

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. (This is the same as last month.) [Econ/YouGov 8/29/23]

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15% of the United States worked from home last year. Every state now has more remote workers than it did in 2019.

Boulder, Colorado had the highest share of remote workers in any metro area last year at 32%.

San Francisco and San Jose are both in the top 10.

Just over 25% of the workforce in D.C. is remote – the 6th highest rate of any city and higher than any state.

Mississippi has the lowest share of remote workers in the United States at just 5.5%.

Nationwide, the share of people working from home declined by less than 3 percentage points between 2021-2022. [Axios AM 9/16/23]

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“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” [Maya Angelou]

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The House of Representatives voted to remove Kevin McCarthy as Speaker, marking the first time in history that a House Speaker has been removed in this manner.

McCarthy served for 269 days. The final vote was 216-210 in favor of a motion to “vacate the chair.” McCarthy declined to enter the contest for a new Speaker. Jim Jordan and Steve Scalise are the two members of the House who have announced their candidacies. [NPR 10/3/23]

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Unions

In 1936, 72% of Americans approved of labor unions. By 2009 labor unions were approved of by 48% of Americans. In 2016 approval was at 56%. By August 2018 62% approved of unions. In August 2022 approval of unions had risen to 71%.

In the 1940s, only about 9.8% of public employees were represented by unions while 33.9% of private, non-agricultural workers had such representation. In this decade, 36% of public workers are represented by unions while private sector union density had dropped to 7%.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics most recent survey shows union membership in the US has risen to 12.4% from 12.1% in 2007. Private sector membership was 7.6% in 2008. In 2013 the percentage of workers belonging to a union was 11.3% compared to 20.1% in 1983.

In 2023, the BLS reported that Trade Union Membership hit an all-time low at 10.1%.

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In 2021, 48,830 people died from gun-related injuries.

2021 is the most recent year for which complete data is available.

43% of gun deaths were murders.

54% of gun deaths were suicides.

3% of gun deaths were from other causes.

81% of murders involved firearms.

55% of all suicides involved firearms.

There were 14.6 gun deaths per 100,000 people in 2021.

There were 16.3 gun deaths per 100,000 people in 1974, the highest it has ever been.

The states with the highest total rates of gun-related deaths were Mississippi (33.9 per 100,000 people; Louisiana (29.1); New Mexico (27.8); Alabama (26.4) and Wyoming (26.1).

The states with the lowest total rates included Massachusetts (3.4); Hawaii (4.8); New Jersey (5.2); New York (5.4) and Rhode Island (5.6). [PEW Research Center]

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In 2022, Americans' median age hit 39 years old, up from 38.8 in 2021 and 37.4 in 2012.

The states with the highest growth rates (2021-2022) are Florida, Idaho, and South Carolina.

The states with the biggest population decreases were New York, Louisiana, and Illinois. [Axios AM 9/14/23]

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The poverty rate rose to 12.4% in 2022 from 7.8% in 2021, the largest one-year jump on record. Poverty among children more than doubled to 12.4% from a record low of 5.2% the year before. [NYT 9/12/23]

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Last year, 5% of all new cars sold in the 4th quarter were fully electric, a traditional tipping point when EV sales take off in some countries. There currently are limits on U.S. enthusiasm for the new vehicles, with nearly half of adults (46%) say they prefer to own a gas-powered car or truck. That compares to 19% who want a full-electric vehicle, 13% who want a plug-in hybrid and 22% who want a traditional hybrid vehicle. [WP 9/18/23]

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The number of previously occupied homes sold in the United States dropped by 21 percent over the past year. That's on top of an 18 percent annual decline the year before. Median sales price climbed by 3.9% from a year ago. [WP 9/21/23]

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The Passing of Senator Dianne Feinstein

I first met Dianne Feinstein when she was the Mayor of San Francisco. Over the years we had a number of professional, social, and friendly connections. The following says what I would like to say better than I could. (WW)

Washington, D.C. – Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi issued this statement on the passing of Senator Dianne Feinstein of California:

“Paul, my daughter Nancy Corinne and I were heartbroken to learn of the passing

of our dear friend Dianne Feinstein. For decades, Senator Feinstein was a pillar of public service in California: from San Francisco’s City Hall to the United States Capitol. Her indomitable, indefatigable leadership made a magnificent difference for our national security and personal safety, the health of our people and our planet, and the strength of our Democracy.

“Dianne was a pioneering woman leader, who served as San Francisco’s first female Mayor with unmatched courage, poise, and grace. Standing strong amid horror and heartbreak – from the brutal murders of Harvey Milk and George Moscone to the deadly HIV/AIDs epidemic – she offered our city a beacon of strength and hope.

“In the United States Senate, she was a champion for the Golden State: bringing home billions of federal dollars while defending our state’s natural wonders. Blazing trails as the first woman to lead the powerful Intelligence Committee, she bolstered America’s moral standing and national security with her fierce opposition to the use of torture. On the Judiciary Committee, she authored and passed the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, which helped stem the tide of mass shootings for the ten years it was law and continued urging its renewal as an essential template for ending gun violence. A fierce champion for gender justice, her tireless advocacy was consequential in securing the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

“Personally, it was a great honor to serve alongside Dianne for decades – from the hilly streets of San Francisco to the hallowed halls of Congress. We were not only colleagues, but neighbors and friends. My daughter, Nancy Corinne, has long been an admirer and devoted friend of Senator Feinstein, and we were all close friends with her and her late husband, Richard.

“Dianne’s extraordinary career will continue to inspire countless young women and girls to pursue public service for generations to come. May it be a comfort to her daughter Katherine and her husband Rick, her granddaughter Eileen, and the entire Feinstein family that all Americans join them in mourning at this sad time.”

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America’s Dismal Views of the Nation’s Politics

How Americans feel when they think about politics:

	<u>Always/Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely/Never</u>
Exhausted	65	25	9
Angry	55	34	11
Hopeful	10	33	56
Excited	4	18	78

Majorities of Americans say partisan fighting gets too much attention, while issues and policy get too little.

	<u>Too much</u>	<u>Right Amount</u>	<u>Too Little</u>
Important issues facing the country	5	16	78
Policies local elected officials are working on	8	25	66
Policies elected officials in Washington are working on	13	20	64
2024 presidential election	39	37	22
Disagreements between Republicans and Democrats	57	20	22

Most Americans are critical of the role of money in politics; 72% favor limits on political spending.

	<u>Percent in Favor</u>
The cost of political campaigns makes it hard for good people to run for office.	85%
Special interest groups and lobbyists have too much say in what happens in politics.	84%
There should be limits on the amount of money that can be spent on campaigns.	72%

It's possible to have laws that would effectively reduce the role of money in politics. 58%

[PEW 9/19/23]

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August 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 -2.9 % (up from last month)

Men -3.4% (up from last month)

Unemployment by Race

White - 3.4% (up from last month)

Black - 5.3 % (down from last month)

Hispanic -4.9 % (up from last month)

Asian -3.1% (up from last month)

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

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

High School -3.8 % (up from last month)

Some college -3.0 % (down from last month)

Bachelor's Degree or higher -2.2 % (up from last month)

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3 in 10 young adults in America hold two or more jobs, according to the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies. [NYT 10/1/23]

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This and That

Among student borrowers in the United States who opened their loans between 2010 and 2019 more than half now owe more than what they originally borrowed. [NYT 9/10/23]

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Toyota, the world's largest car maker and a hybrid pioneer, sold 10.5 million vehicles last year, eight times as many as Tesla. But fewer than 1 percent of the cars it sold were fully electric vehicles. [NYT

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54.86% of state legislatures are Republican and 44.29% Democratic. [Ballotpedia 9/12/23]

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Why is President Biden losing ground among Black, Hispanic, and Asian American and other nonwhite voters?

The various theories are not mutually exclusive, and the best explanation may synthesize all of them.

Theory 1: It's about the moment – Biden, his age, the economy, and abortion.

In the short term, Mr. Biden could hope to gain ground if inflation continues to lose steam and the economy avoided recession. Democrats are counting on issues like abortion to compensate for their weaknesses.

Theory 2: Democrats are too far to the left.

There are many nonwhite Democrats who self-identify as moderate or even conservative. Many hold conservative views on issues like opposition to same-sex marriage. These moderate or conservative non-white voters consider themselves Democrats because they see the party as representing them and their interests, not because they have party-line views on every issue.

Theory 3: Democrats aren't delivering a progressive agenda.

Being a moderate on a left-right ideological scale is not the same thing as being content with the status quo.

Theory 4: It's Trump

It's Mr. Trump, not Mr. Biden, who defines American politics nowadays. Voters say they're voting based on their feelings toward the former president, not the current one.

Theory 5: It's about a new generation.

Democratic strength among nonwhite voters was forged in an earlier era of politics when the party unequivocally represented the working class and the poor. Younger nonwhite voters might see it differently. At the very least, almost all of Mr. Biden's losses come among nonwhite voters under 45.

It would for hard for any party to hold 90 plus percent of a voting group forever.

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Odds and Ends

The public is more pessimistic than optimistic about various aspects of American life.

Here is how they feel about a few items.

	Pessimistic	Optimistic	Neither
The moral and ethical standards in our country	63%	16%	16%
Our country's ability to ensure racial equality for all people	59	20	17
The Institution of marriage and the family	40	25	29

White adults, older adults, and Republicans are more pessimistic about the institution of marriage and the family.

	Pessimistic	Optimistic	Neither
All adults	40%	25%	29%
White	43	25	29
Black	30	29	29
Hispanic	34	29	31
Asian	40	26	30
Ages 18-29	32	23	37
30-49	38	25	32
50-64	41	28	25
65+	48	26	23
Rep/Lean Rep	56	20	21
Dem/Lean Dem	25	32	36

About half of adults say fewer children being raised by two married parents will have a negative impact on the U.S. in the future.

	Negative	Positive	Neither
Fewer children being raised by 2 married parents	49	11	39
More couples living together without being married	29	15	55
People getting married later in life	9	34	57

About 52% of Republicans and 23% of Democrat, say fewer people getting married will have a negative impact on the future of the country.

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By the close, Beyonce’s 56 show Renaissance World Tour will have generated \$4.5 billion for the American economy, about as much as the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. [NYT 10/1/23]

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The novelist Larry McMurtry (“The Last Picture Show”) died in 2021 at age 84, spent every morning writing. He averaged five to ten pages a day, every day, his entire life. [NYT 10/1/23]

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The following was created by Gerry Kauvar.

A MODEST STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM

May I have a student on loan?
To help me to maintain my home?
No need to study — free beer and Molly.
No requirement to study by golly.

Your sororities and fraternities
Will provide many candidacies.
Your athletic teams may as well,
But no liberal arts kids are to ring my bell.

My requirements are very modest,
Don't send anyone who is too honest.
They'll mingle with wing nuts and vaccine deniers,
Writers of commercials and other liars.

Pay no attention to diversity,
Or the ranking of their university.
I'll show them America can't be bested,
And bail them out if they're arrested.

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President Biden

<u>Date</u>	<u>NBC</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN</u>	<u>FOX</u>	<u>QUINNIPIAC</u>
SEPT'23	41/56	37/56	xxx	41/58	39/55
AUG'23	xxx	xxx	39/61	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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	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Overall	40.4	55.4%
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.

<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>
9/23/23	41%	58%	40.9%	54.8%
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%

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Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date

As of September 21, 2023, the United States Senate has confirmed 143 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 106 judges for the United States District Courts.

There are 33 nominations awaiting Senate action: 4 for the Courts of Appeals and 27 for the District Courts. There are 7 vacancies in the U.S. Courts of Appeals, 60 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	143	1	36	106	
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.

- 530 people have been confirmed by the Senate.
- 103 nominees are being considered by the Senate.
- 1 awaiting formal nomination.
- 81 positions have no Biden nominee.
- 94 appointees are serving in termed positions or were held over from previous administrations. [WP 9/28/23]

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The following are the favorability ratings for a variety of political leaders based on the Real Clear Politics averages for 9/26/23.

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Biden	40.4	55.4
Trump	40.1	56.0
DeSantis	35.8	49.9
Harris	36.5	54.2
McCarthy	33.8	44.5
Schumer	32.7	47.7
Jeffries	31.0	33.0
McConnell	22.0	62.7

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The 118th Congress

Congress

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Approval of the Congress is down roughly 5.2 points from where it was a year ago and disapproval is up 6.2 points.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 9/26/23	19.7%	73.2%
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	188	Solid Democrat	170
Likely GOP	12	Likely Dem	20
Lean GOP	6	Lean Dem	15
GOP Tossup	14	Dem Tossup	10
Total	220	Total	215

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THE SENATE

49 Republicans
 48 Democrats
 3 Independents

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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	14	CA-Open	9 IN-Open

		Murphy	Hawley
		DE- Open	Wicker
		Hirono	Cramer
		Warren	Fischer
		MD-Open	Ricketts
		King (I)	Blackburn
		Klobuchar	Romney
		Heinrich	Barrasso
		Gillibrand	
		Whitehouse	
		Kaine	
		Sanders (I)	
		Cantwell	
Likely	1	Menendez	2 Cruz Scott
Lean	5	MI-Open	
		Rosen	
		Casey	
		Baldwin	
		Tester	
Toss Up	3	Sinema (I)	
		OH – D	
		Manchin	

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2024 Presidential Election

Comparing two national surveys taken at the same time.

	Trump	Biden	
9/20/23	51%	42%	WP/ABC
9/19/23	46%	46%	NBC

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.

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
Tim Scott – U.S. Senator from South Carolina
Chris Christie – Former Governor of New Jersey
Mike Pence – Former Vice President
Doug Burgum – Governor of North Dakota

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 failed to catch on or changed their minds.

Francis Suarez – Mayor of Miami
Asa Hutchison – Former Governor of Arkansas
Will Hurd – Former member of Congress/CIA
Larry Elder – Talk Show host.

Trump has a strong lead among potential rivals. [9/26/23]

Donald Trump 56.6%
Ron DeSantis 14.4%
Nikki Haley 5.8%
Vivek Ramaswamy 5.1%
Mike Pence 4.2%
Tim Scott 2.8 %
Chris Christie 2.7%
Doug Bergum 0.9%

For the Democratic nomination [9/19/23]:

Joe Biden – 65.8%
 Michael Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. – 14.9 %
 Marianne Williamson – 4.9%

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Women Will Get It Done

About 8 in 10 women in opposite-sex marriages say they took their husband’s last name. On the flip side, 5% of U.S. men, married to women say they took their wife’s last name.

Most U.S. women who are married to men (79%) say they took their husband’s last name after marriage, while 14% kept their own last name.

Women who are younger than 50, who are Democrats or who have a postgraduate degree are among the most likely to report keeping their own name.
 [PEW Research Center 9/9/23]

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Most women and Democrats say there are too few women in high political offices in the U.S. today.

	<u>Too many Women</u>	<u>Too few Women</u>	<u>About the right number of women</u>
All adults	8	53	37
Men	11	42	46
Women	5	63	30
Rep/Lean Rep	12	29	56
Dem/Lean Dem	3	75	21

About 1 in 5 Democrats who say there are too few women in high elected offices would prefer more women than men in these positions.

	<u>Equal number of Women and men</u>	<u>More women than men</u>	<u>More women than now but not as many as men</u>
All who say there are too few women	77	13	9
Rep/Lean Rep	80	4	16
Dem/Lean Dem	75	18	7

About half of U.S. adults think there will eventually be as many women as men in high political offices

	Men will continue to hold more high political offices in the future	It is only a matter of time before there are as many women in office as men
Adults	46	52
Men	40	58
Women	51	46
Rep/Lean Rep	43	54
Dem/Lean Dem	48	51

[PEW 9/27/23]

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Two women are vying for president of Mexico assuring that Mexico will have its first female head ever. [NYT 9/17/23]

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58% overall say women have to do more to prove themselves. This includes 71% of women but just 43% of men.

50% overall say women in business face gender discrimination. 59% of women agree as do 39% of men.

76% of Democrats say there are too few women in top business positions. Only 33% of Republicans share that view.

The share of women CEOs in Fortune 500 companies has risen from 4.8% in 2018 to a record 10.6%. The share of women Fortune 500 board members grew from 22.5% in 2018 to 30.4% in 2022. [Axios PM 9/27/2023]

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?

Enough
Cassidy Hutchison

Cassidy Hutchinson’s desk was mere steps from the most controversial president in recent American history. Now, she provides a riveting account of her extraordinary experiences as an idealistic young woman thrust into the middle of a national crisis, where she risked everything to tell the truth about some of the most powerful people in Washington.

Ever since a childhood visit to Washington, DC, Cassidy Hutchinson aspired to serve her country in government. Raised in a working-class family with a military background, she was the first in her immediate family to graduate from college. Despite having no ties to Washington, Hutchinson landed a vital position at the center of the Trump White House.

Her life took a dramatic turn on January 6th, 2021, when, at twenty-four, she found herself in one of the most extraordinary and unprecedented calamities in modern political history.

Hutchinson was faced with a choice between loyalty to the Trump administration or loyalty to the country by revealing what she saw and heard in the attempt to overthrow a democratic election. She bravely came forward to become the pivotal witness in the House January 6 investigations, as her testimony transfixed and stunned the nation. In her memoir, Hutchinson reveals the struggle between the pressures she confronted to toe the party line and the demands of the oath she swore to defend American democracy.

Enough reaches far beyond the typical insider political account. It’s the saga of a woman whose fierce determination helped her overcome childhood challenges to get her dream job, only to face a crisis of conscience—one that more senior White House aides tried to evade—and, in the process, find her voice and herself. This is a portrait of how the courage of one person can change the course of history.

Hutchinson, says in a her new book she was groped by Rudy Giuliani, who was “like a wolf closing in on its prey”, on the day of the attack on the Capitol. Describing meeting with Giuliani backstage at Donald Trump’s speech near the White House before his supporters marched on Congress in an attempt to overturn the 2020 election, Hutchinson says the former New York mayor turned Trump lawyer put his hand “under my blazer, then my skirt”.

“I feel his frozen fingers trail up my thigh,” she writes. “He tilts his chin up. The whites of his eyes look jaundiced. My eyes dart to [Trump adviser] John Eastman, who flashes a leering grin.

“I fight against the tension in my muscles and recoil from Rudy’s grip ... filled with rage, I storm through the tent.

* * * * *

Dream Town:
Shaker Heights and the Quest for Racial Equality
Laura Meckler

Can a group of well-intentioned people fulfill the
Promise of racial integration in America

In this searing and intimate examination of the ideals and realities of racial integration, award-winning *Washington Post* journalist Laura Meckler tells the story of a decades-long pursuit in Shaker Heights, Ohio, and uncovers the roadblocks that have threatened progress time and again—in housing, in education, and in the promise of shared community.

In the late 1950s, Shaker Heights began groundbreaking work that would make it a national model for housing integration. And beginning in the seventies, it was known as a crown jewel in the national move to racially integrate schools. The school district built a reputation for academic excellence and diversity, serving as a model for how white and Black Americans can thrive together. Meckler—herself a product of Shaker Heights—takes a deeper look into the place that shaped her, investigating its complicated history and its ongoing challenges in order to untangle myth from truth. She confronts an enduring, and troubling, question—if Shaker Heights has worked so hard at racial equity, why does a racial academic achievement gap persist?

In telling the stories of the Shakerites who have built and lived in this community, Meckler asks: What will it take to fulfill the promise of racial integration in America? What compromises are people of all races willing to make? What does success look like, and has Shaker achieved it? The result is a complex and masterfully reported portrait of a place that, while never perfect, has achieved more than most and a road map for communities that seek to do the same.

* * * * *

Tech Lash
Who Makes the Rules in the Digital Gilded Age
Tom Wheeler

Hailed by Publishers Weekly as "a potent primer on the need to rein in big tech" and Kirkus Reviews as "a rock-solid plan for controlling the tech giants," readers will be energized by Tom Wheeler's vision of digital governance.

An accessible and visionary book that connects the experiences of the late 19th century's industrial Gilded Age with its echoes in the 21st century digital Gilded Age.

Hailed by Ken Burns as one of the foremost "explainers" of technology and its effect throughout history, Tom Wheeler now turns his gaze to the public impact of entrepreneurial innovation. In *Techlash*, he connects the experiences of the late 19th century's industrial Gilded Age with its echoes in the 21st century digital Gilded Age. In both cases, technology innovation and the great wealth that it created ran up against the public interest and the rights of others. As with the industrial revolution and the Gilded Age that it created, new digital technology has changed commerce and culture, creating great wealth in the process, all while being essentially unsupervised.

Warning that today is not the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" some envision, Wheeler calls for a new era of public interest oversight that leaves behind industrial era regulatory ideas to embrace a new process of agile, supervised and enforced code setting that protects consumers and competition while encouraging continued innovation. Wheeler combines insights from his experience at the highest echelons of business and government to create a compelling portrait of the need to balance entrepreneurial innovation with the public good.

* * * * *

Collision of Power
Trump, Bezos, and the Washington Post

Martin Baron monumental work of nonfiction that gives a first-row seat to the epic power struggle between politics, money, media, and tech -- for fans of Maggie Haberman's *Confidence Man* and Jane Mayer's *Dark Money*.

Marty Baron took charge of *The Washington Post* newsroom in 2013, after nearly a dozen years leading *The Boston Globe*. Just seven months into his new job, Baron received explosive news: Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, would buy the *Post*, marking a sudden end to control by the venerated family that had presided over the paper for 80 years. Just over two years later, Donald Trump won the presidency.

Now, the capital's newspaper, owned by one of the world's richest men, was tasked with reporting on a president who had campaigned against the press as the "lowest form of humanity." Pressures on Baron and his colleagues were immense and unrelenting, having to meet the demands of their new owner while contending with a president who waged a war of unprecedented vitriol and vengeance against the media.

In the face of Trump's unceasing attacks, Baron steadfastly managed the *Post*'s newsroom. Their groundbreaking and award-winning coverage included stories about Trump's purported charitable giving, misconduct by the Secret Service, and Roy Moore's troubling sexual history. At the same time, Baron managed a restive staff during a period of rapidly changing societal dynamics around gender and race.

In *Collision of Power*, Baron recounts this with the tenacity of a reporter and the sure hand of an experienced editor. The result is elegant and revelatory—an urgent exploration of the nature of power in the 21st century.

* * * * *

Restaurants

Bistro Cacao
316 Massachusetts Ave NE
Washington DC 20002
202-546-4737

Debbie, Whitney, Lee, and I went to Bistro Cacao on a Saturday afternoon. Whitney chose the restaurant.

Bistro Cacao has a narrow entry way from Mass Avenue into the restaurant which is right next to a tented outdoor dining area. The night we were there it was rainy and windy, and the tented area was swaying so heavily it nearly blew over

and all of the restaurant employees left the area. The restaurant opened in 2009 serving modern French cuisine on Capitol Hill

On the main floor there is a bar area that seats up to 10 people and a series of tables that seat 2 to 4 people. We were seated at a 4-person table in a circular window area.

Our server was Neila who has worked at the restaurant on weekends for two years. She particularly likes the people she works with. When our meals were a bit slow in arriving, Neila explained that the kitchen was overwhelmed by a large party on the second floor. (She noted that Neila spelled back word was alien. Her full name is Neila Kurgumbayeva.)

The menu that was available that day was a 3-course Prix Fixe Brunch Menu.

Whitney started with Salade “Cacao” – followed by Frittata Loraine and Crepes Sarrasin.

Lee also started with Salade “Cacao” – followed by Salade Cesar au Poulet Grille. He did not order dessert, but he snacked on Whitney’s.

Debbie started with Escargots au Beurre d’Ail followed by Oefs Norwegian and ending with Trio Crème Brulee.

I started with Yogurt Parfait followed by Omelette Vegetarienne and ending with Crepes Sarrasin.

There is no question, we will be back.

* * * * *

Joon Restaurant
8045 Leesburg Pike
Vienna, Virginia 22182
571-378-1390

Amy suggested that she and Peter and Debbie and I go to Joon, a new restaurant that has been open since June and seats up to 230 people in a variety of connected rooms.

The restaurant represents that it offers the best in Persian Cuisine. The Michelin starred co-chef & co-owner is Christopher Morgan.

Morgan is the son of Amy and Peter's close friends Peter & Vicki Morgan. Najmieh Batmanglij is the co-chef. Morgan refers to Batmanglij as a "second mother" and she calls him her third son.

Christopher's wife just had a baby, and he was on paternity leave. The Executive Chef came over to say hello.

The restaurant's menu is broken down into 8 sections: For the Table, Soup, Salads, Khoresh, Kabob, Platters, Rice Dishes, and Desserts.

We received a complimentary starter – Sabzi Khordan – Mixed fresh herbs, radish, cucumber, spring onion walnuts, goat cheese, feta, lime.

The group ordered Mirza Ghasemi – eggplant, sungold cherry tomatoes, onion, garlic, olive oil, poached egg. And

Shirazi – tomato, cucumber, spring onion, lime, olive oil
(As we were finishing dinner, we realized that none of us had eaten anything from that plate. Perhaps we were put off by the onion which was a whole skinned onion cut in half.)

The group also ordered Duck Fesenjoon – duck legs, pomegranate, walnuts, crispy onions;

Fried Sardines;

Lamb & Pistachio Meatballs;

Sour Cherry Rice – tadigh crispy rice with sour cherry, lime saffron, rose water and pistachio.

I ordered - Pistachio Soup – pistachios soup, leek, chick broth, ginger, saffron sour orange – served hot.

For dessert Peter ordered Najmieh's Baklava with vanilla ice cream, brandied almonds. Mike ordered Persian Love Cake -strawberry and barberry compote, lemon curd, whipped cream pistachio – share by all.

* * * * *

Mike

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