



Inside Track

Washington, D.C., Could Become a State if Democrats Win in 2020

In a 232-180 vote on June 26, House Democrats passed a bill to make Washington, D.C., the nation's 51st state.

Democrats have long wanted to make a state out of America's capital, arguing that residents of the city deserve to have representatives in Congress.

It doesn't hurt that the one representative and two senators D.C. would gain would be Democrats, given the city's political demographics. This would particularly upset the current balance in the Senate, where Republicans hold a slim three-vote majority.

Not surprisingly, Republicans oppose D.C. statehood (as do two-thirds of Americans).

"D.C. will never be a state," President Trump told the *New York Post* on May 5. "You mean District of Columbia, a state? Why? So we can have two more Democratic — Democrat senators and five more congressmen? No, thank you. That'll never happen." (D.C., with its population of approximately 700,000, would only gain one representative in the House, not five as the president said.)

Thus, Democratic efforts are unlikely to go anywhere at present. But all that could change if Democrats take back the Senate and White House in November.

Yet Republicans' opposition to D.C. statehood goes beyond party politics. The Constitution explicitly states that the capital should not be a state.

Princeton Students Demand Slavery Reparations, Abolishing Police Force

More than 400 current students and alumni from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University in New Jersey have signed a letter to the school's administration demanding, among other things, that the school pay slavery reparations and abolish the school's police force.

In the letter — dated June 23 — which was addressed to the Board of Trustees, President Christopher Eisgruber, Acting Dean Mark Watson, and Deans Cecilia Rouse, Miguel Centeno, Karen McGuinness, and Elisabeth Donohue, the students and former students demanded that the school act against what they call "the slow and sudden violence that robs Black people of life."

The letter excoriates the school for failing to properly prepare its students for the job of addressing "white supremacy" and dismantling what they refer to as an "oppressive" and "racist" system.

The students of the Wilson school laid out a list of seven demands, which they believe would finally address the so-called systemic racism at Princeton: Pay Reparations; Divest From Prison Industrial Complex; Abolish the Police; Implement an Anti-racist Curriculum; Increase Black Faculty, Lecturers, and Practitioners; Establish a Center for Anti-racist Policy; and Increase Black Student Enrollment.

Ridiculous demands such as these from the students and alumni of the Wilson School at Princeton won't



Written by [Staff](#) on July 20, 2020

Published in the July 20, 2020 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 36, No. 14

help end racism — they'll only encourage actual racists that their beliefs are right.

Consumer Spending Rebounds a Record Eight Percent in May

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) reported on June 26 that consumer spending jumped to a new record in May: 8.1 percent over April, more than double the all-time high ever recorded since the bureau started keeping track of such things in 1959.

Consumers, locked away owing to government mandates in response to COVID-19, headed for auto showrooms and big-box stores to celebrate their new freedom in May. Spending on cars, trucks, SUVs, RVs, refrigerators, and furniture all jumped, along with increased spending at restaurants, hotels, and motels, and on healthcare.

Most commentators focused on the fact that incomes dropped in May, thanks to decreased government stimulus. And that, many assured their readers, bodes poorly for June and later months.

But they failed to mention at least two facts. One: Consumers saved almost a quarter of their incomes in May despite the spending rush. Two: Inflation is almost flat (0.5 percent year over year), while interest rates are close to zero.

To be fair, consumers still have a lot of ground to make up. Consumer spending dropped 6.6 percent in March and another 12.6 percent in April. But given the reopening of the economy, third-quarter estimates that the economy will grow by 20 percent don't seem that far off the mark. Just in time for the election.



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