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5 pieces worth reading

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Joe Biden has been pretty productive as president. That doesn't mean he's popular

This *Vox* article by Li Zhou highlights President Biden's accomplishments during his first term and examines several possible reasons for the disconnect between his significant achievements and relatively low public approval rating. Zhou contends that inflation is the key reason for this scenario, as it is an issue that directly affects people's daily lives and expenses. In addition, Biden has yet to secure several Democratic Party priorities including protecting voting rights, enacting police reform, and broadening paid family leave.

Zhou, L. (2023, April 25). "Joe Biden has been pretty productive as president. That doesn't mean he's popular." *Vox*. Retrieved April 2023, from <https://www.vox.com/politics/23697855/joe-biden-popularity-legislative-record>

Why Biden can win in 2024

Lis Smith argues in this *New York Times* article that President Biden opens his re-election campaign in a strong position because his legislative accomplishments, including the Inflation Reduction Act, are now having a direct and positive impact on Americans' lives, and his steady leadership stands in sharp contrast to chaos daily on display among Republicans. In addition, GOP extremism on multiple issues, including abortion rights, has energized the Democratic base and alienated many independent voters. Smith contends that fact could prove critical in the 2024 general election.

Smith, L. (2023, April 26). "Why Biden can win in 2024." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/26/opinion/joe-biden-2024-reelection-win.html>

The Tucker realignment

New York Times columnist Ross Douthat discusses Tucker Carlson's firing from Fox News and in this column and highlights his role in helping move the nation's Right to a politics of suspicion, defined as evidencing a fundamental lack of trust in government and many other institutions and a willingness to embrace unfounded conspiracy theories. While Douthat argues that it is unlikely that Carlson's successor will play a similarly significant role, he also suggests

Ut Prosim (That I may Serve)

that whoever that individual turns out to be will find it difficult to escape the implications of the former host's legacy successfully sowing profound suspicion, even disdain, of Western institutions among his viewers.

Douthat, R. (2023, April 25). "The Tucker realignment." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/25/opinion/tucker-carlson-fox-news-audience.html>

The unnecessary price of Covid-19

Peter Bergen discusses the tragedy of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the principal factors that led to the uneven U.S. response to that public health emergency in this article. Bergen contends that the nation's hyper partisan context shaped virtually all elements of the pandemic including politicization of its origins, the role of lockdowns in addressing it, the need for masks and school closures, and unfounded suspicion of vaccines. He commends The Covid Crisis Group for developing a major report providing a comprehensive investigation of the pandemic and America's governance response to it.

Bergen, P. (2023, April 24). "The unnecessary price of Covid-19." *CNN*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/24/opinions/covid-unnecessary-price-bergen/index.html>

The Supreme Court stopped short of a radical act

This story, by Aziz Huq, discusses the Supreme Court's decision last week to continue to allow broad availability of Mifepristone, in light of that body's other recent high-profile rulings on reproductive choice, guns and gun rights, and climate change. Cumulatively those recent decisions have resulted in a rapid (and ongoing) negative shift in the general public's perception of the Court. Huq argues that the justices' high-profile choices have also led to a shift in the political dynamics of court reform with proponents becoming energized by the Court's widely unpopular actions.

Huq, A. (2023, April 21). The Supreme Court stopped short of a radical act. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/04/21/mifepristone-wisconsin-supreme-court-reform-00093355>