

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

22% of registered voters say the country is headed in the right direction.
68% of registered voters say the country is on the wrong track.

	<u>Right direction</u>	<u>Wrong track</u>
Male	27%	62%
Female	17	70
Democrats	42	41
Republicans	9	88
Independents	14	71
Urban	33	54
Suburban	20	66
Rural	15	76

[Econ/YouGov 8/29/23]

In the July 22, 2023, issue of the Washington Watch, 25% of registered voters said the country was headed in the right direction and 63% were on the wrong track.

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Half of Americans name China as the country posing the greatest threat to the U.S.

China	50%
Russia	17%
No one	4%
North Korea	2%
U.S.	2%
Don't know/ Refused	24%

China has risen in Americans' ranking of greatest threats over the years.

In 2007:	In 2014:	In 2019:
1st Iran	1st Russia	1st China/Russia
2nd Iraq	2nd China	2nd North Korea
3rd China	3rd Iran	3rd Iran

About a fifth of Americans see the UK as the United States top ally.

UK	22%	Japan	2%
Canada	6%	EU	1%
No Country	6%	France	1%
Israel	4%	Mexico	1%
Germany	3%	Russia	1%
China	2%		

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Every year, about 4 million Americans turn 18 and gain the right to vote. In the eight years between the 2016 and 2024 elections, that 32 million new eligible voters.

Also, every year, 2.5 million older Americans die. So, in the same eight years, that's as many as 20 million fewer older voters.

There is discussion in some parts of the GOP about raising the voting age to 25, and among some Democrats about lowering it to 16. [WP 7/19/23 – Celinda Lake and Mac Heller.]

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Politics in America

1. Democrats aren't young. Both parties are old.

Young voters tend to prefer Democrats while their parents and grandparents are more likely to prefer the GOP. In the 2022 House elections, 68 percent of voters aged 18 to 29 backed a Democrat, and 56 percent of seniors voted for a Republican.

Older voters rule both parties. In 2022, 6 in 10 Democrats and 7 to 20 Republicans were 50 or older.

2. Republicans aren't rural. Democrats aren't urban. Most voters from both parties live in suburbs.

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Democrats	27%	57%	16%
Republican	11%	53%	36%

3. Religious Democrats and secular Republicans are both common.

Democrats typically represent the most secular voters. They consistently win almost all identified atheists and 80% of agnostics. Republicans represent more than 80% of the White evangelical vote.

	Protestant	Catholic	Other	Unaffiliated
Democrats	33%	17%	10%	39%
Republicans	59%	21%	6%	14%

- Both parties rely on White college graduates – not just Democrats.

In 2022, only 52% of White college graduates voted for Democrats, and 47% favored Republicans.

Racial and educational breakdown of each party:

	White, college-ed	White, non-college ed	Non-white
Democratic	37%	27%	36%
Republican	31%	54%	15%

- The Hispanic vote is not the GOP’s only route to victory. Hispanic voters are still a small chunk of the GOP.

Racial breakdown of the Republican Party

White	85%
Hispanic	7%
Other	4%

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On June 29, 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court ended affirmative action in college admissions. The ruling held that race-conscious admission programs of Harvard University and the University of North Carolina violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. It’s now deemed unconstitutional for colleges – both public and private – to weigh race as a factor in who they should admit. A new study, however, finds that effectively, affirmative action for rich kids is alive and well.

The study is based on what is called – for purposes of this study the Ivy-Plus colleges: the eight Ivy League Schools – Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia, Brown, Cornell, Dartmouth and UPenn – as well as Stanford, MIT, Duke, and the University of Chicago.

Less than half of 1% of Americans go to these prestigious private colleges. Yet these twelve colleges account for more than 10% of Fortune 500 CEOs, a quarter of U.S. Senators, half of all Rhodes scholars, and three-fourths of Supreme Court Justices appointed in the last half-century.

As previously mentioned, the economists find that wealthy children, even when they have comparable SAT and ACT scores to less affluent kids, are much more likely to get into these elite schools. A student from the richest 1% of American families (from families earning \$611,00 per year) is twice as likely to attend an elite private college as a middle-class student (from a family earning between \$83,000-\$116,000) with the same academic credentials: they find no such advantages for rich kids at America’s flagship public universities, like UC Berkeley or the University of Michigan.

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U.S Population Projections

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2040</u>	<u>2050</u>
Population in millions	294	366	438
White	67%	51.7%	47%
Hispanic	14%	23.46%	29%
Black	13%	13%	13%
Asian	5%	7.24%	9%

19% of Americans will be foreign born by 2050.

For the period from 2005-2050 new immigrants and their descendants will account for 82% of population increase.

Of the 117 million people added to the population during this period – 67 million will be the immigrants themselves, 47 million will be their children, and 3 million will be their grandchildren. [PEW 2/11/2008]

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Doctor Income Data from 2017

The average U.S. physician earns \$350,000 per year. Top doctors pull in 10 times that amount.

In their prime earnings years of 40-55, the average physician made \$405,000 in 2017 – almost all (94%) from wages. Doctors in the top 10% averaged \$1.3 million. Those in the top 1 percent averaged \$4 million though 85% came from business income or capital gains.

Top	Avg total Income	Share of Income from Wages	Average Workweek Hours
Top 1%	\$4.1M	15%	48
Top 5%	\$1.8M	49%	54
Top 10%	\$1.M	69%	54
Top 25%	\$871K	86%	53
Top 50%	\$626K	92%	50
All	\$405K	94%	

As of 2017 Medical students have an average debt of \$246,000. [WP 8/4/2023]

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The rise of the wellness culture and the decreased interest in alcohol have led to the growth of non-alcoholic drinks – even for people who sometimes drink alcohol.

Athletic Brewing, a nonalcoholic brewery, saw a more than 13,000% increase in revenue from its launch in 2018 to 2021, brewing 875 barrels in year one compared to 1,700% in 2022.

But nonalcoholic beverages still make up a low percentage of overall alcohol sales – only about .05% from October 2021 to October 2022.

From August 2021 to August 2022, total dollar sales of these drinks was \$395 million according to Nielsen.

Mocktails and other alcohol alternatives are more than a passing fad. The sector is expected to grow to \$30 billion in 2025. [Axios What’s Next 8/03/23]

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Households that make more than \$75,000 have accounted for a large majority of the growth in renters over the past decade, according to the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies. [NYT 7/23/23]

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Wikipedia has versions in 334 languages and a total of more than 61 million articles. It consistently ranks among the world's 10 most -visited websites. Its contributors, who make about 345 edits per minute on the site, are not paid. [NYT7/23/23]

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American consumers credit card debt has surpassed \$1 trillion for the first time ever. The rise reflects soaring consumer confidence and spending power among cooling inflation. [Axios PM 8/8/23]

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Second-home owners constituted half of all home sales in 2020 and 2021. [NYT 8/28/23]

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37% of Americans say they have a friend who is at least 15 years younger or older than they are.

Intergenerational friendships are more common among older generations – Gen X (41%) and boomers (39%) and – millennials (32%).

People are more likely to meet their friends from other generations at work (26%) or at church or temple (11%). [Axios Finish Line – 7/17/23]

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Dwayne Wade, who will be inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame, moved his family out of Florida to California because of state laws that negatively affect the LGBTQ community. His daughter Zaya is transgender. [NYT 8/12/23]

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for June 2023 is 3.8%.

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 7.1% in August 2023, greater than the 7.0 % it was a year earlier.

The Labor Force Participation rate (LFPR) in August 2023 is 62.8% higher than the 62.3% in August 2022.

The Demographics of Unemployment for August 2023

Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women –3.2 % (up from last month)

Men –3.7% (up from last month)

Unemployment by Race

White – 3.0% (down from last month)

Black – 5.4 % (down from last month)

Hispanic –4.0 % (down from last month)

Asian –3.0 % (down from last month)

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

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

High School –3.8 % (up as last month)

Some college –3.1 % (down from last month)

Bachelor’s Degree or higher –2.2 % (up from last month)

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46% of U.S. workers, who receive paid time off from their employer, whether for a vacation, doctor appointments or minor illnesses, do not take all of their paid time off. [PEW 3/30/23]

Closing the Gap

The difference in earnings between full-time working women and men is now the narrowest on record, according to an Axios analysis of data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Full-time working women had median weekly earnings of \$1001 last quarter, about 84% of the \$1,181 median for men. It’s the smallest the gap has been since 1979, the first year for which earnings data is available. That year, women’s median earnings were 62% of men’s. [CNBC 7/27/2023]

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What's the most reliable method of predicting election results? Here is the answer from the Washington Post's polling director, Scott Clement.

No method of forecasting elections is as reliable as we would like.

Close to an election, pre-election polls continue to be a good indicator of the likely outcome.

The following polls are considered most valid for national media.

Washington Post
Associated Press
CBS
CNN
Fox News
Monmouth University
Wall Street Journal
New York Times

[WP 8/17/23]

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This and That

The author(s) of the following is unknown to Washington Watch and efforts to determine the author have been unsuccessful. But WW thinks it is worth sharing.

I JUST discovered my age group!

I am a Seenager (Senior teenager).

I have everything that I wanted as a teenager, only 55 years later.

I don't have to go to school or work.

I get an allowance every month.

I have my own pad.

I don't have a curfew.

I have a driver's license and my own car.

I have ID that gets me into bars and the wine store. I like the wine store best.

The people I hang around with are not scared of getting pregnant, they

aren't scared of anything, they have been blessed to live this long,
why be scared?

And I don't have acne.

Life is Good!

Also, you will feel much more intelligent after reading this, if you are a Seenager.

Brains of older people are slow because they know so much.

People do not decline mentally with age; it just takes them longer to recall facts because they have more information in their brains. Scientists believe this also makes you hard of hearing as it puts pressure on your inner ear.

Also, older people often go to another room to get something and when they get there, they stand there wondering what they came for.

It is NOT a memory problem; it is nature's way of making older people do more exercise.

SO THERE!!

I have more friends I should send this to, but right now I can't remember their names.

So please forward this to your friends;
they may be my friends, too.

OLD JUST GOT COOLER!!

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The richest 10% of U.S. households are responsible for 40% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

The top 1% of households accounted for 15-17% of the nation's emissions.

The team found that the highest emissions linked to income came from White, non-Hispanic households and the lowest came from Black households. [WP 8/18/23]

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49% of American workers believe a 4-Day work week would be successful. [Ellyn Briggs 8/27/23]

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The first semiconductor chips, invented in the late 1950s, held only a handful of transistors. Today, the primary semiconductor in a smart phone has between 10 and 20 billion transistors, each about the size of a virus. [NYT 7/16/23]

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7 nations have been led by openly gay heads of state: Latvia, Iceland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Serbia, Ireland, Sarino, Canary Islands, and Norway.

A proposal from China’s internet regulator would try to prevent “internet addiction” by limiting children younger than 8 to 40 minutes of smartphone time a day. [NYT 8/5/23]

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Approximately 10 million Americans have entered into a rent-to-own deal at some point in their adult lives, according to estimates by the Pew Charitable Trusts. [NYT 8/5/23]

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Nearly 4 million American in 38 states have recently been cut from Medicaid “since the end of a pandemic-era promise that people with safety-net health coverage could keep it, requiring every state to begin a herculean undertaking of sorting out who still belonged on the rolls. Most of those people have been dropped from Medicaid for reasons unrelated to whether they are actually eligible for the coverage, according to Kaiser Family Foundation, a health-policy organization, which has been compiling this data. Three-fourths have been removed because of bureaucratic factors.

The politics: For millions of Americans, this is the only health insurance available. Losing it for reasons of paperwork, not eligibility, is government not running smoothly on a life-or-death issue. [WP 8/4/23]

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According to the Association for Advancing Automation, robot orders in North America jumped 42% during the pandemic after essentially being flat over the previous 5 years. [NYT 7/30/23]

Ageless Innovation is a company that creates products for older adults, including animatronic dogs and cats. [WSJ 9/2-3/2023]

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When Netflix shipped DVDs to customers, there were about 100,000 to choose from. Streaming which has a different economics has reduced that to about 6,600 titles, [NYT 8/13/23]

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The National Diaper Bank Network reports that nearly half – 47% -- of U.S. families with young children struggle to afford diapers. That is up from 34% when the study was first conducted in 2010. [Michele Munz 7/24/23]

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79% of Canadians and 63% of folks in the United States favor allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally. The country that is most welcoming is Sweden where 92% favor marriage. [PEW Global attitudes survey]

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About Martin Luther King
From May 1963 to April 2023

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Favorable	
			White	Black
May 1963	41%	37%	35	92
August 1964	44	38	38	82
May 1965	45	46	38	89
August 1966	33	63	27	83
August 2011	94%	4%	93	100

[PEW 8/10/23]

Most Americans say King had a positive impact on the country, with 47% saying he has had a very positive impact.

60% of Americans say they have heard or read a great deal or a fair amount about King’s “I have a dream” speech.

52% of Americans say there has been a great deal or a fair amount of progress on racial equality in the last 60 year.

58% of those who say efforts to ensure equality haven’t gone far enough think it is unlikely that there will be racial equality in their lifetime.

Many people who say efforts to ensure racial equality haven't gone far enough say several systems need to be completely rebuilt to ensure equality.

70% of Americans say marches and demonstrations that don't disrupt everyday life are always or often acceptable ways to protest racial inequality. [PEW 8/10/23]

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Odds and Ends

California residents received a rude awakening when State Farm (insurance company) announced in late May that it would no longer accept new applications for homeowners' insurance policies in the state. (A result of the wildfire season.) [Morning Consult 7/10/23]

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Once pilot whales, which can grow up to 24 feet in length and weigh up to 6,600 pounds, are out of the water, their organs can gradually be crushed under their own weight. [NYT 7/28/2023]

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Mexico exports more beer to the United States than any other country by far. In 2022, it shipped in seven times the volume of the second-highest source of U.S. imports, the Netherlands. [NYT 7/28/2023]

The average American eats 20 pounds of ice cream each year, which works out to more than 10 scoops a month. [NYT 7/30/23]

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More companies filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the first half of this year than in any year since 2010 according to S&P Global. [NYT 8/6/23]

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Last year, the original art for a comic book page featuring Spider-Man in his black costume sold for \$3.36 million at Heritage Auctions. [NYT 8/6/23]

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32% of Americans have a tattoo, and 22% have more than one. Women, Black Americans, and younger adults are among the most likely to have tattoos.

- 38% of women have at least one tattoo compared with 27% of men.

- 69% of Americans with tattoos do it to remember or honor someone.
- 24% of tattooed Americans say they regret their tattoos.
- 2 in 10 adults under 30 who don't have a tattoo are likely to get one in the future.

For Americans without tattoos, seeing one on someone else gives them a more negative than a positive impression of that person.

8 in 10 Americans say society has become more accepting of people with tattoos. [PEW 8/15/23]

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Forty million Americans have stopped attending church in the past 25 years. [Atlantic 7/29/23]

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The crown sitting on the Notorious B.I.G.'s head in the now famous "King of New York" photo taken a few days before his death in 1997 was made of plastic and cost about \$6. In 2020 it sold at auction for nearly \$600,000. [NYT 8/13/23] [Notorious B.I.G is a famous rapper.]

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An Englishman, taking a road trip through the US, notices he is low on fuel and pulls into the first gas station he sees.

Attendant walks out and approaches the car.

"How can I help you, sir?"

The man says, "I'm low on petrol, please top off the tank."

With an odd look, the guy begins to fill it up.

The Englishman says, "Could you open the bonnet and check the oil?"

"Oh yes", says the attendant.

The Brit says, "It appears my windscreen needs a good cleaning, would you mind terribly."

Unable to hold his tongue any more the attendant angrily snaps, "Alright that's enough! It's not petrol, its gasoline, it's not a bonnet, it's a hood. And it's not a windscreen, it's a windshield. We invented cars, so you call them by their American names!"

The Englishman calmly replies, "Well yes, my friend, you may have invented the automobile, but we invented the language!"

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The following was created by Gerry Kauvar

Georgia – The IM-PEACH STATE

I've got Georgia on my mind,
How many votes can you find?

The Devil Went to Georgia
(And messed with the voting machines)

The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia: November 2020

Midnight Train to Georgia: Where the stolen votes were.

The Moon Over Georgia: Trump call: The Loon Over
Georgia

Ramblin' Man: Mark Meadows

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President Biden

In 2020, Biden won only 500 or so counties, but together they are responsible for 71% of the American economy. Trump won over 2,500 counties, responsible for only 29%. [David Brooks, NYT, 8/2/23]

President Joe Biden on July 29, 2023, publicly acknowledged his seventh grandchild for the first time, while adding that his granddaughter is “not a political issue.”

The president's son, Hunter Biden, and Lunden Roberts settled a paternity suit over their daughter, Navy, in an Arkansas court last month. Some Republicans, including presidential candidate Ron DeSantis, have taken jabs at Biden for not counting Navy among his grandchildren in public remarks.

President Biden's job approval ratings
(7/30)

<u>Date</u>	<u>NBC</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN</u>	<u>FOX</u>	<u>QUINNIPIAC</u>
AUG'23	xxx	xxx	xxx	42/58	39/55
JULY'23	xxx	xxx	41/59	xxx	40/53
JUNE'23	43/53	xxx	xxx	44/55	42/54
MAY'23	xxx	xxx	41/59	42/58	38/57
APR '23	41/54	37/56	xxx	44/55	xxx
MAR'23	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	38/57
MAR'23	xxx	xxx	xxx	44/56	xxx
FEB'23	xxx	43/53	xxx	xxx	40/55
JAN'23	46/50	40/53	46/54	45/54	38/53
DEC'22	xxx	xxx	48/52	44/56	43/49
NOV'22	44/53	43/53	xxx	xxx	36/55
OCT'22	45/52	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
OCT'22	45/52	43/53	42/58	46/53	37/54
SEPT'22	xxx	xxx	46/54	xxx	xxx
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

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	Favorable	Unfavorable
Overall	42.1%	54.1%
On the economy	38.3%	57.6%
On foreign policy	41.7%	52.7%

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.

Gallup (All Adults)

FiveThirtyEight (Reg/Likely voters)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
8/23/23	42%	53%	40.6%	54.6
7/27/23	40%	55%	41.0%	54.0
6/22/23	43%	56%	41.5%	53.8%
5/24/23	39%	57%	40.9%	55.0%
4/25/23	37%	59%	42.1%	53.6%
3/23/23	40%	56%	42.7%	52.8%
12/2/22	40%	55%	42.9%	53.0%
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%

In the United States. Ronald Reagan was the first divorced president in history. None have divorced while in office. [NYT 8/13/23]

For more than 30 years, the Republican Party was defined by Ronald Reagan’s famous three-legged stool: a coalition of fiscal conservatives, social conservatives, and national security hawks.

Today, a majority of Republicans oppose many of the positions that defined the party as recently as a decade ago.

Republicans now side against the key positions that defined Reagan’s stool and George W. Bush’s re-election campaign.

	<u>Republicans in 2005</u>	<u>Republicans in 2023</u>
Oppose same-sex marriage	78%	36%
Prefer reducing debt to protecting entitlements	62%	29%
Think America should be active abroad	53%	24%
All three	30%	7%

The Republican Party has been redefined by the rise of Donald J Trump's conservative populism. [NYT 8/10/23]

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Republicans and Republican-leaning voters are divided into a half dozen groups. (Based on the Times/Siena poll)

The Moderate Establishment – 14% -- Highly educated, affluent- social moderate or liberals – Never Trump

The Traditional Conservative – 26% -- Old fashioned economic and social conservatives – Don't love Trump but support him.

The Right Wing – 26% -- Very conservative. Disproportionately evangelical. – Love Trump more than any other group.

The Blue Collar Populists – 12% -- Socially moderate, economic populists deeply conservative views on race and immigration.

The Libertarian Conservatives – 14% -- Value freedom and small government.

The Newcomers – 8% - They are young, diverse, and moderate.

[NYT The Tilt – Nate Cohn 8/16/23]

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Vice President Harris cast her 31st tie breaking vote on July 12 to invoke cloture on the nomination of Kalpana Kotagal to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In doing so, Harris tied with John C. Calhoun for the most Vice-Presidential tie-breaking votes in U.S. history.

Of these 31 tie-breaking votes – 25 have advanced the confirmation of judges and administration officials and 6 were in relation to a pair of budget reconciliation bills.

It took Calhoun seven years to reach that number – during the presidencies of John Quincy and Andrew Jackson. Harris reached 31 tie-breaking votes in less than three years.

In 3rd place with the most tie-breaking votes, John Adams – 29

In 4th place, George Dallas with 19 tie-breaking votes.

As of July 19, 37 Vice Presidents have cast 299 tie-breaking votes with 156 cast during the 19th century. Less than a quarter of the way into the 21st century, four Vice Presidents have cast 52 tie-breaking votes, not far off from the 60 tie-breakers case during the entire 20th century. [Ballotpedia 7/13/23]

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Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date

As of August 21, 2023, the United States Senate has confirmed 140 federal judges nominated by President Biden: one Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 36 judges for the United States Courts of Appeals, and 103 judges for the United States District Courts.

There are 31 nominations awaiting Senate action: 4 for the Courts of Appeals and 25 for the District Courts. There are 7 vacancies in the U.S. Courts of Appeals, 61 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 – 2 years	140	1	36	103	
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 811 of those 1200 positions.

- 530 people have been confirmed by the Senate.
- 103 nominees are being considered by the Senate.
- 0 awaiting formal nomination.
- 79 positions have no Biden nominee.
- 98 appointees are serving in termed positions or were held over from previous administrations. [WP 9/1/23]

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The following are the favorability ratings for a variety of political leaders based on the Real Clear Politics averages for 8/29/23.

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Biden	40.2	54.6
Trump	38.4	56.9
DeSantis	36.7	47.8
Harris	37.0	53.3
McCarthy	34.0	41.4
Schumer	29.8	42.8
Jeffries	26.6	27.8
McConnell	19.8	58.0

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The 118th Congress

Congress

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Approval of the Congress is up roughly 3.6 points from where it was a year ago and disapproval is down 0.6 points.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 8/29/23	24.2%	66.8%
Real Clear Pol. 7/25/23	23.8%	64.5%
Real Clear Pol. 6/27/23	22.8%	68.6%
Real Clear Pol, 5/16/23	27.0%	65.5%
Real Clear Pol. 3/28/23	26.4%	65.2%

Real Clear Pol. 2/14/22	24.4%	65.4%
Real Clear Pol. 12/19/22	27.6%	62.4%
Real Clear Pol. 11/23/22	23.8%	62.8%
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%	68.3%
Real Clear Pol. 1/17/22	22.4%	66.4%

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

Solid Republican	189	Solid Democrat	172
Likely GOP	12	Likely Dem	18
Lean GOP	6	Lean Dem	15
GOP Tossup	13	Dem Tossup	10
Total	220	Total	215

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THE SENATE

49 Republicans
48 Democrats
3 Independents

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The Senate confirmation process is broken, says Max Stier, President of Partnership for Public Service.

There are now more than 1200 Senate-confirmed political appointments.

Procedural votes, cloture votes to end debate and direct vote on presidential nominations, during the first two years in office:

	Percentage of Recorded Senate Votes
Joe Biden	59%
Donald Trump	55%
Barack Obama	11%
George W Bush	14%

Votes on amendments, to end debates and for final passage of legislation:

	Percentage of recorded Senate Votes
Joe Biden	31%
Donald Trump	28%
Barack Obama	55%
George W Bush	55%

Nominees confirmed:

Joe Biden	793
Donald Trump	620
Barack Obama	881
George W Bush	957

The 2024 Senate Election

		<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independents</u>
Seats not up in 2024		28	39	0
Seats up in 2024		23	11	
Safe	15	CA-Open Murphy DE- Open Hirono Warren MD-Open King (I) Klobuchar Menendez Heinrich Gillibrand Whitehouse	10 IN-Open Hawley Wicker Cramer Fischer Ricketts Blackburn Romney Barrasso Scott	

		Kaine Sanders (I) Cantwell	
Likely	0		1 Cruz
Lean	4	MI-Open Rosen Casey Baldwin	
Toss Up	4	Sinema (I) OH – D Manchin Tester	

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U.S. Senator Rankings

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Mitch McConnell (R-KY)	32%	7%	61%
Joe Manchin (D-WV)	39%	7%	55%
Susan Collins (R-ME)	43%	7%	50%
Ron Johnson (R-WI)	43	8	48
Lindsey Graham (R-SC)	45	10	44
Kyrsten Sinema (I- AZ)	42	15	43
John Fetterman (D-PA)	44	13	43
Ted Cruz (R-TX)	48	9	43
Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)	46	13	41
Joni Ernst (R-IA)	46	14	40
Raphael Warnock (D-GA)	46	13	41

Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming boasts a 70% approval rating in his state, making him the most popular senator. Republican minority leader Mitch McConnell remains America’s most unpopular senator.

Vulnerable Democrats continue to outperform Biden’s approval rating. [Morning Consult 4/1-6/30 2023]

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2024 Presidential Election

A prominent person from the political polling community stated the following in mid-August: Neither Joe Biden nor Donald Trump will be on the general election ballot in November 2024.

On August 15, at 3:45 p.m. on CNN, New Hampshire Governor Republican Chris Sununu, having not seen the previous statement, said he was betting that neither Biden nor Trump would be on the final general election ballot. (WW)

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

For the Republican nomination: The following have announced their candidacies or are expected to announce their candidacies.

Donald Trump – Former President of the United States
Ron DeSantis – Governor of Florida
Nikki Haley – Former governor of South Carolina
Vivek Ramaswamy – Entrepreneur and author
Asa Hutchinson – Former Governor of Arkansas
Tim Scott – U.S. Senator from South Carolina
Chris Christie – Former Governor of New Jersey
Mike Pence – Former Vice President
Larry Elder – Conservative talk show host
Doug Burgum – Governor of North Dakota
Will Hurd – Former member of Congress/CIA

Republicans who have said they are not running in 2024:

Rick Scott – U.S. Senator
Josh Hawley – U.S. Senator
Tom Cotton – U.S. Senator
Larry Hogan – former Governor of Maryland
Mike Pompeo – Former Secretary of State
Chris Sununu – Governor of New Hampshire

Republicans who have started to campaign and then changed their minds.

Francis Suarez – Mayor of Miami

Trump has a strong lead among potential rivals. [8/29/23]

Donald Trump 52.7%
Ron DeSantis 14.5%
Mike Pence 5.0%
Nikki Haley 5.7%
Tim Scott 2.0 %
Chris Christie 2.8%
Vivek Ramaswamy 7.5%
Asa Hutchison 0.5%
Doug Bergum 0.3%
Will Hurd 0.3%
Larry Elder 0.0 %

For the Democratic nomination [8/26/23]:

Joe Biden – 65.8%
Michael Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. – 12.8 %
Marianne Williamson - 5.3%

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Women Will Get It Done

President Joe Biden is set to tap Admiral Lisa Franchetti to lead the Navy which would make her the first woman to serve as a member of the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff, according to a Defense Department official. [Politico 7/21/23]

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FIFA increased the Women's World Cup prize money to \$110 million up from \$30 million. It still trails the prize money at the recent men's World Cup in Qatar: \$440 million, or four times as much. [NYT 7/22/23]

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History has been made. Against the odds and amid a backdrop of turmoil, Spain reached the pinnacle in Sydney on August 20, beating England 1-0 to win the Women's World Cup for the first time.

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6 out of 8 Ivy League Presidents are now Women – Harvard, Columbia, Dartmouth, Brown, Cornell, and University of Pennsylvania.

Only about one-third of college presidents are women, a number that has been stagnant for years. This is at a time when 60% of college students are women and they graduate at higher rates than men. [Forbes 8/1/2023]

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Confidence starts to decline for girls compared to boys around 11 years old – and never bounces back. [Fortune – Sheryl Sandberg’s Lean In 7/31/23]

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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 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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Finding My Way:
A Memoir of Family, Identity and Political Ambition
Robin F. Schepper

A deeply personal memoir about finding family and belonging from White House staffer Robin F. Schepper.

Growing up torn between her single Pan Am–stewardess mom and brothel-owning grandmother in 1960s New York City, Robin F. Schepper never imagined that she’d one day have an office in the East Wing of the White House. Her childhood in a German American neighborhood on the Upper East Side was peppered with half-truths, from the family secrets surrounding her grandmother’s immigration to deceptions about her biological father.

In a world of self-absorbed adults, Robin largely raised herself: she secured a scholarship to a prestigious private school and worked several jobs as a teenager to pay her own living expenses before finally escaping to California for college. Street-smart and undeniably driven, once in the professional world Robin quickly ascended in the male-dominated political sphere, traveling the globe while being

subjected to sexual harassment and assaults that echoed obstacles her mother and grandmother had faced.

Through it all, Robin searched for her biological father. She felt that if she could understand why he abandoned her, she could free herself from secrets, lies, and shame.

Robin eventually ascended to work for the First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama and, in the meantime, created her own family by adopting two sons from Kazakhstan. Intimate and captivating, *Finding My Way* follows an ambitious woman who reached the highest pinnacles of a political career while simultaneously fulfilling her own quest to heal from family trauma and discover her true identity.

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The Rabbit Hutch
Tess Gunty

An online obituary writer. A young mother with a dark secret. A woman waging a solo campaign against rodents — neighbors, separated only by the thin walls of a low-cost housing complex in the once bustling industrial center of Vacca Vale, Indiana.

Welcome to the Rabbit Hutch.

Ethereally beautiful and formidably intelligent, Blandine shares her apartment with three teenage boys she neither likes nor understands, all, like her, now aged out of the state foster care system that has repeatedly failed them, all searching for meaning in their lives.

Set over one sweltering week in July and culminating in a bizarre act of violence that finally changes everything, *The Rabbit Hutch* is a savagely beautiful and biting funny snapshot of contemporary America, a gorgeous and provocative tale of loneliness and longing, entrapment and, ultimately, freedom. "Gunty writes with a keen, sensitive eye about all manner of intimacies—the kind we build with other people, and the kind we cultivate around ourselves and our tenuous, private aspirations.

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Restaurants

The Bazaar
By Jose Andres
1100 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington DC
202-868-5088

The story of the building in which this restaurant is located, the Waldorf Astoria, can be found at the end of the restaurant review.

Susan, David, Max, Debbie, and I went to “The Bazaar - By Jose Andres” restaurant on July 13th, 6 months after it opened.

There are male and female servers. It appears that each of the “waiters” is accompanied by an assistant. In our case the waiter was Lucas, and his assistant was Justin.

The restaurant is multi-floor with large steps between floors. There is a two-person elevator that can be used by those for whom the steps make entering the dining floor difficult if not impossible.

There are several traditional liquor bars on the lower floors below the main dining floor which seats 120+ at the same time on 2, 4, 5-6 tops.

There is on the menu a dinner called The Bazaar Experience, a five-course offering called an “exceptional” tasting menu at \$150/person (pre-gratuity).

The regular menu is broken into several sections “A peek into the Archives”, “Little Snacks”, “Traditional Tapas”, “Modern Tapas”, and “Dessert”.

There is no “take out” or “delivery.” Although a couple of dishes that we ordered had leftovers and Debbie asked to take them home. Then we left the bag containing the leftovers in the restaurant.

As we were leaving the restaurant, a person who seemed to be a manager, escorted us to the 2-person elevator and mentioned that a large part of the cliental were visitors to Washington but not many local folks have visited. We promised to tell our friends.

We ordered 13 items which turned out to be too much. We ordered 2 items from Archives, 6 items from Modern Tapas, 3 items from Traditional Tapas, 1 desert and 1 item that was not on the printed menu.

By popular request, Max devised a rating system so we could figure out our favorite dishes. Everyone rated each dish on the following scale:

1 - Eh... 2 - Good! 3 - Great!! x - Did not try

Here are our rankings of the tapas:

Dish	Avg. Individual Ratings
1. Steak & piquillo <i>short rib steak, piquillo chips, piquillo pil pil</i>	3.0
2. Neptune's pillows <i>sesame rocoto, spicy tuna, fresh wasabi</i>	3.0
3. Crab Louie cone <i>Marie Rose sauce, avocado, garden pickles</i>	2.8
4. Rossejat negra <i>paella-style pasta, squid ink, uni, sepia sofrito, shrimp</i>	2.67
5. Key lime pie (dessert) <i>José's way</i>	2.5
6. Patatas bravas <i>not on the menu</i>	2.5
7. Philly cheesesteak <i>airbread, cheddar, Wagyu beef</i>	2.4
8. California funnel cake <i>seaweed funnel cake, avocado, Blue Crab, tobiko, mayo, cucumber</i>	2.0
9. Ferran Adrià modern olives <i>liquid Arbequina olive, Gordal olive, Manzanilla olives</i>	2.0
10. Ensaladilla de cangrejo <i>Maryland Blue Crab, potatoes, mayo espuma</i>	2.0
11. Potatoes Pau Gasol <i>fried potatoes, labneh, cured egg yolk, Ossetra caviar</i>	1.67
12. Spanish octopus <i>Potato espuma, fried potatoes, chorizo</i>	1.67

13. Baby Japanese peaches

1.4

Fresh burrata, hazelnuts, arugula

The washrooms are located on a lower level of the building. One can get tired just looking up or down the very long flight of stairs. Presumptively, there are separate male and female washrooms, the following is from the male washroom.

There is a black marble counter in which there are located three washbasins headed by long mirrors. There are black figured floors. To the right there are 5 white ceramic urinals with partial walls between them. Behind them are a series of commode rooms. There is also a crib to rest or change a baby.

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The Old Post Office building was built between 1892 and 1899. It was used as the city's main General Post Office until 1914.

A year after the building opened, an accident there took the life of D.C. Postmaster James P. Willett. On September 30, 1899, Willett fell 90 feet (27 m) down an open elevator shaft. Nothing more than a flimsy wooden barrier prevented access to the shaft. Willett died a day later.

Thereafter, it functioned primarily as a federal office building.

Major renovations were made to the building in 1976 and 1983. Between then and 1991 it was used for a variety of commercial purposes and renamed the "Old Post Office Pavilion."

In 2013, the U.S. General Services Administration leased the property for 60 years to a consortium headed by "DJT Holdings LLC" a holding company that Donald Trump owns through a revocable trust. Trump developed the property into a luxury hotel, the Trump International Hotel which opened in 2016 and closed in May 2022 after its sale to CGI Merchant Group. It reopened as the Waldorf Astoria on June 1, 2022. [Wikipedia 7/28/23]

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BBQ at Love Makoto
200 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington DC 20001
202- 992 -7730

Debbie, Bev, Brady, and I went to BBQ at Love Makoto. At the end of dinner when I asked Debbie, Bev, and Brady whether they would come to this restaurant again they all said no. I am not as negative as they are and so I have written the following.

This Japanese culinary collection consists of three full-service dining and drinking areas. The three areas apparently seat up to 200 people.

At least in the area in which we were seated it was busy, crowded, and loud.

Chopsticks are provided as an eating device but when I asked for a fork one was quickly delivered.

Portions were more than ample.

The area we were in included 4 tops and 2 tops. The 4 tops had cooking grills in the center of the table.

Debbie and Brady ordered Omakase. This is a 4-5 course serving with the courses being chosen by the chef.

Bev ordered Hokkaido scallop's and Udon "mac" & cheese.

Mike ordered sweet shrimp + caviar.

For the table we ordered Tokyo slaw + wasabi; Mochi potato and truffle shisco and seasonal roasted vegetables. Oysters were ordered and not delivered and were taken off the bill.

There are 7 individual bathrooms. Brady checked them out and found that each had a commode and wash basin.

The restaurant opened May/June 2023 and is open Tuesday through Sunday.

The owners of this restaurant are also the owners of the Unconventional Diner and L'Ardente.

* * * * *

The Saga

1190 22nd St NW
Washington DC 20037
202-480-9892

I went to this restaurant with Debbie and Max. It had been open for 4 months and is located in the Ritz Carlton Hotel. In a previous incarnation it was the Westend Bistro.

One passes through the Quadrant Bar and Lounge on your way to Saga.

The restaurant seats 80 inside and another 20 on the patio/sidewalk on the Avenue.

The menu is Spanish-Latin American.

Debbie had PA AMB Tomaquet – House-made sourdough with tomatoes.

She shared a Whole Branzino with Mike and ordered the Petit Pecat De Xocolata for dessert.

Mike also ordered Octopus Carpaccio as an appetizer.

Mike finished the evening with 2 scoops ice cream - Tocinillo del Cielo and Lemon Yuzu Pistachio.

Max ordered Cambas Al Ajillo – Mexican Gulf Shrimp with olive oil followed by ARROZ AMARILLO – Bomba Rice, duck confit baby radishes, mushroom and Spicy Deviled Churros.

Edwin was our server. Notably, all the servers were men. Women were included among the assistants.

When you make a reservation, the restaurant requires a \$10 deposit for each person in your party – It is credited on your bill at the end of the meal. There is a 22.5% service charge.

There are 2 tops and 4 tops and at least one larger table and a bar that seats up to 20 people just inside the restaurant. I found the chairs to be particularly comfortable.

There is a huge window on the M Street side of the restaurant and watching the many walkers, animals, bikers, and scooter users makes for good entertainment until darkness sets in.

Periodically fire trucks with lights blazing run down M Street to the fire station a block away.

The restaurant is quite noisy.

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Café Lurcat
1624 Harmon Place
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612 486 5500

Because of the large number of people who participated in a dinner at Café Lurcat the description of this restaurant is more complicated than most. Therefore, this review has two sections, a list of the people that joined in and a separate description of the food they consumed.

The participants were – Nancy, Stan, Heidi, Loni and Zoey, Joe, Bridget, Neil, Janice, Tyler, Carly Rooney, Eli, Debbie, Michael. (Sarabeth and Kai were not at the dinner.)

Here are the items from the menu that were enjoyed by one or more of the participants.

Small plates -Bread, Octopus, Eden Valley Wagyu Beef Tongue, Hamachi Crudo grapefruit gelee, Poached Oysters
Salads – Pickled Strawberry & Burrata
Pasta – Cavatelli Lamb Neck apu; Linguine & Clams
Dinner plates – Miso Sea Bass; Korean Barbecue Salmon; Roasted Amish Chicken; Lurcat Burgers, Eden Valley Wagyu – 7 oz Filet Mignon
Vegetables – Lurcat Fries

The single most popular dish was the Miso Sea Bass – Janice, Neil, Stan, Mike (4 orders)

Second most popular were the Lurcat Burgers – Debbie, Nance, Carley (3 orders)

There was a fair amount of sharing. The French fries were outstanding.

The restaurant seats up to 375 people at a time in multiple dining rooms. The food was quite good, but the service was very, very slow.

* * * * *

COV

3155 Galleria

Edina, Minnesota 55435

952-999-4011

About a block from the Westin Hotel.

The restaurant can seat 300 people at the same time.

It has every size and shape of seating that one might imagine: 2 tops, 4 tops, and 6 tops. Tall tables and ordinary height tables. Tables that seat 2, 4 or 6 people. There is a U-shaped bar that seats as many as 30 people.

There is indoor and outdoor seating which is combined when the weather is appropriate. There are various temporary walls that can be closed to keep the outside from coming inside in bad weather. It is likely that the walls would be down all the time in the winter months.

Debbie, Danny, and Mike all had Lobster rolls. Debbie had French fries. Danny and Mike started with New England Clam Chowder. Sheila had a bacon lettuce and avocado sandwich plus French fries.

The restaurant has a private dining space called The Harbor Room.

The restaurant has substantial offerings of alcoholic beverages: Signature Drinks, Zero Proof Cocktails, Corvain Reserve Selections by the glass or bottle, White and Red wine by the bottle or glass.

The restaurant does not take reservations for groups of less than 6 people.

The restaurant has a wide variety of offerings in various sections: Shareables, Flatbreads & Soups, Burgers & Sandwiches, Salads, Pasta, Entrees and Wood- Fired steaks and Sides.

Mike

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