (up from last month)

High School –4.2% (up from last month)

Some college –2.9% (up from last month)

Bachelor's Degree or higher –1.9% (less than last month)

In July 2022, 27 states had unemployment rates below the national average of 3.5%. 22 states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, had

unemployment rates that were above the national average. Two states, and Oregon, had unemployment rates that were the same as the national average.

The state/territory with the highest unemployment rate in July was Puerto Rico at 5.9%.

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This and That

The word “woke”, as an adjective which was first used in the 1940s, has resurfaced in recent years as a concept that symbolizes awareness of social issues and movement.

In 2015, searches for “woke” on Google surged. The term increasingly came to be identified with members of the millennial generation (25-40 years old).

In May 2016, “woke” was identified as being among ten words teenagers should know.

The first time many people heard “woke” was likely during the birth of the Black Lives Matter movement.

According to Merriam-Webster, “woke” is described as being aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues – especially issues of racial and social issues.

“Woke” was officially added into the Oxford English Dictionary as an adjective in June 2017. The dictionary defines it as “originally: well-informed, up to date. Now chiefly: alert to racial or social discrimination and injustice”.

The Urban Dictionary, published its original definition two years prior to the official dictionary, defining it by saying “being woke means being aware... knowing what’s going on in the community (related to racism and social injustice)”.

In other words, it means to be awake to sensitive social issues, such as racism.

Once upon a time, “woke” simply meant the past participle of “wake”. While that has rapidly changed in recent years, the modern definition of the word isn’t that new in the US.

In 1962 the *New York Times* published an article of “phrases and words you might hear today in Harlem”, in which “woke” was included.

Ten years later in 1972, a character in the Barry Beckham play *Garvey Lives!* says he’ll “stay woke” via the work of pan-Africanist, Marcus Garvey, with the line, “I been sleeping all my life. And now that Mr. Garvey done woke me up, I’m gon’ stay woke. And I’m gon’ help him wake up other black folk”.

In 2012, when an unarmed teenager Trayvon was shot dead in Florida by neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, the term was used headily to raise awareness of the movement.

In January 2021, the actor Lawrence Fox re-ignited an argument over the use of the term, after he branded an audience member who labelled him a “white privileged male” for saying he was “bored” of racism accusations.

He subsequently accused subscribers to woke views of being “racist”, telling Julie Hartley-Brewer’s radio show, “The wokists are fundamentally racist. Identity politics is extremely racist.”

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In 2020, wildfire smoke accounted for roughly half of all the air pollution in the Western United States, which means that there was as much toxic smog coming from wildfires as there was coming from all human activity combined. [NYT 8/28/2022]

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The average published price of tuition, fees, room, and board for the 2021-2022 academic year was about \$52,000 for a four-year, private nonprofit college, according to the College Board. [NYT 8/28/2022]

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The American Medical Association says the United States faces a projected shortage of between 37,800 and 124,000 physicians within 12 years. [MinnPost Daily 8/29/22]

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The following were created by Gerry Kauvar...

Son In Law Like Father-in-Law

Here are a few choice quotes from a recent interview with Jared Kushner:

“My generation could be the first generation to live forever.” (In Infamy?)
Responding to a question about whether the election was stolen, Jared said:
“I think that there’s different words. I think there’s a whole bunch of different approaches that different people have taken, and different theories.”

When asked whether his father-in-law lost the election, Jared replied: “I think there’s a lot of issues that I think if litigated differently may have had different insights into them.”

Says a lot about a guy who attended Harvard and NYU. Whether he was educated at either institution remains a question.

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RNC Cognitive Test for Presidential Candidates

- What is the difference between a rhino and a RINO?
- Is “donor” a contributor to a PAC or the name of one of Santa’s reindeer?
- What is a PAC?
- True or False: A mulligan is an Irish Stew and a hair style.
- Is Pussers the name of a rum or a vulgar term for a woman?
- Is the correct spelling “elefant” or “elephant”? Are you sure?
- Is an “Iron Triangle” a musical instrument?
- True or False: A gimmie is a term in both golf and fund-raising.
- Why is a good lie welcome in golf but not in public discourse?
- Explain why below par is good in golf but not in describing your health.
- What word is out of place? fact, fiction, friction, faction, fraction. Explain your answer.
- How come the word landslide is okay in politics but not in California? Or is it okay if it happens in California too?
- Name the wars during which Fort Sumter and Fort McHenry were memorialized in song.
- Why is it okay for a tweet to go viral but not okay for a pathogen?
- What if any is the difference between “abortion” and “abomination”?

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Oh Henry

He led the nation like a potentate,
And often in a deranged state.
He dressed to hide his burgeoning weight,
And was nasty to his mate.
Any dissent made him rant and rail,
His temper made his associates pale.
This isn't about Trump — in faith,
It's all about Henry the Eighth.
If you believe this little tale,
I've got a bridge in Brooklyn for sale.

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Odds and Ends

Alabama tops the AP's preseason Top 25 college football teams. It is the seventh time the Crimson Tide has been ranked preseason #1 during Nick Saban's 15 years as head coach. 11 preseason #1 teams went on to finish top-ranked since 1950. The most recent was Alabama in 2017...during Saban's tenure. [Mike Allen Axios PM 8/15/22]

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The percentage of people over the age of 85 is predicted to double to 14 million by 2040 in part because Americans are living longer. In 2050, 84 million elderly people will live in America. Virginia alone is projected to be short 23,000 nurses in the next decade. [From an article by Alexandra Moe in Politico – politico/Alexandra Moe/the Crisis Facing Nursing Homes.]

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During the current election cycle (as of August 31) campaigns have already sent 90.5 million texts including some 68 million from Democrats and 23 million from Republicans. [Axios PM 8/31/22]

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There are five types of friendship we all need in our life: Close friends, lifelong friends, friends of convenience, work friends, and same-chapter-of-life friends. [NBCTodayShow 8/26/22]

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President Biden

President Biden is the oldest president in U.S. history. He still has not addressed the question of whether he will run for re-election in 2024.

President Biden has announced that he will cancel up to \$10,000 in federal student loan debt for individual's earning less than \$125,000 per year or \$250,000 per year for married couples who file taxes jointly. There is additional forgiveness of \$10,000 for Pell grant recipients.

The White House estimates that some level of forgiveness will be received by up to 43 million people. 20 million borrowers could have their debt completely canceled. 53% of borrowers owe less than \$20,000.

In addition, President Biden is extending the pause on federal student loan repayments through December 31.

Among all voters, the percentage of Americans who support the President's plan is only slightly larger than those who oppose.

	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
All voters	48%	43%	9%
Democrats	72	19	9
Independents	42	47	11
Republicans	26	67	8
Folks who owe student debt	73	22	5

To find the authority to cancel billions of dollars in student debt without congressional action the administration is relying on its determination that student loan debt constitutes a "national emergency."

At the time of this writing (September 5) Republicans, who oppose this plan, are searching for someone who has the standing to sue. [WPost 8/24/2022; Morning Consult 8/31/2022; Time 8/29/2022]

(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' 22	42/55	xxx	xxx	41/55	43/53
JULY'22	xxx	xxx	xxx	36/58	33/59
JUNE'22	xxx	xxx	xxx	43/57	35/56
MAY'22	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	38/55
MAY'22	42/54	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	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	38/57	48/52	44/54	38/53
OCT'21	45/52	xxx	xxx	xxx	40/51

<u>Date</u>	<u>ECON/YOUGOV</u>	<u>POL/MORNCON</u>
AUG'22	41/55	42/56
JULY'22	40/55	39/59
JULY'22	41/53	xxx
JUNE'22	44/51	40/56
MAY'22	44/51	42/56
MAY'22	43/51	44/54
APR'22	46/50	41/55
APR'22	43/51	45/52
MAR'22	45/49	42/54
FEB'22	42/53	43/53
JAN'22	45/51	40/56
DEC'21	42/53	46/51
NOV'21	45/49	46/51
OCT'21	44/49	45/52

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As of September 1, 2022, the following is Biden's approval rating based on Real Clear Politics.

	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>	
Overall	42.1%	54.8%	9/1/22
On the economy	38.3%	58.7 %	8/30/22

On foreign policy 39.2% 54.8% 8/30/22

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>
8/23/22	44%	53%	42.7 %	52.8%
5/22/22	41%	54%	41.1%	54.3%
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%

Using Gallup (all adults) as the marker, Biden’s approval rating has fallen by 5 points in the last year and his disapproval has grown by a similar number.

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Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date

As of September 8, 2022, the United States Senate has confirmed 76 federal judges nominated by President Biden. One Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 18 judges for the United States Courts of Appeals, and 36 judges for the United States District Courts.

There are 60 nominations awaiting Senate action: 17 for the Courts of appeals and 43 for the District Courts. There are 9 vacancies in the U.S. Courts of Appeals, 67 vacancies on the U.S. District Courts.

There are currently 9 vacancies on the U.S. Courts of Appeals, 69 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	79	1	20	58	
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 809 of those 1200 positions.

- 442 have been confirmed by the Senate
- 132 nominees are being considered by the Senate
- 1 pick is awaiting formal nomination
- 82 positions have no Biden nominee
- 152 appointees are serving in termed positions or were held over from previous administrations

[WP 9/1/22]

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The following are the favorability ratings for a variety of political leaders based on the Real Clear Politics averages for 8/30/22.

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Biden	41.9	52.9
Harris	36.0	51.3
Pelosi	36.0	55.3
McConnell	23.3	55.7
McCarthy	28.3	42.7
Schumer	30.5	46.0
Trump	40.7	53.7

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2022 Election

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The 117th Congress

Congress

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Approval of the Congress is down roughly 8 points from where it was a year ago and disapproval is up 8 points.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 8/30/22	20.6%	67.4%
Real Clear Pol. 6/15/22	21.2%	69.0%
Real Clear Pol. 5/17/22	22.4%	68.0%
Real Clear Pol. 4/16/22	22.2%	67.5%
Real Clear Pol. 3/15/22	21.8%	67.8%
Real Clear Pol. 2/18/22	20.8%	68.32%
Real Clear Pol. 1/17/22	22.4%	66.4%
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%

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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 – 220 seats
Republicans – 211 seats
Vacancies – 2 seats

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A total of 14 House members, 8 Republicans, and 6 Democrats have lost renomination in 2022. This is the highest number since 1992 when 19 incumbents went down this way, including 5 Republicans and 14 Democrats.

This group includes 2 from Illinois, 2 from Michigan, 2 from New York, and 1 each from Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

As of 9/1/22, 49 House incumbents have announced they are not running for re-election.

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The following are the current House race ratings for the coming election

Solid – Not competitive

Likely – These seats are not considered competitive at this point but have potential

Lean – These seats are considered competitive races, but one party has advantage

Toss Up – The most competitive either party has a good chance of winning

Solid Democrat	162	Solid Republican	188
Likely Dem	13	Likely GOP	14
Lean Dem	15	Lean GOP	11
Dem Toss up	24	GOP Toss up	8
Total	214	Total	221

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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	15	
	Padilla	Murkowski	
	Murray	AL – open	
	Blumenthal	Boozman	
	Schatz	Grassley	
	Duckworth	Crapo	
	Van Hollen	Young	
	Schumer	Moran	
	Wyden	Paul	
	VT – open	Kennedy	
		Hoeven	
		OK - open	
		MO - open	
		Scott	
		Thune	
		Lee	
Likely	1	2	
	Bennet	Rubio	
		OH	
Lean	2	1	
	Hassan	NC - open	
	PA - open		
Toss Up	3	1	
	Cortez Masto	Johnson	
	Warnock		
	Kelly		

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2024 Election

The 2024 Republican National Convention will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin which was also the site of the 2000 Democratic National Convention.

The site of the 2024 Democratic National Convention has not been selected. Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, and New York City have submitted bids.

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The following people have indicated or been commonly named as someone thinking about or planning to run for president in 2024. These lists are a result of the mining of a variety of other lists published in the last few months.

For the Republican nomination (Several on this list have said they will not run if Trump runs again.)

Donald Trump
Ben Sasse – U.S. Senator
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
Marco Rubio – U.S. Senator
Liz Cheney – U.S. Representative - Wyoming
 “I haven’t made a decision about that yet.”
Kristi Noem – Governor of South Dakota
Larry Hogan – Governor of Maryland
Asa Hutchinson – Governor of Arkansas
Greg Abbott – Governor of Texas
Ron DeSantis – Governor of Florida
Mike Pence – Former Vice President
Mike Pompeo – Former Secretary of State
Nikki Haley – Former governor of South Carolina
Chris Christie – Former Governor New Jersey
Glenn Youngkin – Governor of Virginia
Francis Suarez – Mayor of Miami

For the Democrat nomination if Biden does not run

Kamala Harris – Vice President
Pete Buttigieg – Secretary of Transportation
Gina Raimondo – Secretary of Commerce, former Governor of Rhode Island
Elizabeth Warren – U.S. Senator
Amy Klobuchar – U.S. Senator

Bernie Sanders – U.S. Senator
Cory Booker – U.S. Senator
Sherrod Brown – U.S. Senator
Michael Bennet – U.S. Senator
Jamie Raskin – U.S. Representative, Maryland
Tim Ryan – U.S. Representative, Ohio
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez – U.S. Representative, New York (She will be 35
years of age on October 13, 2024)
Roy Cooper – Governor of North Carolina
Gavin Newsom – Governor of California
Gretchen Whitmer – Governor of Michigan
Andy Beshear – Governor of Kentucky
Phil Murphy – Governor of New Jersey
J.B. Pritzker – Governor of Illinois
Tim Walz – Governor of Minnesota
Jared Polis – Governor of Colorado
Stacey Abrams – currently running for Governor of Georgia
Mitch Landrieu – former Mayor of New Orleans (now working to
implement infrastructure bill)

(There are folks who believe that one or more of these individuals will
challenge Biden if he decides to run.)

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Women Will Get It Done

President Biden has named the second woman in the 157-year history of the
Secret Service to head that organization. Biden has selected Kim Cheatle who was
on his security detail when he was Vice President.

Cheatle was also the Service's first woman to serve as the agency's assistant
director of protective operations.

Cheatle, who is retired from the agency, is currently an official with
PepsiCo. [WP 8/24/22]

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Laurie Leshin is the first woman to lead NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory
in its 85-year history.

Prior to NASA's JPL, Leshin spent 8 years as president of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute, an influential engineering-focused university in Massachusetts. She is also an experienced NASA hand having had leadership roles at the Goddard Space Flight center. [Science Insider 6/6/22]

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Former state Rep. Mary Peltola won the special election for the state's vacant U.S. House seat, becoming the first Alaska Native ever elected to Congress. [538.com 9/1/22]

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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?

Dinners with Ruth A Memoir on the Power of Friendships Nina Totenberg

Celebrated NPR correspondent Nina Totenberg delivers an extraordinary memoir of her personal successes, struggles, and life-affirming relationships, including her beautiful friendship of nearly fifty years with Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Four years before Nina Totenberg was hired at NPR, where she cemented her legacy as a prizewinning reporter, and nearly twenty-two years before Ruth Bader Ginsburg was appointed to the Supreme Court, Nina called Ruth. A reporter for *The National Observer*, Nina was curious about Ruth's legal brief, asking the Supreme Court to do something revolutionary: declare a law that discriminated "on the basis of sex" to be unconstitutional. In a time when women were fired for becoming pregnant, often could not apply for credit cards or get a mortgage in their own names, Ruth patiently explained her argument. That call launched a remarkable, nearly fifty-year friendship.

Dinners with Ruth is an extraordinary account of two women who paved the way for future generations by tearing down professional and legal barriers. It is also an

intimate memoir of the power of friendships as women began to pry open career doors and transform the workplace. At the story's heart is one special relationship: Ruth and Nina saw each other not only through personal joys, but also illness, loss, and widowhood. During the devastating illness and eventual death of Nina's first husband, Ruth drew her out of grief; twelve years later, Nina would reciprocate when Ruth's beloved husband died. They shared not only a love of opera, but also of shopping, as they instinctively understood that clothes were armor for women who wanted to be taken seriously in a workplace dominated by men. During Ruth's last year, they shared so many small dinners that Saturdays were "reserved for Ruth" in Nina's house.

Dinners with Ruth also weaves together compelling, personal portraits of other fascinating women and men from Nina's life, including her cherished NPR colleagues Cokie Roberts and Linda Wertheimer; her beloved husbands; her friendships with multiple Supreme Court Justices, including Lewis Powell, William Brennan, and Antonin Scalia, and Nina's own family—her father, the legendary violinist Roman Totenberg, and her "best friends," her sisters. Inspiring and revelatory, *Dinners with Ruth* is a moving story of the joy and true meaning of friendship.

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Confidence Man:
The Making of Donald Trump and the Breaking of America
Maggie Haberman

From the Pulitzer-Prize-winning *New York Times* reporter who has defined Donald J. Trump's presidency like no other journalist: a magnificent and disturbing reckoning that chronicles his life and its meaning from his rise in New York City to his tortured post-presidency.

Few journalists working today have covered Donald Trump more extensively than Maggie Haberman. And few understand him and his motivations better. Now, demonstrating her majestic command of this story, Haberman reveals in full the depth of her understanding of the 45th president himself, and of what the Trump phenomenon means.

Interviews with hundreds of sources and numerous interviews over the years with Trump himself portray a complicated and often contradictory historical figure: capable of kindness but relying on casual cruelty as it suits his purposes. Pugnacious. Insecure. Lonely. Vindictive. Menacing. Smarter than his critics

contend and colder and more calculating than his allies believe. A man who embedded himself in popular culture, galvanizing support for a run for high office that he began preliminary spadework for 30 years ago, to ultimately become a president who pushed American democracy to the brink.

The through-line of Trump's life and his presidency is the enduring question of what is in it for him or what he needs to say to survive short increments of time in the pursuit of his own interests.

Confidence Man is also, inevitably, about the world that produced such a singular character, giving rise to his career and becoming his first stage. It is also about a series of relentlessly transactional relationships. The ones that shaped him most were with girlfriends and wives, with Roy Cohn, with George Steinbrenner, with Mike Tyson and Don King and Roger Stone, with city and state politicians like Robert Morgenthau and Rudy Giuliani, with business partners, with prosecutors, with the media, and with the employees who toiled inside what they commonly called amongst themselves the "Trump Disorganization."

That world informed the one that Trump tried to recreate while in the White House. All of Trump's behavior as President had echoes in what came before. In this revelatory and newsmaking book, Haberman brings together the events of his life into a single mesmerizing work. It is the definitive account of one of the most norms-shattering and consequential eras in American political history.

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For You When I am Gone
Twelve Essential Questions to Tell a Life Story
Steve Leder

Writing an ethical will, a document that includes stories and reflections about your past, is an ancient tradition. It can include joy and regrets, and ultimately becomes both a way to remember a loved one who is gone and a primer on how to live a better, happier life. Beloved Rabbi Steve Leder has helped thousands of people to write their own ethical wills, and in this intimate book helps us write our own.

Because our culture privileges the material over the spiritual, we sometimes forget that our words carry greater value than any physical thing we can bequeath to our loved ones. Rabbi Leder provides all the right questions and prompts, including: What was your most painful regret and how can your loved ones avoid repeating it? When was a time you led with your heart instead of your head? What did you

learn from your biggest failure?

Including examples of ethical wills from a broad range of voices—old and young, with and without children, famous and unknown—*For You When I Am Gone* inspires readers to examine their own lives and turn them into something beautiful and meaningful for generations to come.

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Thank you for your Servitude
Donald Trump's Washington and the Price of Submission
Mark Leibovich

From the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *This Town*, the eyewitness account of how the GOP collaborated with Donald Trump to transform Washington's "swamp" into a gold-plated hot tub—and a onetime party of rugged individualists into a sycophantic personality cult.

In the early months of Trump's candidacy, the Republican Party's most important figures, people such as Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, and Lindsey Graham, were united—and loud—in their scorn and contempt. Even more, in their outrage: Trump was a menace and an affront to our democracy. Then, awkwardly, Trump won.

Thank You for Your Servitude is Mark Leibovich's unflinching account of the moral rout of a major American political party, tracking the transformation of Rubio, Cruz, Graham, and their ilk into the administration's chief enablers, and the swamp's lesser lights into frantic chasers of the grift. What would these politicians do to preserve their place in the sun, or at least the orbit of the spray tan? What would they do to preserve their "relevance"? Almost anything, it turns out. Trump's savage bullying of everyone in his circle, along with his singular command of his political base, created a dangerous culture of submission in the Republican Party. Meanwhile, many of the most alpha of the lapdogs happily conceded to Mark Leibovich that they were "in on the joke." As Lindsey Graham told the author, his supporters in South Carolina generally don't read *The New York Times*, and they won't read this book, either. All that cynicism, shading into nihilism, led to a country truly unhinged from reality, and to the events of January 6, 2021. It's a vista that makes the Washington of *This Town* seem like a comedy of manners in comparison.

Thank You for Your Servitude isn't another view from the Oval Office: it's the

view from the Trump Hotel. We can check out any time we want, but only time will tell if we can ever leave.

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Restaurants

NOMA
Copenhagen, Denmark

Reviewed by
Carol Kelley of Washington, DC
during a visit to Copenhagen on July 28, 2022

(The numbers in parentheses are photos, shown at the bottom of the review.)

For some years the 3 Michelin-starred NOMA has been named the Top Restaurant in the World. Currently, it is considered to be one of the top two restaurants in the world both of which are in Copenhagen. It was founded and is run by “Danish protegee” Rene Redzepi,

The restaurant, which seats about 40, is on a small farm in Christiania, a hippie community just outside the central city area, and during the summer serves a vegetable-inspired menu, all locally sourced or foraged. There are 3 seasonal menus: Seafood, Feb.-May; Vegetable, June-Sept; Game and Forest, Oct.-Dec. (1)
(2)

Arriving into a separate sunny waiting room, we were offered Himalayan tea or juice, and then directed outside and down the long path to the main dining room. When the wooden door opened, we entered a large open space and were greeted by the entire kitchen staff, lined up in their black aprons, welcoming us with great enthusiasm. All of them, including the chef. Well, many chefs.

We had requested gluten-and dairy-free in advance, and our plates did not look different from other diners’. Describing the imaginatively plated 15+course meal is a challenge because so many of the plant-based elements in each course were unfamiliar, at least in the form they appeared. For instance, listed as “Scoby steak and smoked pumpkin” it appeared as a sea anemone but was a “mother of the kombucha pickled in cardamom powder and sweetened jasmine tea” with a border of “grated pumpkin dried, smoked, and mixed with sunflower oil.” (Definition of SCOBY: Symbiotic Community Of Bacteria and Yeast that develops into bacterial cellulose.) Very healthy, I’m told.

Not every course was as complicated, but even the simplest one had a new-to-me element or a twist to the norm.

The 4th course: What looked like a regular stuffed grape leaf was a steamed cucumber skin wrapped around a barley cake, which looked like a tube of rice. It was delicious, even if we could not identify the ingredients without help, which the staff was excited to provide with each plate.

The 8th course, one of my favorites, was this marigold tempura (it is VERY hard to keep a flower whole while dipping it in a beer batter) with a Danish whisky and egg yolk sauce, dotted with congee oil. The pinecones under the flower were not edible, but an example of how the inclusion of seashells, stones, etc. represent the importance of nature to this kitchen. (3)

Somewhere around the 12th course we were served what was presented to us as the “main course” — a lion’s mane mushroom roasted with wild roses. (4) This meaty mushroom is grown in oak tree sawdust. Its bulk pushed the boundaries of my intake capacity.

The last two courses, thankfully small, featured (1) basil and mint over berries and Jaguar chocolate, and (2) elderberry oat milk ice cream base with a saffron-colored pastry shell topped with bee pollen.

A final touch was a marinated honeycomb, which we were encouraged to chew and enjoy the honey, discarding the wax. (Like chewing those big wax lips we used to see – still available) (5)

Then filtered coffee. The dinner lasted for almost 4 hours. (And yet, so this review doesn’t last as long as the dinner, I am not including a review of the restroom.)

Finally, the bill. A meal for two at NOMA comes at a significant price, with wine and optional gratuity it was well over \$1500.

All in all, a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Was it worth it? If food is high on the list of things you love, then definitely. Mr. Redzepi is a master of magic and a master of science in the kitchen.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

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