

5 pieces worth reading

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Even on Biden's big day, he's still in Trump's long shadow

Peter Baker argues that President Biden's many achievements, including his recent signing of the Inflation Reduction Act, have often not broken through to the public given the all-consuming media circus that keeps former President Trump in the public eye. Biden aides continue to hope that focusing on important public issues such as jobs, inflation, financial security, and housing will help the President regain political standing and appeal to voters who are more concerned about their own lives than Trump's legal battles.

Baker, P. (2022, August 16). Even on Biden's big day, he's still in Trump's long shadow." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/us/politics/biden-trump-competition.html?referringSource=articleShare>

Liz Cheney and the twilight of the old Republican elite

Stephanie Muravchik and Jon Shields discuss Representative Liz Cheney (R-WY)'s GOP primary loss to a Donald Trump-supported political novice who has embraced his "Big Lie" that the 2020 election was stolen and its impact on the state of the Republican Party and Wyoming politics. Her defeat showcases the cultish character of the right's evolving identity politics.

Muravchik, S. and J. Shields. (2022, August 17). "Liz Cheney and the twilight of the old Republican elite." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/opinion/liz-cheney-wyoming.html>

Trump's hypocrisy threatens democracy- that's the point of it

Austin Sarat argues that former President Trump's blatant hypocrisy concerning his conduct, especially as revealed by the FBI raid at Mar-a-Lago and his high-profile reversal concerning pleading the Fifth Amendment, ultimately undermines democracy by eroding public trust and breeding cynicism. Sarat contends that democratic politics cannot survive if such obvious hypocrisy becomes the norm.

Sarat, A. (2022, August 15). "Trump's hypocrisy threatens democracy - that's the point of it." *The Hill*. Retrieved from <https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/3602083-trumps-hypocrisy-threatens-democracy-thats-the-point-of-it/>

American democracy was never designed to be Democratic

Louis Menand argues that America's form of government is fundamentally undemocratic, as revealed by the fact that the Constitution placed limits on what the government can do, regardless of what the majority party wants. Other elements designed to check majority rule include the Electoral College and the electoral composition of Congress, especially the Senate. Widespread and egregious partisan gerrymandering has only exacerbated the significance of these Constitutional features in Menand's view, a fact that makes it difficult to contend that the U.S. government is truly governed "by the people."

Menand, L. (2022, August 15). "American democracy was never designed to be Democratic." *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/08/22/american-democracy-was-never-designed-to-be-democratic-eric-holder-our-unfinished-march-nick-seabrook-one-person-one-vote-jacob-grumbach-laboratories-against-democracy>

Little is free in prison- here are the various ways incarcerated people make money

The Marshall Project's Beth Schwartzapel describes the prison economy in this interview and outlines how incarcerated people work for the states that have imprisoned them by performing a large share of the tasks needed to maintain the facilities in which they are jailed. In addition, she discusses court interpretations of the 13th amendment that essentially consign inmates to work long hours for extremely low wages that then must be expended to purchase items from prison authorities that are needed for daily life. The system constitutes a modern form of indentured servitude.

Chang, A., Levitt, M. and P. Jarenwattananon. (2022, August 11). "Little is free in prison - here are the various ways incarcerated people make money." *NPR*. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2022/08/11/1117015493/little-is-free-in-prison-here-are-the-various-ways-incarcerated-people-make-money>