

*Mike Berman's*

# WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

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## State of the Nation

24% of registered voters say the country is headed in the right direction.  
68% of registered voters say the country is on the wrong track. [Econ/YouGov  
10/10/23]

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What does friendship look like in America?

No close friends 8%  
1 close friend 7%  
2 close friends 14%  
3 close friends 18%  
4 close friends 13%  
5+ close friends 38%

A majority of U.S. adults say most of their close friends share their race or ethnicity.

All adults 63%  
White 70%  
Black 62%  
Hispanic 47%  
Asian 52%  
Ages 18-29 53%  
30-49 62%  
50-64 63%  
65+ 70%

(PEW RC 10/12/23)

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Majorities in both parties, support age limits for federal elected officials.

% who favor putting a maximum age limit in place for:

	<u>Dem/LDem</u>	<u>Rep/LRep</u>	<u>Total</u>
Elected officials in Wash, DC	76	82	79
Supreme Court Justices	68	82	74

[Pew 7/16/23]

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Older U.S. adults are more likely to prefer having an older president.

% who say it is best for president to be in their...

30s - 3%

40s - 17%

50s - 49%

60s - 24%

70 or older - 3%.

[PEW 6/11/23]

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There is broad support for a number of significant structural changes to politics.

	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Favor</u>
Limit number of terms that members can serve	12	87
Put a maximum age limit for elected officials in D.C.	20	79
Require all voters to show government issued to vote	22	76
Put a maximum age limit for Supreme Court Justices	24	74
Automatic registration for all eligible citizens to vote	37	62
Increase number of Supreme Court Justices	51	46

  

	<u>Change</u>	<u>Keep</u>
A majority of Americans favor replacing Electoral College with popular vote for presidential elections	<u>Electoral</u> 65%	<u>Electoral</u> 33%

Should the size of the U.S. House of Representatives change?

	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Stay same</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
Total	29%	53%	15%
Rep/Lean Rep	23	60	15
Dem/Lean Rep	34	49	16

Roughly two thirds of Americans oppose changing the Constitution to give larger states more senators.

	The Constitution should be:	
	<u>Amended</u>	<u>Not Amended</u>
Total	32%	66%
Rep/Lean Rep	19	80
Dem/Lean Dem	45	54

[PEW 9/19/23]

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Commutes under 30 minutes were more commonplace between 2019 and 2022, per the U.S. Census Bureau while those 30 minutes and longer became rarer.

36.8% of U.S. workers had commutes of 15-29 minutes in 2022 up from 35.6% in 2019. 26% had a commute of less than 15 minutes up from 24.8%. The two above groups represent 85.5 million people.

20.9% of workers had a commute of 30-44 minutes in 2022, down from 21.2% in 2019. 7.9% of workers had a commute of 45-59 minutes in 2022, down from 8.5%. 8.5% of workers had a commute of an hour or more, down from 9.8%. These groups represent 50.8 million people. [Axios: what next 10/19/23]

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330,000 American workers have been part of strikes since the start of September, The number of workers on strike has increased nearly 10-fold since 2021.

January 1 to October 11, 2021 – 188 strikes involving about 47,800 workers.  
January 1 to October 11, 2022 – 345 strikes involving about 126, 800 workers.  
January 1 to October 11, 2023 – 318 strikes involving about 468, 200 workers.

Between 2000 and 2017, the average number of workers on strike shrunk to about 100,000 per year. [Mike Allen 10/16/23]

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“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” - Harriet Tubman

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November 7<sup>th</sup> was not a good night for Republican Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin.

Youngkin went into the evening with the Republicans in control of the Virginia House of Delegates and Democrats in control of the Virginia State Senate. Youngkin’s goal was capturing the latter and having a Republican controlled trifecta.

There was a fair amount of confidence on the Republican side that the trifecta would happen and there was the beginning of talk that perhaps Youngkin would be a late entry into the 2024 Republican presidential primary.

As you already know it did not quite work out that way. As the evening came to an end, Youngkin was standing alone with the Democrats having taken over control of the Virginia House of Delegates and thus controlling two thirds of the Virginia government. Any talk of the governor becoming part of the 2024 election was as if it had never been uttered.

Among the actions that Youngkin was pushing was a 15-week ban on abortions.

Since his losses, there are experts saying that Youngkin has his eyes set on Virginia's Senate seat since he cannot run for re-election as Governor until the term after the next one. (Individuals cannot serve successive terms as governor in Virginia.) Many are suggesting that Youngkin challenge Senator Tim Kaine who is up for re-election in 2024.

Virginia Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger has announced that she is not running for re-election and is instead going to run for governor.

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On the evening of November 14, by a vote of 336 to 95, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to fund the government. Democrats provided most of the votes for the measure, which passed under a special rule that required two-thirds of the House to agree to it. The Democrats provided 209 "yes" votes, the Republicans, 127. Two Democrats and 93 Republicans opposed the measure. [Heather Cox Richardson 11/14/23]

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The following are the top three concerns of American voters right now compared with the share of voters who think the Democratic and Republican parties focus on these issues.

<u>Issues</u>	<u>All Voters</u>	<u>Democratic Focus</u>	<u>Republican Focus</u>
Price increases/Inflation	32%	8%	14%
Immigration	27%	8%	20%
Economy and jobs	24%	13%	14%

The following are the issues that American voters believe the Republican and Democratic parties must focus on today.

<u>Democratic Party Focus</u>		<u>Republican Party Focus</u>	
Abortion	21%	Immigration	20%
Guns/school safety	17%	National debt	26%
Environment/climate change	17%	Abortion	15%

[No Labels, Ryan Clancy 11/14/23]

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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES  
Statement of the Court  
Regarding the Code of Conduct

The undersigned Justices are promulgating this Code of Conduct to set to succinctly and gather in one place the ethics rules and principles that guide the conduct of the Members of the Court. For the most part these rules and principles are not new: The Court has long had the equivalent of common law ethics rules, that is a body of rules derived from a variety of sources, including statutory provisions, the code that applies to other members of the federal judiciary, ethics advisory opinions issued by the Judicial Conference Committee on Codes of Conduct and historic practice. – (this opening statement is a beginning part of the 9-page Code of Conduct issued by the Court, signed by

John C Roberts, Jr. Clarence Thomas, Samuel A. Alito, Jr, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, Neil Gorsuch, Brett M Kavanaugh, Amy Coney Barrett, Ketanji Brown Jackson.

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**Employment**

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for October 2023 is 3.9%.

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 7.2% in October 2023, greater than the 6.7 % it was a year earlier.

The Labor Force Participation rate (LFPR) in October 2023 is 62.7%, higher than the 62.2% October 2022.

### The Demographics of Unemployment for October 2023

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

Women –2.9 % (up from last month)

Men –3.4% (down from last month)

#### Unemployment by Race

White – 3.5% (up from last month)

Black – 5.8 % (up from last month)

Hispanic –4.8 % (up from last month)

Asian –3.1% (up from last month)

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

Less than high school –5.8 % (up from last month)

High School –4.0 % (down from last month)

Some college –3.1 % (up from last month)

Bachelor’s Degree or higher –2.1 % (same as 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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Millennials aren’t having kids. America’s birthrate remains mired near record lows. In 2022 the annual live births per 1,000 women age 15-44 was 56.

Share of women who have never given birth, by age.

83% of women 18-19

62% of women 20-24

35% of women 25-29

17% of women 30-34

12% of women 40-44

Share of women who have given birth only once, by age.

10% of those 18-19

12% of those 20-24

25% of those 25-29  
10% of those 40-44  
23% of those 35-39  
23% of those 30-34

Number of times women have given birth in their lifetime, average, ages 25-44

10% - 4 – 5+  
17% - 1  
19% - 0 and 3  
27% - 2

[National Center for Health Statistics 11/3/23]

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Perq Soleil

Perq Soleil: A Premium Meet & Assist Airport Concierge Service

This review is for Perq Soleil, a Washington, DC-based airport meet & assist service which Debbie and I used for a recent trip from DC to Minneapolis. This thoughtful and unobtrusive service allowed us to enjoy our trip without all the niggly details of contemporary air travel.

Perq Soleil arranged for a car and driver to pick us up at our apartment and take us to the airport where a Perq Soleil agent met us at the curb. She presented us with our boarding cards, and a waiting porter tagged our one piece of checked luggage and checked it in at the curb for us. She also secured a wheelchair and wheelchair assistant so I wouldn't have to navigate the terminal using my cane.

The agent escorted us quickly through the security checkpoint and then, since our flight was delayed, to the Delta Airlines Club where we relaxed until she returned to accompany us to our gate for boarding.

When we arrived in Minneapolis, a Perq Soleil agent greeted us at the gate together with a wheelchair assistant. We were escorted to baggage claim and, after we collected our bag, a driver (also arranged by Perq Soleil) met us at the curb and took us to our hotel.

Coming back to Washington was just as smooth. Perq Soleil provided both departure service from Minneapolis and arrival service at Reagan National. It could not have been easier.



If I were still traveling as much as I used to, I could see myself using this service often, especially for international flights, where support like that would mitigate or eliminate the all-too-common stress points of foreign travel.

Perq Soleil services can be arranged on their website [www.perqsoleil.com](http://www.perqsoleil.com), by email to [contact@perqsoleil.com](mailto:contact@perqsoleil.com), or by phone at (202) 573-7705.

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### **This and That**

Is There Room for a Third Party? Yes.

The 2022 election was a high-water mark with Independents as a percentage of the electorate, comprising 31% of the electorate. From 2020 exit polls, 26% of the electorate identifies as conservative Republican, 17% as liberal Democrats, and 57% is everyone else. These percentages indicate the majority of the electorate does not consider themselves as either party's base. [Winston Group 11/17/2023]

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Young voters (respondents aged 18-29) support more environmental regulation than the general electorate.

	<u>General Electorate</u>	<u>Young voters</u>
Give the Environmental Protection Agency power to regulate carbon dioxide emissions.	66%	71%
Raise the average fuel efficiency for all cars and trucks in the U.S. from 40 miles per gallon to 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025.	<u>2020</u> 69%	<u>2022</u> 75%

Young voters are further left on immigration than the general electorate.

	<u>General Electorate</u>	<u>Young voters</u>
Grant legal status to all illegal immigrants who have held jobs and paid taxes for at least 3 years.	68%	78%

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When did shoppers say they planned to start holiday shopping? In a survey conducted September 1-14:

Started before taking survey 14%  
Planned to start in September 10%  
In October 17%  
In November 39%  
In December 20%

In 2021, Walmart sourced \$13.3 billion in goods and services from roughly 2,600 diverse small businesses. [Axios]

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1,150 guns, more than six a day on average, were found in K-12 campuses last year according to a WP investigation, the true number may be higher. [WP 10/11/23]

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The average time of a nine-inning Major League Baseball game fell to just under 2 hours and 40 minutes, 24 minutes less than last season and the shortest since 1985. [WP 11/13/23]

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About a hundred people and one million wild animals are killed by cars every day in the United States, home of the world's longest road network. [NYT 10/8/23]

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The number of Americans who were food insecure soared in 2022. The share of households that couldn't reliably afford food rose to 12.8% from 10.2%.

Among households with children, 17.3% were food insecure, up 5 percentage points from the previous year, 22% of Black (non-Hispanic) households with 21% of Hispanic households.

The numbers are higher for those with children under 6 years old (17%) and households headed by a single mother (33%). [Axios Markets 10/27/23]

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Fewer people are going to movies, theaters, and museums. 48% of adults reported attending at least one arts event from July 2021 to July 2022. That number represents a six-point drop from the most recent survey in 2017.

White people were the least likely ethnic demographic to engage with the arts digitally, at 64% compared with 81% Black respondents, 73% of Hispanic respondents and 89% of other ethnicities.

After movie theaters enjoyed five straight years of hitting \$11 billion at the domestic box office from 2015 to 2019, the total gross was only \$7.3 billion in 2022. [WP 10/18/23]

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Most Americans say expectations of tipping have spread to more places. Here are the percentage of U.S. adults who say that tipping is expected, compared to five years ago.

- More places - 72%
- About the same number of places - 23%
- Fewer places - 5%

American tipping habits vary across service settings. Here are the % of adults who say they leave a tip when:

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>
Eating at a restaurant where there are servers	81%	11%
Getting a haircut	65%	13%
Having food delivered	59%	11%
Buying a drink at a bar	53%	18%
Using a taxi or rideshare service	43%	18%
Buying coffee or other beverages at a coffee shop	12%	12%
Eating at a restaurant where there are no servers	7%	5%

Americans say they think of tipping as depending on the situation. The % who say they think of tipping as:

	<u>More of a Choice</u>	<u>More of an obligation</u>	<u>Depends on the situation</u>
Total	21	29	49
Age 18-29	15	38	42
30-49	19	31	50
50-64	23	25	52
65+	29	24	46

For many Americans, it isn't always clear to know whether to tip for different kinds of services.

	Extremely/ <u>Very easy</u>	Somewhat <u>easy</u>	Not too/ <u>Not at all easy</u>
Total	34%	39%	26%
Ages 18-29	27	41	31
30-49	36	37	28
50-64	37	38	24
65+	36	40	33

Most Americans say tips should stay with restaurant servers. Tips are pooled together and then shared among:

All the servers	13%
The entire staff	14%
Each server keeps all of the money they receive in tips	72%

[PEW 7/27/23 and 11/9/23]

A survey published in June by the financial website Bankrate found that two-thirds of Americans had a negative view of tipping, while about one-third felt that tipping culture was “out of control.” [NYT 11/18/23]

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Generations defined and reminded.

Generation Z – ages 7-22
Millennials – ages 23-38
Generation X – ages 39-54
Boomers – ages 55-73
Silent – ages 74-91

[PEW 10/18/23]

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### Passwords

Many Americans are overwhelmed by keeping up with passwords – and nearly half forego secure ones.

% of U.S. adults who say they:

Feel overwhelmed by the passwords they have to keep track of – 69%

Generally, create passwords that are easier to remember – 46%  
Feel anxious about whether the passwords they use are strong and secure – 45%

[PEW 10/18/23]

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Growing shares of Republicans say they are worried about how the government uses their personal data.

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2023</u>	
U.S. adults	64%	71%	
Rep/Lean R	63%	77%	
Dem/Lean D	66%	65%	[PEW 10/18/23]

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70% of Americans think marijuana use should be legal. More than half of Americans live in states where marijuana will soon be legal. Gallup found that 87% of Democrats, 70% of Independents and 55% of Republicans back legal marijuana.

176 million people in the U.S. will live in states where recreational use is allowed after Ohio voted to legalize marijuana.

The legalized marijuana market is worth \$64 billion. [Axios PM 11/08/23]

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	<u>America's best days are now behind us</u>	<u>Since the 1950s American culture has mostly changed for the worse</u>
All Americans	52%	55%
Republican	67%	73%
Independent	55%	57%
Democrat	35%	34%

[American values survey 10/25/23]

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As of October 2023, the percentage of U.S. adults who have a great deal of confidence in the:

Military 26%  
Medical scientists 25%  
Scientists 23%  
Police Officers 19%  
Public School principals 14%  
Religious leaders 11%  
Journalists 6%  
Business leaders 3%  
Elected officials 2%

Percentage of U.S. adults who have a great deal of confidence in scientists:

30% of college graduates  
45% Dem/lean Dem  
12% GOP/lean GOP

20% with Some college or less  
12% Dem/lean Dem  
10% GOP/lean GOP

[PEW 11/14/23]

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### **Odds and Ends**

The moon's surface formed at least 40 million years earlier than previously thought, according to a new study of an ancient crystal embedded in rock collected by Apollo 17 astronauts.

Scientists have mostly agreed on the moon's origin story: About 4.5 billion years ago, a giant Mars-sized object slammed into the nascent Earth, ejecting hot debris that coalesced into our moon.

The new atom-atom analysis of a 4.46-billion-year-old lunar crystal pushes back the timeline by 40 million years.

This is the oldest age to date. It doesn't mean we know the age of the moon and should stop looking. [WP 10/23/23]

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The names of dozens of North American birds will be changed. The nation's top birding organization decided that birds should no longer have human names. It will prioritize changing names from white supremacists and enslavers.

The American Ornithological Society will set up a group next year to explore up to 80 new names. The names will better describe the birds' characteristics. [AP News 11/1/23]

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Since 1980, when Senator Charles Grassley, was elected to the U.S. Senate, at least 20 couples who began dating in his office were married. Only one couple has divorced. [WP 10/19/23]

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The following were created by Gerry Kauvar

Multi-purpose Trial Prep.

You're not corrupt; You're just careless.

You've always been too trusting.

You were too engaged with long term strategy.

You've been experiencing moments of forgetfulness and are under medical care.

You have always believed in delegating authority and responsibility.

Members of your immediate family have been ill, and you thought it important to spend a lot of time with them.

You're a big picture guy who doesn't believe in micromanaging.

Wall Street company analysts are always nit-picking and second-guessing. You know what they say, if you laid them all end to end, they still wouldn't reach a conclusion.

I did not molest that person. It was consensual. I don't know anyone by that name.

Yeah, I didn't do so well in math in school; I mostly took gut courses.

In hindsight maybe I should have paid more attention and asked more questions, that's not evidence of corruption or stupidity.

I always asked the Lord for guidance and support when making business decisions.

I'm not shifting the blame —just telling I always tried to do His work.

The dog ate the financial statements.

WHAT IS SPACE JUNK?'

Whatever is between Marjorie Taylor Greene's ears

George Santos' seat in Congress

90% of the Washington Post Style section

Prevagen claims of effectiveness

Pre- and post-game interviews with athletes and coaches

Testimony given by any member of the Trump family  
 Any effort spent hoping or working for DC Statehood  
 Any “two State solution” to the war in Israel (alas)  
 The office of the Speaker of the House  
 Fact checking political speeches.

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In states with comparable enrollment, the number of home-schooled students increased 51% over the past six school years, far outpacing the 7% growth in private school enrollment. Public school enrollment dropped 4% in those states over the same period, a decline partly attributable to home schooling. [WP 11/3/23]

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Las Vegas, known as the “wedding capital of the world” since 1953, is home to about 100 chapels. Clark County, NV, in which Las Vegas is located, issued its five millionth marriage license in 2022. [NYT 11/12/23]

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In 1898, South Dakota was the first state in the nation to give its citizens the right to bypass the elected class and directly legislate at the ballot box by popular vote using citizen-led initiated ballot measures. [Takitback 11/18/23]

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<u>Date</u>	<b>President Biden</b>				
	<u>NBC</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN</u>	<u>FOX</u>	<u>QUINNIPIAC</u>
NOV’23	40/57		40/60	40/59	39/58
OCT’23	xxx	xxx	42/58	41/58	38/56
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
JAN' 21	xxx	xxx	50/44	xxx	49/36

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	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Overall	41.1%	54.9%
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>
10/26/23	37%	59%	38.7%	55.4%
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 November 3, 2023, the United States Senate has confirmed 148 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 34 nominations awaiting Senate action: 5 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 – 3 years	148	1	36	111	
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.

- 541 have been confirmed by the Senate.
- 104 are being considered by the Senate.
- 0 awaiting formal nomination.
- 79 positions have no Biden nominee.
- 301 appointees are serving in termed positions or were held over from previous administrations.

[WP 11/1/23]

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The following are the favorability ratings for a variety of political leaders based on the Real Clear Politics averages for 10/31/23.

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Biden	41.4	55.0
Trump	40.4	55.9
DeSantis	35.6	49.0
Haley	31.0	35.0
Harris	37.1	54.3
McCarthy	26.3	48.8
Schumer	29.3	44.7
Jeffries	28.3	30.7
McConnell	21.0	60.0

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The 118<sup>th</sup> Congress

### **Congress**

Republicans currently have a nine-seat majority (11/7/23), in the U.S House with two vacancies that will be filled later this year. The current narrow margin is quite rare. Since 1913, when the House reached its current complement of 435 seats, the majority party has had a cushion of fewer than nine seats only twice – 1917-19 and 1931-33.

There are more recent examples of majorities that have been pretty narrow. In the 83<sup>rd</sup> Congress (1953-55) and 107<sup>th</sup> Congress (2001-03) the GOP had just a

10-seat majority. And in the last Congress, Democrats had a cushion of 11 seats. In the 56 Congresses since 1912, the majority and minority have been separated by 20 seats or fewer, 10 times. [538 newsletter 10/26/23]

\* \* \* \* \*

Approval of the Congress is down roughly 6.3 points from where it was a year ago and disapproval is up 6.7 points.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol 10/31/23	19.0%	72.5%
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%

\* \* \* \* \*

### **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Having served as speaker for 269 days Kevin McCarthy, the Speaker who was the first person selected after a number of votes, was ousted by a group of rebels in his caucus. He had the third shortest tenure as Speaker in history.

Jim Jordan was the first to seek the nomination to replace him but failed to get the required number of votes in three elections.

He was followed by Steve Scalise, who could not draw enough support and then Tom Emmer, the GOP Whip, who ended his campaign when it became clear that Trump was against him.

Then Mike Johnson of Louisiana, who came to the House in 2017, entered the fray and was elected on his first try, receiving every Republican vote winning 220 to 209. He is the least experienced Representative to obtain the gavel in 140 years. Since the Civil War, Speakers have spent an average of 18 years in the chamber before ascending to the top of the ladder.

There have been a number of Speaker contests over the years requiring numerous ballots, but the record was set at the outset of the 34<sup>th</sup> Congress which was in 1856. There were 234 members of the House. 133 ballots were required before a speaker was elected. The winner was Nathaniel Prentice Banks.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mike Johnson  
56th Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives  
Took office on October 25, 2023  
2<sup>nd</sup> in line for President of the United States

“In his first big test as House speaker: coming up with a credible plan to avert a government shutdown, which passed the chamber on a bipartisan vote on Tuesday – Mike Johnson has offered a sign that he might be a more skillful and pragmatic leader than many thought possible.” [Tumulty, WP, 11/14/23]

What do we know about Johnson? He is 51 years old and married. The following are quotes from a well-regarded, Republican member of the House. “Mike is one of those people who gets along with everybody and is well-respected.” And further, when asked why Johnson won said “probably because he has the fewest enemies of anybody in the Republican Party.”

The items below are those that have been found by Washington Watch in various print news sources.

Johnson is the most far right speaker in modern times. He is a totally publicly committed supporter of former president Donald Trump. But it turns out his attachment to Trump is fairly recent.

In a lengthy post on Facebook on August 7, 2015, before he was elected to Congress, Johnson wrote, “The thing about Donald Trump is that he lacks the character and the moral center we desperately need again in the White House.”

The rest of the story is obvious. Like every other Republican lawmaker still in the party, Johnson changed his tune after Trump won in 2016. But he became a class A suck-up and took on a major role in propagating Trump’s lies.

Mike Johnson voted to overturn the 2020 Presidential election and was called “the mastermind of the January 6 plot.”

As chair of the Republican Study Committee, he pushed for a national abortion ban, even for victims of rape, and has cosponsored three federal abortion bans. He has advocated for extending constitutional protections to human life at conception.

As a Louisiana state legislator, he proposed a bill called the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act that would have prevented “adverse treatment by the State of any person or entity on the basis of the views they may hold with regard to marriage”. He supports the right of states to make gay-sex illegal. Johnson argued that allowing same-sex marriage could be the downfall of the democratic system and introduced federal legislation modeled after Florida’s so-called ‘don’t say gay’ bill.

Johnson endorsed trying to expunge Trump’s first impeachment.

He worked as a lawyer for an organization that opposes the separation of Church and State and when he ran for Congress in 2016, Johnson placed his faith at the center of his campaign saying, “I am a Christian, a husband, a father, a lifelong conservative, constitutional law attorney and a small business owner in that order.”

He opposes any form of gun control.

As chairman of the Republican Study Committee, the group touted budget plans that called for deep cuts to Social Security and Medicare and to change Medicare into a system that gives people financial assistance to buy insurance. He’s also in favor of raising the social security retirement age.

When measured against the last seven speakers using the DW-nominate scores, Johnson is the most conservative followed by Paul Ryan, John Boehner, Kevin McCarthy, Denis Hastert, Newt Gingrich, and Joseph Martin, Jr.

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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	187	Solid Democrat	170
Likely GOP	15	Likely Dem	19
Lean GOP	6	Lean Dem	14
GOP Tossup	15	Dem Tossup	9
Total	223	Total	212

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE SENATE**

49 Republicans  
 48 Democrats  
 3 Independents

\* \* \* \* \*

The 2024 Senate Election

The Democrats’ control of the U.S. Senate will come to an end effective January 3, 2025. Senator Manchin of West Virginia has announced that he is not running for re-election. The current Republican Governor Jim Justice is running for the office and while he has a primary, odds are that he will be the next senator. It is not clear what Manchin, age 76, will do in the next stage of his life. He has said that running for President isn’t beyond the pale.

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independents</u>
Seats not up in 2024	28	38	0
Seats up in 2024	23	11	
Safe	14	9	
	CA-Open Murphy DE- Open Hirono	IN-Open Hawley Wicker Cramer	

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

\* \* \* \* \*

At a Senate hearing on 11/14/2023, a discussion devolved into an angry confrontation between Senator Mullin of Oklahoma and Sean O’Brien, the president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Mullin suggested to O’Brien “stand your butt up”. It was obvious that Mullin was prepared to go to fisticuffs.

They were told to sit down and attend to the business of the hearing by the committee chair Bernie Sanders.

Mullin landed in the Senate on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, having represented Oklahoma in the U.S. House for 10 years. He was elected to fill the final four years of the term of Senator Jim Inhofe who resigned early.

Prior to his time in the U.S. government, Mullin included in his resume a 5-0 record as a Mixed Martial Arts fighter.



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## **2024 Presidential Election**

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.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. has announced that he will not compete for the Democratic party nomination for President. He will instead run as an independent in 2024.

For the Republican nomination, the following have announced their candidacies and are still in the race.

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  
Chris Christie – Former Governor of New Jersey  
Asa Hutchinson – Former Governor of Arkansas  
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 Missouri  
Tom Cotton – U.S. Senator Arkansas  
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  
Will Hurd – Former member of Congress Texas/CIA  
Larry Elder – Talk Show host  
Mike Pence – Former Vice President  
Tim Scott – U.S. Senator South Carolina

Trump has a strong lead among potential rivals. [11/2/23]

Donald Trump 59.3%  
Ron DeSantis 14.0%  
Nikki Haley 7.7%  
Vivek Ramaswamy 4.9%  
Chris Christie 2.4%

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Women Will Get It Done**

Harvard's Claudia Goldin became the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in Economics, solo. Her research illuminated the structural differences that create pay and employment gaps between men and women.

\* \* \* \* \*

The U.S. Mint recently announced the five women whose quarters will circulate in 2025 as part of the American Women Quarters Program: Ida B. Wells, Juliette Gordon Low, Dr. Vera Rubin, Stacey Park Millbern, and Althea Gibson.

\* \* \* \* \*

Democrat Cherelle Parker is the first female mayor of Philadelphia. Parker cruised past her Republican opponent and then had to battle through a crowded Democratic primary in May. The last time the city had a Republican mayor was 1952.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the capital city, St Paul, Minnesota, all seven members of the City Council are now women under the age of 40.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tammy Murphy, First Lady of the State of New Jersey (her husband is the current governor), has announced that she (along with 3 others so far) is running to replace the current Senator, Bob Menendez who is up for re-election in 2024. Menendez has been accused of accepting bribes. [NYT 11/15/23]

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A trained journalist, Lady Bird Johnson (1912-2007) the wife of President Lyndon Johnson, was the first First Lady to hire her own press secretary.

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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?

“Renegade: Defending Democracy and Liberty in Our Divided Country”  
Adam Kinzinger and Michael D’Antonio

Adam Kinzinger captures one of the most transformative periods in recent political history in a riveting, personal account from inside Congress, including the January 6 attacks on the U.S. Capitol and his vote to impeach Donald Trump.

On January 6, 2021, Donald Trump incited a violent mob to storm the US Capitol in attempts to overturn the presidential election. It was a betrayal of our Constitution, and one of the darkest days in recent history. Yet to former congressman Adam Kinzinger it was also the culmination of a cultural and political rupture he’d long seen coming. Constructive criticism from within the Republican Party was no longer enough. It was time to stand up, even if it meant betraying his own party.

In *Renegade*, Kinzinger tells his story of faith, service, and political duty in a democracy under siege. From the small Illinois county board where he got his start, to his years in the Air Force flying tanker missions over Iraq, to his final tumultuous term in Congress as one of the few Republican members to vote to impeach Trump and join the House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol, Kinzinger takes readers inside the most critical moments and pivotal decisions of the last years. The result is both a searing examination of the rise of extremism and the GOP’s subsequent descent into a dysfunctional and destructive force, and a rousing call to return to unity.

Raw, provocative, and clear-eyed, *Renegade* captures one of the most transformative periods in recent American history.

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Tired of Winning:  
Donald Trump and the End of the Grand Old Party  
Jonathan Karl

An extraordinary view into the politics of our times, *Tired of Winning* explores how Donald Trump remade the Republican Party in his own image—and the wreckage he’s left in his wake.

Packed with new reporting, *Tired of Winning: Donald Trump and the End of the Grand Old Party* tracks Trump’s improbable journey from disgraced and defeated former president to the dominant force, yet again, in the Republican Party.

From his exile in Mar-a-Lago, Donald Trump has become more extreme, vengeful, and divorced from reality than he was on January 6, 2021. His meddling damaged the GOP’s electoral prospects for third consecutive election in 2022. His legal troubles are mounting. Yet he’s re-emerged as the frontrunner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

Jonathan Karl has known Donald Trump since his days as a *New York Post* reporter in the 1990s, and he covered every day of Trump’s administration as ABC News’s chief White House correspondent. No one is in a better position to detail the former president’s quest for retribution and provide a glimpse at what the GOP would be signing up for if it once again chooses him as its standard bearer.

In 1964, Ronald Reagan told Americans it was “a time for choosing.” Sixty years later, Republicans have their own choice to make: Are they tired of winning?

\* \* \* \* \*

Prequel: An American Fight Against Fascism  
By Rachel Maddow

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER • Rachel Maddow traces the fight to preserve American democracy back to World War II, when a handful of committed public servants and brave private citizens thwarted far-right plotters trying to steer our nation toward an alliance with the Nazis.

“A ripping read—well rendered, fast-paced and delivered with the same punch and assurance that she brings to a broadcast. . . The parallels to the present day are strong, even startling.”—*The New York Times*

Inspired by her research for the hit podcast *Ultra*, Rachel Maddow charts the rise of a wild American strain of authoritarianism that has been alive on the far-right edge of our politics for the better part of a century. Before and even after our troops had begun fighting abroad in World War II, a clandestine network flooded

the country with disinformation aimed at sapping the strength of the U.S. war effort and persuading Americans that our natural alliance was with the Axis, not against it. It was a sophisticated and shockingly well-funded campaign to undermine democratic institutions, promote antisemitism, and destroy citizens' confidence in their elected leaders, with the ultimate goal of overthrowing the U.S. government and installing authoritarian rule.

That effort worked—tongue and groove—alongside an ultra-right paramilitary movement that stockpiled bombs and weapons and trained for mass murder and violent insurrection.

At the same time, a handful of extraordinary activists and journalists were tracking the scheme, exposing it even as it was unfolding. In 1941 the U.S. Department of Justice finally made a frontal attack, identifying the key plotters, finding their backers, and prosecuting dozens in federal court.

None of it went as planned.

While the scheme has been remembered in history—if at all—as the work of fringe players, in reality it involved a large number of some of the country's most influential elected officials. Their interference in law enforcement efforts against the plot is a dark story of the rule of law bending and then breaking under the weight of political intimidation.

That failure of the legal system had consequences. The tentacles of that unslain beast have reached forward into our history for decades. But the heroic efforts of the activists, journalists, prosecutors, and regular citizens who sought to expose the insurrectionists also make for a deeply resonant, deeply relevant tale in our own disquieting times.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Restaurants**

Claudio's Table  
6441 MacArthur Blvd, NW  
Washington DC  
202-920-7500  
[mail@claudiostable.com](mailto:mail@claudiostable.com)

Debbie and I went to Claudio's Table as the guests of Sherry and Michael. Claudio's has been open for several months, owned by the owner of Restaurant Et Voila, which has been open since 2008. The chef-owner is Claudio Pirolo.

There is table seating for 60 people and bar seating for 10 and an open kitchen connected to the area behind the bar. We were seated at a table for 2 or 4 in an alcove in the front window.

Here is what we ordered.

Insalata Verde – Romaine salad - Sherry and Mike Berman  
Arugula Salad – Mike Mandel

Eggplant Parmesan – Debbie and Mike M  
Gentile Spaghetti with Manilla Clams – Sherry  
Casarecce with Neapolitan Ragu – Mike B

Early in the evening I considered walking the length of the restaurant to what turned out to be two gender neutral restrooms. But the pathway was loaded with folks just standing around, so I waited until later in the evening when Mike M told me the pathway was clear.

The floor of the restroom is covered with a cement like substance, the walls to shoulder height are covered with mid-size blue tiles and the rest of the walls are painted yellow. There is a white ceramic floor-based commode with appropriate wall-connected aluminum bars and a white ceramic square wash basin connected to the wall headed by a wall hanging mirror. There is an appropriate waste receptacle and a locked floor-to-ceiling closet with a wooden door.

We arrived on time for our 7 p.m. reservation but space was not yet available. Seeing that I was walking with a cane, Lily, the hostess/floor manager brought over a chair for me to use while we were waiting although I did not accept her kindness. It was quite crowded around the front entrance. Had we arrived at the restaurant an hour later it would have been far less crowded.

Generally, it is quite noisy in the restaurant. We were seated in an alcove at the front of the restaurant with a table for 2 or 4 people so the noise was subdued.

For a more complete recitation of Claudio's Table history go to [Cladiotable.com](http://Cladiotable.com).

\* \* \* \* \*

*Mike*

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