

WEEKLY CURRENT

April 15-19, 2024

Issues Making a Splash This Week

- **Finish Line in Sight for Ukraine Aid and TikTok Bill:** House Republicans' foreign aid package, which includes forced divestment of TikTok, is moving towards passage.
- **A Trade Agenda for the Rust Belt:** President Biden's electoral focus on the Rust Belt is unmistakable in several recent trade proposals. However, that should not be viewed as a sign that the policies will completely disappear if Biden wins reelection.
- **One's Own Worst Enemy:** Democrats would have to run the board in a bunch of vulnerable races to maintain control of the Senate. Although this is unlikely, it's hardly impossible, as Republicans themselves proved in the midterm elections.

ENDGAME FOR FOREIGN AID IN THE HOUSE: The House Republicans' foreign aid package is on the move. **Late last night, the House Rules Committee approved a rule for floor consideration of the legislation, a key procedural juncture.** House Freedom Caucus-aligned Reps. Ralph Norman (R-SC), Chip Roy (R-TX), and Thomas Massie (R-KY) voted no, forcing House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) to rely on four Democratic votes to inch his plan forward. This is a departure from convention, as usually the majority party supplies the votes for procedural steps.

With this hurdle cleared, the legislation's path to final passage in the House is now clear. After assisting with the Rules Committee vote to report out the rule, Democrats are now expected to support passing the rule on the floor when it comes to a vote today, giving enough votes to offset GOP defections. A final floor vote for the legislation itself will only require a majority vote, which is not in question. Though some Democrats will likely oppose Israel aid and some Republicans will vote against Ukraine aid, there are enough lawmakers in both parties to bring it over the finish line. **Final passage of the four bills in the House is expected on Saturday in order to observe the House GOP conference's rule mandating that legislation wait 72 hours between introduction and a floor vote.**

Johnson's life was made easier this week because former President Trump has not explicitly opposed his foreign aid plan. A condemnation by Trump could have made the speaker's challenging position untenable and empowered his detractors. Trump [took to](#) Truth Social yesterday to complain about what he viewed as insufficient European spending on Ukraine. "Why isn't Europe giving more money to help Ukraine? Why is it that the United States is over \$100 Billion Dollars into the Ukraine War more than Europe, and we have an Ocean between us as separation!" he posted. This echoes his longstanding critiques of NATO members as freeloaders. **Importantly, while Trump voiced grievances about funding Ukraine, he did not directly come out against Johnson's legislation or call on lawmakers to vote no like he has with previous bills** such as the Senate's border security deal earlier this year, or more recently, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) Section 702 reauthorization. This could have caused problems for Johnson.

Johnson's four bills — aid to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan in addition to a potpourri of House GOP foreign policy goals — are expected to pass the House and go as a package to the Senate, which won't be able to change it. **This makes the content of the fourth bill significant as the Democratic-led Senate won't be able to weigh in. In addition to Iran sanctions and the seizure of Russian assets, it also forces ByteDance to divest TikTok.** Senate Commerce Committee Chair Maria Cantwell (D-WA) [came out in favor](#) of the TikTok bill on Wednesday, which facilitates passage in the upper chamber. **Compared to the initial TikTok bill that passed the House, this one lengthens the divestment window from six months to nine, with the potential of a three-month extension at the discretion of the president.** This change is good politics for Democrats, as it allows President Biden to wait until after this fall's presidential election before any changes to the status of the short-form video app, which is extremely popular with the crucial Democratic demographic of youth voters. Moreover, any move towards divestment is likely to encounter litigation, so TikTok would likely remain available on phones and in app stores for some time. **Speaking at Semafor's World Economy Summit yesterday, White House Director of Science and Technology Policy Arati Prabhakar was careful to [specify](#) that Biden wants to see a divestment of TikTok rather than an outright ban of the app.** She emphasized concerns about the national security implications of China collecting user data and stressed that "he president has called for divestment. He has not called for a ban."

The Senate is currently dealing with FISA reauthorization, which expires today. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) [said](#) on the floor yesterday that lawmakers should expect votes today. It's possible that Section 702 authority could briefly lapse over the weekend if the Senate does not complete its consideration of the bill today. **Once FISA is complete, the Senate will be able to turn to the House-passed foreign aid legislation. Next week's scheduled recess provides leverage for Schumer and backers of the foreign aid package to get it done quickly as lawmakers will not want to miss the recess.** Passover begins Monday evening but senators could work during the day. At this point, final passage

is more a matter of when than if.

BIDEN TARGETS RUST BELT WITH TRADE PROPOSALS: As President Biden continues to ramp up his reelection campaign, he is catering particularly to voters in the Rust Belt. **The attention is no accident, as winning these states is likely crucial to [his reelection prospects](#), a big part of which is winning union voters who are seen as some of the potential swing votes in these states.** Without victories in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, Biden's path back to the White House becomes much more difficult. Biden still tends to trail former President Trump in most polls, but there are [some signs](#) that he may be starting to turn this around.

Not only does Biden's recent campaign stops reflect this focus, but it is also shown in some of his recent policy proposals, particularly related to trade policy. **This week, Biden [proposed](#) raising Section 301 tariffs on Chinese steel and aluminum products from 7.5 to 25 percent.** This new tariff would be in addition to the separate Section 232 tariffs the Trump administration imposed. Implementing the new duties is far from immediate and will likely take months. However, what matters most to Biden's campaign is that he gets the headlines and is seen as supporting these policies. **Any change to the Section 301 tariffs would be expected as part of the White House's review of the Trump tariffs.**

In addition to tariff revisions, the Office of US Trade Representative (USTR) [opened an investigation](#) into allegations that China is subsidizing its shipbuilding industry. Several key unions, including the United Steelworkers (USW), petitioned the USTR for this investigation, asserting that China's practices hurt US firms and workers by distorting the market. Unless the Biden administration decides to move faster, the investigation could take up to a year to finish. The unions have asked for several remedies, including a fee on large Chinese ships that dock at US ports, but the White House has not committed to anything yet. **Like Biden's call for tariffs, launching the investigation shows action on an issue that matters to these constituencies while still not locking the Biden administration into any new policies.** Given the length of the investigation, no decision will be made before the election, and if Biden does not win reelection, finishing the inquiry and any remedies would be left up to a future Trump administration.

The Biden administration also continues to indicate that it will take action to ensure there is not a flood of Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) into the US market. When Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) asked about the possible surge of imports in a [recent hearing](#), USTR Katherine Tai said that the White House will "take early action, decisive action, and... be really clear about why we are taking the action." Tai did not offer more details on what types of actions were under consideration. Still, it is widely expected that elevated tariffs [could be imposed](#) on Chinese EVs as part of the Biden administration's review of Trump's Section 301 tariffs. Tai said this review would be done "soon" but has not elaborated further.

The final piece of this puzzle is Biden's continued pushback against **Nippon Steel's (TSE: 5401)** proposed purchase of **US Steel (X)**. During his campaign stops this week, Biden [reiterated his belief](#) that US Steel should continue to be "American-owned [and] American-operated." The deal remains under review at the Committee on Foreign Investment in the US, which will have the final say on whether the merger can close. However, Biden's forceful opposition has made this appear to be unlikely. **The only realistic way this deal can succeed is if the USW changes its tune and emphatically backs the merger. Even then, this new stance from the USW may not be enough alone, and there is still a chance that Biden looks to block the transaction.** If Trump wins in the fall, he has also indicated that he will stop Nippon's acquisition.

As much as election politics are driving these trade policies from Biden, the election is not the only reason that Biden is pursuing them. These issues are being given more priority because of their electoral importance; however, that should not be mistaken as the president not believing or wanting to execute in these issue areas. There is an inescapable element to the proposals that because of the election, Biden is making promises he may not deliver on as he would only need to do so after the election. Still, **these policies should not be viewed as just campaign trail promises that will disappear if Biden wins. The emphasis may decrease, the proposals may be moderated, and other issues may come back to the front of the White House's trade agenda, but these are at least indicative of the direction Biden wants to move on these issues.**

HOW THE SENATE GOP COULD BECOME THREE-TIME LOSERS: It's too early to say much about the elections to come in November, but one thing is clear: **Republicans start the race for the Senate with a major advantage.** It will be unlikely that Democrats hold onto the upper chamber this year. **That said, unlikely is not impossible, and there still remains a path** (albeit a narrow, tenuous one) **for Democrats to emerge victorious once again. Let's walk through the scenario of what that would require.**

Democrats have essentially no margin for error with their current 51-49 majority. Losing even one seat — almost a certainty given Senator Joe Manchin's (D-WV) retirement — would lead to a 50-50 Senate with ties to be broken by the vice president. Losing just one more than that would result in a GOP majority regardless of the presidential outcome. **Holding on either means successfully defending every Senate seat (save West Virginia, which will be entirely omitted from discussion) or pulling off a long-shot victory in either red Texas or Florida. That includes two seats in states former President Trump won twice by comfortable margins: Montana and Ohio.** Democrats are also defending seven more states Biden won by single digits — five of the six battlegrounds that will likely determine the presidential election also have a Democratic Senate incumbent up this cycle. That means of these other seven, four are in states Trump has won in before.

Pulling this off would require one or a combination of things to go their way. First and foremost, Democratic candidates would have to separate themselves from President Biden and establish a strong, independent brand. The reason that Biden simply won't win in Montana and Ohio and the reason these are also the top two Senate battlegrounds is the same: these are definitively red states. Surviving would require somehow winning a significant chunk of voters simultaneously voting for Trump. **The good news for Democrats is that there's nobody as well-suited to the task as Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Jon Tester (D-MT) —** one has to be pretty savvy to remain the only statewide Democrat, prevailing last cycle in 2018 even after both states had picked Trump two years before. Brown has a populist, pro-worker appeal while Tester is a former farmer that is so salt-of-the-earth he lost three fingers in a childhood mechanical accident. **Democrats by and large have a pretty stacked deck of candidates, including incumbents in every contestable race but Arizona and Michigan. Candidates matter: just ask Republicans, who blew every winnable Senate race in 2022 largely in part to this fact.** While the National Republican Senatorial Committee has worked hard to get good picks in place and prevent this from happening again, some glaring weak spots remain. **Full-throatedly MAGA candidates will be the GOP candidates in Arizona and Ohio** in the form of failed 2022 gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake (R-AZ) and businessman Bernie Moreno (R-OH). **And while the remaining Republican candidates are more moderate in tone, they're politically inexperienced and vulnerable to accusations of being [wealthy carpetbaggers](#).**

Not only will the stars of the show have to succeed, but everything has to go right around them. Luckily, Democrats have advantages in many "soft" factors. **One key leg up they enjoy is in fundraising and ad spending.** Total pledged Democratic spending towards *just* TV, radio, and digital advertisements for Senate races *specifically* is [\\$318 million](#) today with the election still six months away. Democratic candidates outraised their Republican counterparts in every contestable state save Wisconsin, as well as in long-shot bids Florida and [Texas](#). For contrast, total Republican pledged Senate spending is currently around \$130 million. **Additionally, state Republican parties in roughly half of the most important battleground states are awash in various degrees of dysfunction, debt and [disarray](#).** These organizations conduct much of the actual grunt work of political campaigns: knocking on doors, voter registration drives, etc.

Lastly, Democrats better be having a good night as a whole. Political outcomes are strongly correlated and almost every key presidential swing state features a simultaneous Senate race. Split-ticket voting is on the decline, meaning that Biden's results are a rough baseline for how each Senate candidate will do. These nominees can overachieve this baseline by running good campaigns but **the less each candidate has to outperform Biden, the better, especially in red states.** Tester and Brown essentially require crossover support from Trump voters to win. A smaller Trump margin in those states would make their lifts easier. The

same applies to the swing states: if Biden loses, say, Arizona, that bodes poorly for the Senate race there as well. If Biden loses, Democrats would also need to win Florida or Texas and defend every other seat (save West Virginia) to retain the upper chamber (a Republican vice president would break ties in an evenly divided Senate). **Failing that, if the nominees aren't getting national help from the top down from a Biden overperformance, they better be getting a boost from the bottom up from strong party outcomes in their particular states and regions. Abortion rights could be exactly that boost.** The week before the Arizona state Supreme Court ruled its 1864 abortion ban was enforceable, the organization behind the campaign to put abortion on the ballot in the state announced they had gathered enough signatures to [qualify](#). In fact, in the wake of the Arizona abortion ruling, Sabato's Crystal Ball [changed](#) its rating of the Grand Canyon State's Senate race from Toss-up to Leans Democratic.

Pulling all this off though requires a lot to break the Democrats' way:

exceptional Senate campaigns and a good night for Democrats across the board.

As of today, the evidence implies otherwise. Both Biden and Democratic Senate candidates are consistently polling around neck-and-neck with their respective opponents. Creating an independent brand, already difficult in our polarized era, is made even tougher by the fact it's a presidential year. **Most of the GOP flaws discussed above are flip-sides that come with corresponding strengths.** If candidate brands can work modern political magic, it would have to affect Brown and Tester but not Republican former popular Governor Larry Hogan in [Maryland](#). If state parties will make the difference, then Democrats themselves are in trouble in [Pennsylvania](#) and [Florida](#). And while Democrats are outraising their opponents, it's largely because their opponents don't have to do as much fundraising: many are independently wealthy. One could say many GOP nominees are inexperienced; one could also say they don't have a track record to critique and can claim to be separate from the mess happening in Washington. A few of them are veterans. **A Democratic Senate isn't impossible but is unlikely given current evidence.** There's only so much they can do in such difficult circumstances (even with the [endorsement](#) of fictional President Josiah Bartlett). **That has massive policy repercussions: it means that Republicans likely won't do worse than divided government post-2024 and even have a real shot of unified federal control.**

A Quick Look Back

House

On Monday, the House considered five bills concerning Iran and "terrorist supporting organizations" under expedited procedures.

On Tuesday, the House considered several measures concerning Iran and Israel.

On Wednesday, the House considered a bill that would prohibit US law enforcement and

intelligence agencies from buying data on US persons from a third-party data broker without a court order, a bill that would redesignate the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, a bill that would provide for tighter congressional oversight of any administration attempt to weaken sanctions imposed on Iran, and a bill that would ensure Iran cannot gain access to funds that could be used to support terrorism. The chamber also completed consideration of a bill that would require Iran to cease support for acts of international terrorism.

On Thursday, the House considered a resolution that condemned Iran's missile and drone attack on Israel.

Today, the House will reconvene at 9:00 a.m. and will consider a border security bill under expedited procedures as well as the rule related to the four foreign aid-related bills.

Senate

On Monday, the Senate held a procedural vote on the nomination of Ramona Villagomez Manglona to be a judge on the District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands.

On Tuesday, the Senate held a final confirmation vote on Manglona's nomination. Later, the sergeant at arms introduced the House managers to initiate impeachment proceedings against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

On Wednesday, the Senate resumed consideration of the Reforming Intelligence and Securing America Act. Senators were also sworn in as jurors for the impeachment trial of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas before the body voted to dismiss the proceedings.

On Thursday, the Senate reconvened to resume consideration of the Reforming Intelligence and Securing America Act and held a procedural vote on the bill.

Today, the Senate will reconvene at 11:00 a.m. and will resume consideration of the Reforming Intelligence and Securing America Act. Votes are possible but not yet scheduled.

White House

On Monday, President Biden met with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia'a Al-Sudani and then with Czechia Prime Minister Petr Fiala.

On Tuesday, President Biden traveled to Scranton, PA to participate in two campaign events.

On Wednesday, President Biden traveled to Pittsburgh, PA, where he met with steel

workers at the United Steel Workers headquarters and delivered remarks.

On Thursday, President Biden traveled to Philadelphia, PA to participate in campaign events.

Today, President Biden will receive his daily intelligence briefing at 9:00 a.m. At 12:00 p.m., the president will deliver remarks at the IBEW Construction and Maintenance Conference in Washington, DC. At 5:10 p.m., Biden will depart the White House, en route to Wilmington, DE, where he will arrive at 6:05 p.m.

Spotlight Review

Tuesday: [Biden's All-In Approach to Semiconductors](#)

Thursday: [What This Year's Tax Battle Tells Us About Next Year](#)

On the Horizon

Macroeconomic

Today at 8:30 a.m., the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group will conclude their 2024 Spring Meeting. [More information here.](#)

Today at 10:00 a.m., the Peterson Institute for International Economics will hold a virtual discussion titled "Monetary policy responses to the post-pandemic inflation: What happened and lessons learned." [More information here.](#)

Today at 12:30 p.m., the Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies will hold a discussion titled "Strategic Priorities for the European Investment Bank" with the bank's president, Nadia Calvino. [More information here.](#)

Today at 3:00 p.m., the Peterson Institute for International Economics will hold a virtual discussion titled "A Vision of the Future Financial System." [More information here.](#)

Expected participants include:

- Roberto Campos Neto, governor, Central Bank of Brazil
- Joachim Nagel, president, Deutsche Bundesbank
- Rhee Changyong, governor, Bank of Korea

Today at 5:00 p.m., the Peterson Institute for International Economics will hold a virtual discussion titled "The Recent Changes in the Bank of Japan's Monetary Policy Framework" with Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda. [More information here.](#)

On Tuesday at 8:30 a.m., the US Chamber of Commerce and BusinessEurope will hold the

2024 Transatlantic Business Works Summit, with the theme "Driving Competitiveness in a Changing World." [More information here](#). Expected participants include:

- Gina M. Raimondo, secretary, Department of Commerce

Cybersecurity

Today at 1:30 a.m., the Center for a New American Security and the Japan Institute for International Affairs held a virtual discussion titled "Cybersecurity in the Indo-Pacific: Japan." [More information here](#).

On Thursday at 1:30 p.m., the Atlantic Council's Cyber Statecraft Initiative will hold a virtual discussion titled "The Secure By Design Imperative: A One-Year Retrospective." [More information here](#). Expected participants include:

- Jen Easterly, director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

Defense

On Tuesday at 1:30 p.m., the Henry L. Stimson Center will hold a discussion titled "Maritime Power for Global Security." [More information here](#). Expected participants include:

- Carlos Del Toro, secretary of the navy, Department of Defense

On Wednesday at 8:30 a.m., the Center for Strategic and International Studies will hold its 2024 Global Security Forum titled "Gathering Strength in a Gathering Storm." [More information here](#). Expected participants include:

- Gen. Charles Brown Jr., US Army, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, Department of Defense

Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources

On Tuesday at 11:00 a.m., the House Oversight and Accountability Committee Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs will hold a field hearing in Plano, TX titled "Drilling Down: Oversight of the Challenges and Opportunities Facing US Energy Production." [More information here](#).

On Tuesday at 4:00 p.m., the Atlantic Council will hold a discussion titled "Space Industry for Space Strategy." [More information here](#).

On Wednesday at 9:00 a.m., the Atlantic Council will hold a virtual discussion titled "Newcleo: Building an Advanced Nuclear Ecosystem" with the theme of "the development of a diverse, iterative advanced nuclear technology suite." [More information here](#).

Financial Services

Today at 9:00 a.m., the Brookings Institution's Global Economy and Development Program will hold a discussion titled "Toward Reimagined Global Financial Architecture: Progress and Challenges." [More information here.](#)

Today at 9:30 a.m., the Center for Strategic and International Studies will hold a discussion titled "The Role of Fast Payment Systems in Addressing Financial Inclusion." [More information here.](#)

Geopolitical

Today at 9:30 a.m., the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission will hold a meeting. [More information here.](#)

On Tuesday at 10:45 a.m., the Center for Strategic and International Studies will hold a conference titled "Energy Security and Geopolitics." [More information here.](#) Expected participants include:

- Geoffrey Pyatt, assistant secretary for energy resources, Department of State

On Friday at 9:00 a.m., the Center for Strategic and International Studies will hold a virtual discussion titled "The Belt and Road Initiative at 10: Challenges and Opportunities." [More information here.](#)

Healthcare

On Tuesday at 12:30 p.m., the Bipartisan Policy Center will hold a virtual discussion titled "Optimizing Medicare-Medicaid Integration for Dually Eligible Beneficiaries." [More information here.](#) Expected participants include:

- Kerry Branick, deputy director of the Medicare-Medicaid coordination office, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Housing

On Tuesday at 10:00 a.m., the Bipartisan Policy Center will hold a discussion titled "HUD's role in addressing the housing supply shortage, the agency's priorities, and how those are reflected in its latest budget request." [More information here.](#) Expected participants include:

- Adrienne Todman, acting secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development

Judicial

On Wednesday at 2:00 p.m., the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies In-House Counsel Network will hold a virtual discussion titled "Climate Lawsuits and Status at the US Supreme Court." [More information here.](#)

On Thursday at 3:00 p.m., the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies Civil Rights Practice Group will hold a virtual discussion titled "Nuziard v. Minority Business Development Agency: What is the Future of Equal Protection Litigation?" [More information here.](#)

Labor

On Wednesday at 1:00 p.m., the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies regulatory Transparency Project will hold a virtual discussion titled "Grading the Biden Labor Department and National Labor Relation Board's Use of Regulatory Authorities" [More information here.](#)

On Thursday at 3:00 p.m., the Brookings Institution will hold a virtual discussion titled "Work in the age of artificial intelligence." [More information here.](#)

Political

On Wednesday at 12:00 p.m., Washington Post Live will hold a virtual discussion titled "issues driving the electorate in 2024, the politics of abortion in battleground states" and former president Trump's vision for a second term. [More information here.](#) Expected participants include:

- Kellyanne Conway, former senior counselor to President Trump

Tech-Media-Telecom

On Wednesday at 6:00 p.m., the Bipartisan Policy Center will hold a discussion titled "Elections in the Age of Artificial Intelligence." [More information here.](#)

On Thursday at 1:00 p.m., the Atlantic Council empowerME Initiative's WIn Fellowship will hold a discussion titled "AI Revolution: Transforming the Global Business Landscape." [More information here.](#)

On Thursday at 1:00 p.m., the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies Telecommunications & Electronic Media Practice Group will hold a virtual discussion titled "Deja Vu all over again? The Return of Network Neutrality." [More information here.](#)

From Friday through Saturday, the Federal Communications Bar Association will hold its annual seminar. [More information here.](#) Expected participants include:

- Anna Gomez, commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

On Friday at 9:00 a.m., Washington Post Live will hold a virtual discussion with policy and industry leaders titled "Disparities in Digital Access." [More information here](#). Expected participants include:

- Jessica Rosenworcel, chair, Federal Communications Commission

On Friday at 2:30 p.m., the American Bar Association will hold a virtual discussion titled "AI and Consumers: The Invisible Impact on Economic Justice," part of the series "AI and the Legal Profession: Navigating Opportunities and Challenges." [More information here](#). Expected participants include:

- Ryan Kriger, attorney at the division of privacy and identity protection, Federal Communications Commission

Trade

On Wednesday at 10:00 a.m., the Washington International Trade Association and the Asia Society Policy Institute will hold a virtual discussion titled "Shipbuilding: The Next US-China Trade Battle?" [More information here](#).

Afterthoughts

Leaving Things in a Cab: It's a fairly relatable experience — you get out of a taxi, check your pockets, and realize you left something in there. **Uber's (UBER)** eighth annual [Lost & Found Index](#) is a highlight reel of the best and worst things people have left behind over the company's [9.5 billion](#) trips made last year. The most common items aren't especially surprising: clothing most, then luggage, headphones, wallet, jewelry, phones, and cameras. Some of the strangest items, however, are real head-scratchers, especially the frontal hair toupee someone somehow left in their taxi. Other winners include "a leaf that's much needed," a live pet turtle, "expensive blueberries that are special," "my girlfriend's pregnant bills," a small box containing a gnome, a poster of Hillary Clinton, and two containers filled with spiders. Apparently January 21st is the most forgetful day of the year, and the most popular hour to report lost items was between 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. The most "forgetful cities" were Miami, FL; Los Angeles, CA; and Atlanta, GA. One for the ages is the time Yo-Yo Ma accidentally left his [\\$3.5 million](#), 260-year old Staradavarius cello in the trunk of a taxi in New York City. Don't worry — the police met the driver at his home and found the instrument still in the back, untouched.

Littering Prohibited: On March 8th, a strange, gray-black object crashed through the roof of one Alejandro Otero. On Monday, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) confirmed in a [statement](#) that it was garbage dumped from the International Space Station that had fallen back to earth. Three years ago, the station's robotic arm released a pallet of aging batteries following the delivery and installation of a new supply. This approximately 5,800 pound chunk was expected to totally burn up on March 8th, but

somehow, a 1.6 pound object approximately the size and shape of a soda can survived the long journey back. NASA will perform an investigation into the event and use the information to update their modeling to estimate how objects heat up and break apart during atmospheric re-entry. Don't worry too much about the risk of falling space rocks clocking one's noggin, however; although there are some old historical [records](#) attributing deaths to meteors, there is only one rigorously documented case of a person being directly hit by one. Ann Hodges was struck by one while napping on her couch in Sylacauga, AL in [1954](#). It gave her a bruise but she survived. By the way, the location of this littering freak event? Florida, of course (Naples, specifically).



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