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AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# USA OUTLOOK

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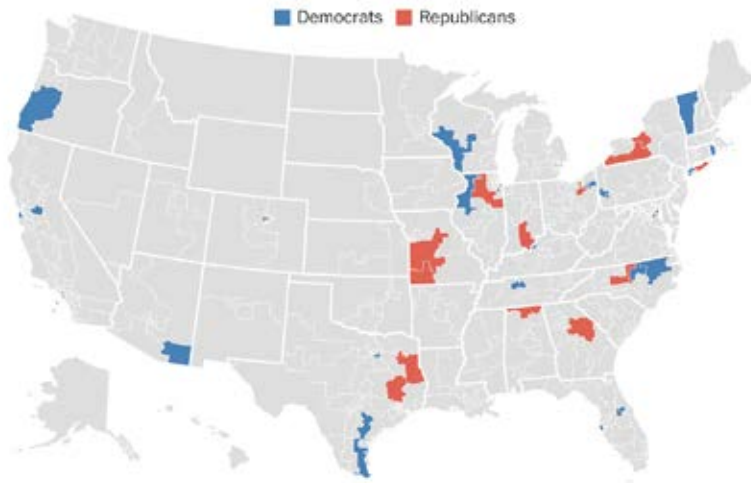


Foto: The Washington Post

## Here's every House member retiring from Congress

Dozens of House members have announced they will not seek re-election and are retiring from Congress, with some having served for decades and ascended to powerful committee perches.

The reasons offered vary — some are pursuing other offices, others have cited changes made to the areas they represent through redistricting, and several have said they simply want to leave the grind of Congress and spend more time with their families.

So far, 30 Democrats have announced their retirements compared with 17 Republicans. This has led GOP officials to charge that Democrats are heading for the exits because they are afraid of tough re-election fights this fall or because they believe Republicans will gain control of the House next year, relegating Democrats to the minority.

Regardless of the reason, the retirements mean there will be a large group of new House members walking the halls of Congress next year.

## Justice Department appeals mask ruling after CDC says mandate "remains necessary for the public health"

The Justice Department has filed an appeal that seeks to reverse a judge's recent ruling that ended the nation's mask mandate on public transit. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had asked the department to appeal the decision, issuing a statement Wednesday that said the mandate "remains necessary for the public health." "CDC continues to recommend that people wear masks in all indoor public transportation settings," the CDC's statement continued. "CDC's number one priority is protecting the public health of our nation. As we have said before, wearing masks is most beneficial in crowded or poorly ventilated locations, such as the transportation corridor."

The Justice Department said Tuesday it would appeal U.S. District Judge Kathryn Kimball Mizelle's decision only if the CDC said the mandate was still necessary. The department said Tuesday that it disagreed with the district court's decision, and upon filing the appeal, Justice Department spokesman Anthony Coley issued a statement Wednesday saying, "In light of today's assessment by the CDC that an order requiring masking in the transportation corridor remains necessary to protect the public health, the Department has filed a notice of appeal in *Health Freedom Defense Fund, Inc., et al., v. Biden, et al.*"



Foto: CBS News





Foto: Topfitness20

## Energy-thirsty Bitcoin miners seek ways to dump fossil fuels

For the past year a company that “mines” cryptocurrency had what seemed the ideal location for its thousands of power-thirsty computers working around the clock to verify bitcoin transactions: the grounds of a coal-fired power plant in rural Montana.

But with the cryptocurrency industry under increasing pressure to rein in the environmental impact of its massive electricity consumption, Marathon Digital Holdings made the decision to pack up its computers, called miners, and relocate them to a wind farm in Texas. “For us, it just came down to the fact that we don’t want to be operating on fossil fuels,” said company CEO Fred Thiel.

In the world of bitcoin mining, access to cheap and reliable electricity is everything. But many economists and environmentalists have warned that as the still widely misunderstood digital currency grows in price — and with it popularity — the process of mining that is central to its existence and value is becoming increasingly energy intensive and potentially unsustainable.

## Biden announces new program for Ukrainian refugees to enter US on humanitarian grounds

President Joe Biden on Thursday announced a new program called “Uniting for Ukraine” that will provide a streamlined process for Ukrainian refugees seeking to come to the United States.

The move comes nearly one month after Biden pledged to admit up to 100,000 Ukrainians fleeing Russia’s invasion and is designed to more quickly get Ukrainians interested in coming to the US.

“This new humanitarian parole program will complement the existing legal pathways available to Ukrainians, including immigrant visas and refugee processing. It will provide an expedient channel for secure legal migration from Europe to the United States for Ukrainians who have a US sponsor, such as a family or an NGO,” the President announced Thursday while delivering an update on Ukraine and Russia.

Biden continued, “This program will be fast. It will be streamlined. And it will ensure the United States honors its commitment to go to the people of Ukraine and (they) need not go through our southern border.”

The President on Thursday also announced another \$800 million package of weapons and other aid would be sent to Ukraine in the administration’s latest efforts to reinforce the country’s forces battling against Russia’s invasion.



Foto: CBS 58



Foto: The New York Times

## Biden announces another \$800m in military aid for Ukraine: ‘We’re in a critical window’ – as it happened

Joe Biden announced that the US would be providing another \$800m military assistance package to Ukraine, in addition to \$500m in economic assistance. He acknowledged that he had nearly exhausted the drawdown authority authorized by Congress in a bipartisan spending bill last month, and that he would be making a supplemental budget request in order to continue funding Ukraine as it defends itself from Russia.

In this same address, Biden announced the creation of Unite for Ukraine, a humanitarian parole program to expedite the migration of

Ukrainian refugees from Europe to the US through sponsorship.

In addition to more sanctions announced yesterday, Biden announced that Russian-affiliated ships are now banned from American ports.

Ukraine prime minister Denys Shmyhal is in Washington, and met briefly with Biden and some of his cabinet members before Biden gave his remarks. Shmyhal then went on to Capitol Hill, where he met with House speaker Nancy Pelosi.