

*Mike Berman's*

# WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

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

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### State of the Nation

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	28%	61%
Female	21%	63%
Democrats	44%	38%
Republicans	12 %	84%
Independents	18%	66%
Urban	31%	53%
Suburban	25%	65%
Rural	17%	67%

[Econ/YouGov 10/4/22]

In the previous issue of the Washington Watch, on September 17, 2022, 26% said right track and 60% said it was on the wrong track.

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The National Registry of Exonerations examined defendants who were exonerated after serving at least part of a sentence--sometimes spending decades in prison.

Black people represent 13.6% of the American population but account for 53% of 3,200 exonerations as of August 8, 2022. Innocent Black Americans were 7 ½ times more likely to be convicted of murder than innocent white people. The convictions that led to murder exonerations of Black Americans were almost 50% more likely to include misconduct by police officers. [Axios AM 9/27/22]

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The number of U.S. home births was substantially higher in 2020 than in previous years. The number of home births rose from 38,506 in 2019 to 45,646 in 2020, a 19% increase. [PEW 7/28/22]

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GM was the biggest seller of cars in the US from 1931 through last year. Toyota dethroned GM at the start of 2021. In 2022, GM recovered its throne selling nearly 80,000 more cars than its Japanese rival Toyota. [Insider 10/4/22]

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### The Changing Population of the United States

2010 population: 309,327,143

2021 population: 331,893,745

From 2010 to 2021, Texas had the largest growth with 4.3 million more residents

Among counties, Maricopa County, Arizona had the largest growth with 671,405 new people. Baltimore County, Maryland had the largest decline with 44,444 fewer residents.

U.S. population has increased 11 out of the 11 years between 2010 and 2021

In 2021 the largest racial or ethnic group in the U.S. was White (non-Hispanic) with a population of 196.8 million. [USAFacts July 2022]

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45% of Hispanics say there is a great deal of difference between the Democratic and Republican parties. 36% say there is a fair amount of difference and 16% say there is hardly any difference between them.

36% of Latinos say the Democratic party works hard to earn Latino votes.

Latinos' party affiliation has changed very little from 2019 to 2022.

In 2022, nearly 35 million Latinos will be eligible to vote, accounting for 14% of eligible voters. [PEW 9/29/22]

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### The Judicial Branch of the Federal Government

47% of Americans have a great deal of trust in the judicial branch of the federal government headed by the U.S. Supreme Court. This is the lowest score

recorded by Gallup since it began keeping score in 1972. The high point was in 1999 when 80% expressed a great deal of trust.

Currently, 58% of Americans disapprove of the way the Supreme Court is handling its job while 40% approve. This is the lowest approval rating the Supreme Court has received in 50 years of Gallup polling.

38% of Americans say the ideological leaning of the Supreme Court is about right. 42% say it is too conservative while 18% say it is too liberal.

67% of Republicans have a great deal or fair amount of trust in the judicial branch of the federal government. This is also true of 46% of Independents. 25% of Democrats have a great deal of trust in the judicial branch.

In 2001, 80% of Republicans approved of the job being done by the Supreme Court. Today that number is 60%. In the same time period, the approval of the Court by independents has fallen from 57% to 40%. Among Democrats approval has fallen from 70% to 13% earlier this year and has now popped back up to 23%.

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Independents</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Too conservative	71	46	11
About right	18	35	58
Too Liberal	9	17	29

[Gallup 9/16/22 & 9/29/22]

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Looking at the current Supreme Court, here are the “number of words spoken” by each of the Justices in the first eight arguments heard during the current term of the court. New Justice Jackson is not waiting to speak up. 11,003 is a unique amount for new Justices.

KetANJI Brown Jackson	11,003
Amy Coney Barrett	4,475
Sonia Sotomayor	4,409
Elena Kagan	4,025
John Robert	3,469
Neil Gorsuch	2,657
Brett Kavanaugh	2,385
Samuel Alito	883

Interestingly, the Justice who has served the longest – Thomas (1991) had the least to say. [SCOTUS]

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For the first time, the number of arrests of undocumented immigrants along the southwestern border exceeded two million in one year. [NYT 9/19/22]

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Nationally, rent costs are 20 % higher than they were in early 2020. [NYT 10/16/22]

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According to a new study of people arrested or charged for crimes during the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack, 86% of them were not affiliated with an extremist group. [NYT 10/16/22]

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Percentage of U.S. adults who say they often use the following:

	<u>Paypal</u>	<u>Venmo</u>	<u>Zelle</u>	<u>Cash App</u>
U.S. adults	57%	38%	36%	26%
Ages 18- 29	63	57	48	39
30-49	66	49	46	35
50 – 64	55	28	29	19
65+	41	15	20	9
White	58	41	29	17
Black	51	21	45	59
Hispanic	52	33	54	37
Asian	70	47	65	16
Upper income	67	54	40	18
Middle income	60	41	37	24
Lower income	48	26	35	36
Having used it	57%	38%	36%	26%

[PEW 9/8/22]

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## **In Memoriam**

Mark Stephen Shields

Born May 25, 1937/Died June 18, 2022

A political activist, columnist, adviser, and commentator.

The following is from Shields' commentary on December 18, 2020, his last Friday night commentary on the PBS NewsHour.

“I grew up when a man was in the White House who said very simply, the measure of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, but whether we provide enough for those who have too little. It's very straightforward – it was Franklin Roosevelt.”

“And the other kind of guidepost for me in politics that I guess I learned from my mom and my dad, my family, was that every one of us has been warmed by fires that we did not build, and every one of us has drunk from wells we did not dig. And together we can't do less for those who come after us. And, together, we can do so much more.”

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Coming into Saturday, October 15, the Yankees were 167-0 in Major League Baseball postseason history when leading by multiple runs entering the ninth inning. That record ended that night when the Guardians beat the Yankees 6 to 5. [WW]

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## **Employment**

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September 2022 is 3.5%.

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 6.7 % in September and less than 8.5% a year earlier. The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in September 2022 is 62.14%, down from 62.3% in September 2021.

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## The Demographics of Unemployment for September 2022

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

Women –2.6% (down from last month)

Men –2.9% (down from last month)

### Unemployment by Race

White – 3.1% (down from last month)

Black –5.8% (down from last month)

Hispanic – 3.8% (down from last month)

Asian –2.5% (down from last month)

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

Less than high school –5.6% (down from last month)

High School –3.7% (down from last month)

Some college –2.9% (same as last month)

Bachelor’s Degree or higher –1.8% (less than last month)

In August 2022, 27 states had unemployment rates below the national average of 3.7%. 19 states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, had unemployment rates that were above the national average. Two states, Washington and Oregon, had unemployment rates that were the same as the national average.

The state/territory with the highest unemployment rate was Puerto Rico at 5.8%.

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### “Quiet Quitting”

82% of young workers (18–29-year-olds) say the idea of doing the minimum required to keep their jobs is pretty appealing. 15% are already doing it.

The idea of working to live instead of living to work is consistent across gender, race, and political views.

Among those who agree are:

85% of young women and 79% of young men

82% of whites, 86% of blacks and 79% of Asians

84% of Democrats, 79% of Republicans, 83% of Independents

The new generation of office workers values work-life balance far more than generations who came before it. [Axios AM 9/21/22]

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### **This and That**

Fearing a shrinking pipeline of new players and fans, the N.F.L. has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to assuage nervous parents that football can be made safer. [NYT 10/1/22]

It is still the early days before we fully understand the economic consequences of Dobbs. It's likely that between 50,000 and 80,000 women who would've otherwise terminated their pregnancy this year will instead give birth. [Axios Market 10/8/22]

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The following were created by Gerry Kauvar...

Looking over or overlooking?

In reading about federal and state candidates in both parties I was reminded of a conversation with a woman in Alaska. She was talking about the fact that men vastly outnumbered women. I asked whether that was an advantage for a woman looking to date someone. Here's her reply: "The odds are good, but the goods are odd."

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Which of the following is not true?

A Wall Street Journal columnist speculated about whether inserting US troops during the buildup phase or those who are now deployed in rear areas of Ukraine would have given Putin second thoughts.

A WSJ columnist wrote, "Another problem is that leftist ideology has 'escaped from the lab of higher education and is now infecting other institutions, the military among them'."

Senator Lindsey Graham said the police should have shot the January 6 rioters.

Congressman Green compared President Biden to Hitler and posted a picture of Biden with a Hitler mustache.

The sky is falling. (Not true)

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In an opinion piece in Washington Post, President Mitch Daniels of Purdue University includes this description of America:

“The falsification of U.S, history, the poisonous divisiveness of identity politics, the conflation of residency with citizenship and the usurpation of democracy by unelected bureaucrats, have plainly altered the conception of American’s responsibilities to the nation and to each other.”

He continues, “There are those who find these changes acceptable or even preferable.”

“Institutions of higher education strive to make certain students know how to separate fiction from fact, polemics from evidence. In every academic discipline, they teach how to analyze, how to inquire, how to debate civilly, a preference for data over dogma. And to deplore argument by adjective: e.g. falsification, poisonous, usurpation.

“Perhaps in his forthcoming “major vocational change” he will model a more intellectual discourse and appeal to the better angels of our nature.”

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### **Odds and Ends**

Failing to graduate from high school is the single greatest risk factor for future homelessness. [NYT 10/2/22]

Tampa Bay grew from a few hundred thousand people to more than 3 million since the last major hurricane struck in 1921. [Axios AM 9/27/22]

The Library of Congress has nearly 2,000 flutes, the largest collection in the world. [WP 9/28/22]

The 1983 finale of \*M\*A\*S\*H\* drew 106 million viewers, a number unlikely to be equaled by any TV show besides a football game. [NYT 9/17/22]

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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 pardoned thousands of people who have been arrested for possession of marijuana. The pardons will clear everyone convicted on federal charges of simple possession since it became a crime in the 1970s. About 6,500 people were convicted of simple possession between 1992 and 2021.

The pardons will not apply to people convicted of selling or distributing marijuana. There are no people now serving time in federal prisons solely for marijuana possession. The move will help remove obstacle for people trying to get a job, find housing, apply to college, or get federal benefits. [NYT 10/6/22

#### 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>
SEPT'22	45/52	39/55	40/53	43/56	41/53
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>
SEPT'22	49/50	46/52
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 October 9, 2022, the following is Biden's approval rating based on Real Clear Politics.

	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>	
Overall	42.9%	53.1%	10/9/22
On the economy	33.8%	59.0 %	10/3/22
On foreign policy	41.2%	53.2%	10/3/22

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>
9/16/22	42%	56%	42.5 %	52.0%
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 1 point in the last year and his disapproval has grown by 3 points.

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### Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date

As of October 4, 2022, the United States Senate has confirmed 84 federal judges nominated by President Biden. One Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 25 judges for the United States Courts of Appeals, and 58 judges for the United States District Courts.

There are 57 nominations awaiting Senate action: 12 for the Courts of appeals and 45 for the District Courts. There are 9 vacancies in the U.S. Courts of Appeals, 74 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	84	1	25	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 810 of those 1200 positions.

- 465 have been confirmed by the Senate
- 125 nominees are being considered by the Senate
- 3 are awaiting formal nomination
- 77 positions have no Biden nominee
- 140 appointees are serving in termed positions or were held over from previous administrations

[WP 10/3/22]

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The following are the favorability ratings for a variety of political leaders based on the Real Clear Politics averages for 10/3/22.

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Biden	43.8	52.2
Harris	38.8	51.2
Trump	41.3	54.2
Pelosi	35.0	57.5
Schumer	32.0	47.5
McCarthy	30.7	43.3
McConnell	25.3	58.3

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### **2022 Election**

In 2018, 67% of potential voters actually voted. Looking ahead to this November, 67% of potential voters say they are planning to vote.

More independents, men, whites, and persons with no college say they are certain to vote in 2022.

Men are expressing more certainty that they will vote this year than they did in 2018 while women are expressing less interest in voting.

A larger percentage of Blacks and Hispanics voted in 2018 than are planning to vote in 2022.

Democrats are less likely to vote in 2022 than they were in 2018. While roughly the same percentage of Republicans are planning to vote in 2022 than did in 2018. [MorningConsult 10/7/22]

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Around 21% of the roughly 1,000 candidates for the U.S. Senate, U.S. House, or state governor on the fall ballot (212 in all) claim some degree of military experience. Nine in ten of those veteran candidates are men and 2/3 are Republican.

49% of all U.S. adults like military experience as a characteristic of political leaders. This includes 53% of men, 46% of women, 66% of Republicans, and 36% of Democrats.

43% neither like nor dislike military experience. This includes 41% of men, 45% of women, 30% of Republicans, and 53% of Democrats.

The percentage of members with previous military experience who ended up in the Senate has fallen from 81% in 1974 to 17% in 2021. While the percentage who ended up in the House fell from 75% in the House in 1972 to 17% if 2021. [Pew 10/14/22]

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Here are some numbers that help to explain the 2022 primary season.

6: The number of secretaries of state candidates who advanced to the general election and have questioned or cast doubt on the legitimacy of the 2020 election.

7: The number of House incumbents who lost their re-election bids to challengers.

7: The number of House incumbents who lost re-election to other members in matchups shaped by redistricting.

8: The number of losses Trump-backed candidates had in competitive House, Senate, and gubernatorial primaries.

15: The number of the 22 Bernie Sanders (I-VT) endorsed candidates who won their primaries.

24: The number of the 31 Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) endorsed candidates who advanced past their primaries.

34: The number of victories Trump-endorsed candidates had in competitive House, Senate, and gubernatorial primaries.

76: The number (at least) of how many House nominees are running for Congress for their first time.

82: The number of Republican House nominees who are women, 27 of whom are running in races rated by the Cook Report. (There are currently 32 Republican women in the House per the Rutgers Center for American Women and Politics.)

117: The number of Democratic women who won their House primaries; 38 in races deemed competitive by the Cook Report. (There are currently 91 Democratic women in the House.)

219: The number (at least) of Republican nominees who have questioned or cast doubt on the legitimacy of President Biden’.

[Meet the Press: First Read 9/21/22]

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The 117<sup>th</sup> Congress

**Congress**

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Approval of the Congress is up roughly 5 points from where it was a year ago and disapproval is down 2 points.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 10/13/22	25.3%	65.8%
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%

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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 – 212 seats  
 Vacancies – 3 seats

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A total of 15 House members, 9 Republicans and 6 Democrats, have lost renomination in 2022. In 2020 a total of 21 House members lost, 5 Republicans and 16 Democrats, and in 2018 a total of 34 House members, 32 Republicans and 2 Democrats, lost renomination.

As of 10/4/22, 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	14	Likely GOP	12
Lean Dem	17	Lean GOP	11
Dem Toss up	21	GOP Toss up	10
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	14	
	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	
Likely	0	3	
		Rubio	
		OH	
		Lee	
Lean	3	1	
	Hassan	NC - open	
	Bennet		
	Kelly		

Toss Up	2	2
	Cortez Masto	Johnson
	Warnock	PA - open

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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
- 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**

Women have voted at higher rates than men in every presidential and  
midterm election since 1984.

Turnout in Presidential elections	Women 68.4%	Men 65%
Turnout during midterm election	Women 55%	Men 51.8%

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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?

### **The Big Truth Upholding Democracy in the Age of the Big Lie by David Becker and Major Garrett**

A Revelatory Account of The 2020 Election—The Most Secure, Verifiable, And Transparent In American History—And The Heroes Brave Enough To Get It Right

*The Big Truth* illuminates a crowning achievement in America’s quest for a robust democracy in the face of slander by sore losers and opportunists. Filled with interviews of the guardians of democracy—election workers, January 6th Committee members Reps. Liz Cheney (R-Wyoming) and Jamie Raskin (D-Maryland), Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, and more—it is an overpowering counterattack against the Big Lie.

CBS Chief Washington Correspondent Major Garrett and National Election Expert David Becker, the Executive Director of the nonpartisan Center for Election Innovation & Research, reveal why Big Lie “fraud” allegations evaporate under scrutiny. They report what *actually* happened in 2020 while calling out each Trumpian misdirection designed to con and beguile Americans into chasing phantom allegations of election crimes.

The 2020 election was not what Trumpist deniers claim. Our political parties knew the rules and procedures. We had record turnout and few election snarls. The result: an accurate count, a seven-million-vote margin of victory, 306 electoral votes for Joe Biden, and Republican gains in congressional and state races. But then-President Trump stoked paranoia—never looking for evidence, contesting results even before anyone cast a ballot, and seeking to bend our system until it almost broke with a violent Capitol riot.

The Big Lie—the true corruption of American democracy—has shaken our confidence in stable self-government. On the heels of voter-fraud claims, the Capitol siege, and damaging voting laws, the next midterm and presidential election will test our democracy more severely than at any time since the Civil War. How we react may well determine if we are led into another war against ourselves. *The Big Truth* debunks the 2020 election conspiracy myth once and for all, while celebrating those who held up our democracy under arguably the most intense scrutiny in American electoral history.

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Unchecked:  
The Untold Story Behind Congress's Botched  
Impeachments of Donald Trump  
by Rachel Bade and Karoun Demirjian

A revealing, behind-the-scenes examination of how Congress twice fumbled its best chance to hold accountable a president many considered one of the most dangerous in American history. The definitive—and only—insider account of both Trump impeachments, as told by the two reporters on the front lines covering them for *The Washington Post* and *Politico*.

In a riveting account that flips the script on what readers think they know about the two impeachments of Donald Trump, Rachael Bade and Karoun Demirjian reveal how—and why—congressional oversight failed when it was needed most.

*Unchecked* weaves a vivid narrative of how House Democrats under the lead of a cautious speaker, Nancy Pelosi, hesitated for months to stand up to Trump—and then pulled punches in their effort to oust him in a misguided effort to protect themselves politically. What they left on the cutting room floor would come back to haunt them, as Republicans seized on their missteps to whip an uneasy GOP rank-and-file into line behind Donald Trump, abandoning their scruples to defend a president who some privately believed had indeed abused his power.

Even after Trump incited a mob to violently attack the Capitol—a day the authors recount in minute-by-minute, stunning detail — Democrats pressured their own investigators to forego a thorough investigation in the name of safeguarding the Biden agenda. And Republicans, fearful of repelling a base they needed for re-election, missed their best moment to turn their backs on a leader they secretly agreed was destructive to democracy.

Sourced from hundreds of interviews with all the key players, the authors of *Unchecked* pull back the curtain on how both parties pursued political expediency over fact-finding. The end result not only emboldened Trump, giving him room for a political comeback, but also undermined Congress by rendering toothless their most powerful check on a president: the power of impeachment. A dramatic and at times crushing work of investigative reporting, *Unchecked* is both a gripping page-turner of political intrigue and a detailed case study for historians and political scientists searching for answers about the unravelling of checks and balances that have governed American democracy for centuries.

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### **Restaurants**

L'Auberge Chez Francois  
332 Springvale Road  
Great Falls, Virginia 22066  
703-759-3800

In 1954, Francois Haeringer, was working at a restaurant, Three Musketeers on Connecticut Avenue in Washington DC. He took it over and opened the original Chez Francois.

The restaurant was housed in the Claridge Hotel. (I remember the hotel.) In 1975 the hotel was closed to make way for an office building. After finding the perfect six acres of rolling green hills in Great Falls, Virginia, Haeringer, had a new home.

The current L'Auberge Chez Francois opened in 1976 and is still owned by the same family. [A more fulsome history can be found online.]

Susan, David, Debbie, and I had lunch at this restaurant on a Sunday afternoon.

In addition to what we ordered the restaurant provided to each of us an Amuse Bouche – a small cup of Butternut Squash Soup. Also, there is provided on the table to be shared, a small basket of interesting breads.

The following are the selections that each of us chose.

Susan ordered a bowl of Gazpacho; Maine Lobster & Haricots Verts Salad, with Vanilla Vinaigrette; Organic sliced Tomato Salad with dressing; Raspberry Souffle.

Debbie ordered Chive Crepe stuffed with Duxelle of Wild Mushrooms, Tomato Concasse, Madeira Sauce; Papa's Bouillabaisse: Medley of fresh fish & shellfish, Saffron Broth; Organic sliced Tomato Salad with dressing; chocolate Souffle.

David ordered a Half Dozen (7) raw Oysters with Mignonette Sauce; Organic Sliced Tomato Salad with dressing, Rainbow Trout Filet, Toasted Almonds, Lemon Brown Butter; Plum Tart.

I ordered Caesar Salad, Lobster Bisque, Marcho Farms Veal Scalloppini, Virginia Ham, Wild Mushrooms, Crème Sauce, Spaetzles; Chocolate Souffle.

David and I each had a glass of Red Lager Beer, a draft from Quebec, Canada.

The restaurant then delivered to be shared, an order of Chocolate Ice cream in Meringue with Raspberry Souffle. Our server had come to understand that we were celebrating David and Susan's anniversary.

There are two gender neutral restrooms. On the floor where we dined, there is a small single user restroom. There is a larger restroom on another floor.

There are large, tan tiles covering the wall to just over waist height.

There is a square white ceramic wall hanging wash basin and a single white ceramic floor-based commode.

There is a dark wood table in one corner and a black metal floor-based container for trash.

The restaurant seats up to 200 people. If there is anything negative about the restaurant, it is that the chairs at the tables are not very comfortable even with cushions on the seats.

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Zinnia  
9201 Colesville Road

## Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Tim, James, Michael, Sherry, Debbie, and I went for lunch at Zinnia. This restaurant used to be Mrs. K's Toll House. For those who remember, Mrs. K's Toll House fondly, you will not be disappointed by Zinnia.

Some 175 people can be seated in various rooms, at various levels inside and there is a bar with 10 tall chairs. Another 200 people can be seated on the extended rolling grounds.

Our server was Sarah who did a great job, well supported by serving teams who delivered the dishes we ordered.

Tim ordered Burrata with Marinated cherry tomatoes, lemon, and basil; a 10 oz Center Cut Creekstone Farms Ribeye and Sorbet.

James also ordered Burrata; Swordfish picada – Blue crab butter, lemon; ice cream.

Michael Mandel was not very hungry and settled for Fried Green Tomatoes and Burrata.

Sherry ordered Broiled Bay Oysters – black garlic butter, and breadcrumbs; 10 oz Center Cut Creekstone Farms Ribeye and Sorbet.

Debbie started with 1 piece of my Fried Green Tomato; a 10 oz Center Cut Creekstone Farms Ribeye and Cheesecake.

Mike ordered 2/3 of a Fried Green Tomatoes, a large cup of Seafood Chowder with Scallops, shrimp, smoked bacon; Sauteed Peruvian Bay Scallops, Leek and cauliflower puree and Crème Brûlée.

There are two gender neutral restrooms. The floor is covered by tiny white tiles. The walls to waist height are covered by grey rectangular tile. Above that by flowered wallpaper.

There is a floor based white ceramic commode and a square white ceramic washbasin. There is gold piping around the commode, a gold hanging toilet paper holder and a gold open trash top can.

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Maman Restaurant  
7190 Bethesda Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20814-5316

This is a relatively new restaurant, mimicking the original restaurant of the same owners in New York City.

Inside there are 6 4-top tables and 1 long table that seats 18 people. Outside, within a railed area, there are additional 4 and 2-tops seating 20 people.

Debbie and I shared an almond croissant. I ordered the Quiche Lorraine and Debbie ordered an omelet – including ham, Comte cheese, and herbed tomatoes.

I asked my now regular question, “how are tips handled by the servers and others?” Our server, Juana Argentina, told me that cash tips go to the people who work in the kitchen and other support folks, while servers get the tips delivered by credit card.

*Mike*

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