

5 pieces worth reading

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By: Billy Parvatam

Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance

<https://ipg.vt.edu/>

Ron DeSantis is a test case

New York Times columnist Thomas Edsall argues that the fact that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is favored to win re-election this November is a clear sign that democratic institutions and values are declining in the United States. His authoritarian actions during his tenure as governor could provide insight into what might occur across the country should Republicans win control of the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives in 2024.

Edsall, T. (2022, August 31). "Ron DeSantis is a test case." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/opinion/ron-desantis-re-election-florida.html>

Joe Biden's big month

John Cassidy argues that August was a very successful month for President Biden, as he signed three major pieces of legislation, the Democrats won a key special election for a New York Congressional seat, and former President Donald Trump is now immersed in multiple legal battles. Biden's achievements, coupled with Trump's difficulties, have given Democrats new momentum heading into the November Midterm elections.

Cassidy, J. (2022, August 31). "Joe Biden's big month." *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/joe-bidens-big-month>

Mikhail Gorbachev, former Soviet president who took down the Iron Curtain, dies

Susannah Cullinane and Laura Smith-Spark discuss the legacy of former Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev, who passed away on August 30 at 91, in this CNN piece. As the last leader of the USSR, Gorbachev undertook major reforms, including "glasnost" (openness) and "perestroika" (restructuring) while attempting to bring fairness to the Soviet economic system.

Cullinane, S. and L. Smith-Spark. (2022, August 31). "Mikhail Gorbachev, former Soviet president who took down the Iron Curtain, dies." *CNN*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/30/europe/mikhail-gorbachev-dies-intl/>

The "fairness" debate over student loan forgiveness, explained

Libby Nelson discusses both sides of the student loan forgiveness debate, in light of President Biden's decision to forgive up to \$20,000 in federal student loan debt for a targeted population. She addresses the issues of whether loan forgiveness is the right thing to do in principle, is the right thing to do now, and whether it will help to redress longer-term challenges concerning higher education access and funding.

Nelson, L. (2022, August 31). "The 'fairness' debate over student loan forgiveness, explained." *Vox*. Retrieved from <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/23322129/student-loan-forgiveness-fair-inflation>

Why I changed my mind on student debt forgiveness

Harvard University economist Susan Dynarski used this article to explain why she now supports targeted debt cancellation for college students, citing an persistent increase in tuition costs and evidence that has revealed the negative implications for a share of students who have borrowed heavily to attend college. She argues that it is now impossible for students to work their way through college, as many individuals in previous generations did and that the current period seems an apt moment for the government to assist many student borrowers with significant obligations by clearing their debts so that they may move ahead with their lives.

Dynarski, S. (2022, August 30). "Why I changed my mind on student debt forgiveness." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/30/opinion/student-loan-debt-relief-biden.html>