

Ever since he wrote his 2020 book on tribalism in American politics, [Why We're Polarized](#), I have increasingly found **Ezra Klein** to be one of the most perceptive in-depth thinkers on the political scene.

I found his article [“Seven Theories Why Biden is Losing \(and What He Should Do About It\)”](#) from yesterday's NEW YORK TIMES, to be a typically first-rate analysis of the current situation.

It reflects what we told a group of friends Jerry Langdon and Larry Maddox assembled at the Houston Country Club last Thursday (for which they did NOT warn me a derecho would provide me a night in a hotel with no electricity, no water, and no air conditioning).

I was honored to share the platform – a “dog & pony” show we do every election cycle for Jerry and Larry – with a long-time colleague from across the political aisle from me, **David Q. Bates**, who served President George H.W. Bush as Cabinet Secretary and from whose keen insight and wise judgment I have benefited for decades and whose friendship I cherish.

On this occasion, David and I were both honored to have in our audience – and to invite to the platform where he spoke eloquently – former Secretary of Transportation and President George W. Bush Chief of Staff **Andy Card**. Let this old Democrat repeat here what I said in Houston, “*Washington would be better with more Andy Cards while, sadly, we seem to have fewer of them.*” Indeed, David and I commented that in today's polarized Washington, it is unlikely we would ever become friends and certain we could never have achieved the bipartisan results we produced together since neither of our party's extreme wings would permit it today.

In presenting to Jerry's and Larry's distinguished friends, we relied on a lot of material from the brilliant analyst and presenter **Doug Sosnik** and, as we have for years, stole with abandon (but, at least with credit) from the dean of American political prognosticators, **Charlie Cook**, at *The Cook Report with Amy Walters*. [Here is the deck from the presentation we made.](#)

Our predictions were, of course, based on what we know TODAY . . . and in what is in so many ways an historically unique election (two badly aging Presidents facing off in a re-run for the first time since Cleveland won back the White House from Harrison in 1892), there are an ENORMOUS amount of “**unknowns**” about the next five and one-half months (and more through the vote counting, electoral college, congressional certification, and inauguration processes running into January, 2025). Those “unknowns” include the health of both candidates, the legal status of President Trump and of President Biden's son, performance in the now two debates, one in June (BEFORE the Democratic convention) and one in September, the economy and voter personal perception of it, immigration and any border incidents, international chaos (and Fall campus protests), voter dissatisfaction among key Democratic groups (Blacks, Latinos, young voters), etc.

While much COULD change, David and I agree we see little getting better for Biden. Based on polling, especially in the six to eight key “swing states,” it’s clear to us (despite denial and delusion in the White House) that if the election were held TODAY, **President Trump** would win back the **White House**. Absent a major shift that we do NOT see coming, we expect that to still be true in November.

We expect the **Republicans** to win control of the **U.S. Senate**. Given the Democrats’ sure loss of West Virginia, even if the Democrats “ran the table” and won every close race (which they have done in the past but we don’t think they’re likely to do this year, especially in the event of a Trump victory), they would have only a 50-50 Senate. We’re convinced it will be worse for Democrats.

The **U.S. House** is, in truth, too close to call . . . and those elections are more intensely local. However, based on redistricting/court decisions, GOP dysfunction, and current polling, we think there is a chance **Democrats** could win back the U.S. House.

There is little **governor** action in this cycle. We see the **Democrats** maybe picking up one governor’s office.

Those are the latest views from Hawthorn and our friends whose judgment we respect. The only thing that’s certain is events are highly likely to change these views.

As the wreaths start appearing at the federal cemeteries around Alexandria, we’re reminded Memorial Day approaches and with it the unofficial start of summer. We wish you a good Memorial Day and a pleasant summer, not unduly spoiled by political acrimony.

John