CALENDAR:

Because of the new Juneteenth national holiday, the House and Senate are off today and will return Tuesday. The Senate will stay in session through Thursday, while the House is scheduled to stay in session through Friday.

LAST WEEK IN THE HOUSE:

The House came back to work on Monday, and took up and passed three bills under Suspension of the Rules.

On Tuesday, the House took up the Rule governing floor consideration of H.R. 2543, the Federal Reserve Racial and Economic Equity Act; H.R. 2773, the Recovering Americas Wildlife Act; and H.R. 7606, the Meat and Poultry Special Investigator Act. Then the House took up and passed S. 4160, the Supreme Court Police Parity Act, by a vote of 396-27, with all 27 votes against coming from Democrats.

Then the House began consideration of H.R. 2773, the Recovering Americas Wildlife Act. After considering – and agreeing to – four amendments, the amended bill was passed by a vote of 231-190. Then the House passed two more bills under Suspension of the Rules.

On Wednesday, the House took up H.R. 2543, the Federal Reserve Racial and Economic Equity Act. After considering amendments – three of which were agreed to, and one of which was rejected – the bill was passed by a vote of 215-207.

On Thursday, the House took up H.R. 7606, the Meat and Poultry Special Investigator Act. The bill passed by a vote of 221-204.

And then they were done.
THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE:

The House will return Tuesday, with the first vote set for 6:30 PM. At that time, the House is scheduled to consider 11 bills under Suspension of the Rules.

On Wednesday, the House will take up three bills under Suspension of the Rules: H.R. 5407, the Enhancing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Through Campus Planning Act; H.R. 6493, the Campus Prevention and Recovery Services for Students Act of 2022; and H.R. 6411, the STRONG Veterans Act of 2022.

On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the House will consider H.R. 7666, the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022; H.R. 5585, the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Health Act; the Senate Amendment to H.R. 3967, the Honoring Our PACT Act of 2022; and H.R. 4176, the LGBTQI+Data Inclusion Act.

In addition, if the Senate passes something on gun control in time, the House may take up that legislation before heading out of town for two weeks for the Fourth of July recess.

LAST WEEK IN THE SENATE:

The Senate came back to work on Monday, and voted to invoke cloture on the Tester amendment to H.R. 3967, the Honoring Our PACT Act.

On Wednesday, the Senate voted to pass that amendment. Then the Senate voted to invoke cloture on the amended bill. Then the Senate voted against the Motion to Proceed to S.J.Res. 41, the Rand Paul budget resolution. Then the Senate voted to confirm Alan M. Leventhal to be Ambassador of the United States to the Kingdom of Denmark.

On Thursday, the Senate voted by 84-14 to pass H.R. 3967, the amended Honoring Our PACT Act. Then the Senate voted to invoke cloture on the nominations of Ana Isabel de Alba to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of California and Mary T. Boyle to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Then the Senate voted to discharge from the Committee on the Judiciary the nomination of Steven M. Dettelbach to be Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

And then they were done.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE:

The Senate will return to work on Tuesday, with the first vote set for 5:30 PM. At that time, the Senate will proceed to a roll call vote on ... what, exactly, we don’t know, because the Majority Leader’s office didn’t send out the notice they usually do, and we have no idea what’s on tap for this week.
ALASKA SPECIAL ELECTION:

As you know, we don’t regularly get into the details of individual elections, even special elections. But there’s a special election going on right now in Alaska that has some special interest to many of you, because one of the candidates is Sarah Palin.

The special election was necessitated by the March 18 death of the late Congressman Don Young, who represented Alaska in the House of Representatives for 49 years. In representing Alaska for that long, he became the longest-serving Republican in the history of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The special primary election was held on June 11, with the top four finishers set to move on to the August 16 special general election, where ranked-choice voting will be employed.

As of the weekend, three of the four finalists are known. They are:

- Sarah Palin, the former governor and 2008 GOP vice presidential nominee, who has the endorsement of former President Trump. She polled 37,741 votes, representing 28.2 percent of the vote.

- Nick Begich III, nephew of the former Democrat U.S. senator, and the scion of one of the state’s most powerful political families. Unlike his uncle the former U.S. senator, he is a Republican. In an odd twist, it was the 1972 disappearance of his grandfather, Congressman Nick Begich Sr., that triggered the special election that launched Congressman Young’s service in the House of Representatives. Begich has raised $1.2 million and has the endorsement of the state’s Republican Party. Begich polled 25,766 votes, representing 19.2 percent of the vote.

- Al Gross, running as an Independent, who ran in 2020 as the Democrat nominee for U.S. Senate against incumbent Republican Dan Sullivan. Gross polled 17,037 votes, representing 12.7 percent of the vote.

The August 16 special general election – which will be held on the same day as the regular primary election for the full term in the 118th Congress – will employ ranked-choice voting. If no one receives at least 50 percent of the vote plus one, then the fourth-place finisher will be eliminated, with his or her votes being redistributed to his or her voters’ next choices, and so on until someone gets to 50 percent plus one. In this scenario, Begich would appear to have the upper hand – of the three we know who are going to be in the special general election, he’s positioned in the center. So if Gross is eliminated, it seems likelier that the bulk of his votes would go to Begich, rather than Palin. And if Begich is eliminated, it seems likelier that the bulk of his votes would go to Gross than to Palin.
IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL:

Last week, Iran declared that it was removing 27 cameras operated by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the international organization tasked with tracking Iran’s nuclear activities. Removing the cameras, installed inside Iranian facilities, blinds the IAEA to what exactly Iran is doing.

On Wednesday, senior Biden Administration officials briefed a bipartisan group of U.S. senators on the latest status of the multiparty negotiations over whether or not the U.S. and Iran could agree to come back inside the terms of the 2015 Iran Nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. The takeaway is simple – it does not appear that Iran is willing to come back into the terms of the agreement, because the Biden Administration is unwilling to reverse an action taken by the Trump Administration, to wit, the Trump Administration’s 2019 decision to list the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Consequently, senators from both parties shared their views that a resumption of the Iran nuclear deal is a non-starter.

On Thursday, The New York Times reported on Iranian construction of a series of tunnels deep in the mountains near the Natanz nuclear facility. With sourcing from Israeli and U.S. intelligence officials, the piece explains that Iran is building these tunnels so they can hide nuclear production facilities so deep inside mountains that they can withstand bombing assaults from anything known to be in the Israeli Air Force’s arsenal – meaning, presumably, that the only thing short of a nuclear strike that could possibly take out the facilities is a direct strike by a U.S. bunker buster.

INFLATION:

Last week’s inflation numbers – which showed the Consumer Price Index rising by 8.6 percent year over year, the highest inflation in 41 years – were so bad that the Fed decided it had to raise interest rates even more than it had previously signaled. So instead of a 50-basis point hike, the Fed raised rates by 75 basis points, or three-quarters of a percent. That means home mortgages, credit card rates, car loans and the like will all become more expensive, and that, the Fed hopes, will result in a slowdown of economic activity that will lessen demand and, the Fed hopes, reduce inflation.

The last time America suffered under inflation this bad, government officials solved the problem by a combination of a restrictive monetary policy run by the Fed and a stimulative fiscal policy run by the Reagan Administration. That is, the Fed used its control over the money supply to shrink the number of dollars in circulation, while the Reagan Administration convinced a Congress with a Democrat-controlled House to pass a significant tax cut that stimulated the supply side of the economy, because producers knew they’d be keeping more of their profits and were thereby incentivized to produce more supply. When you shrink the dollars in circulation while you simultaneously increase the supply of goods and services, you’ve hit on the proper recipe to reduce inflation.

Right now, the Biden Administration is counting on the Fed to use its control over interest rates to shrink the dollars in circulation. So far, so good. Sadly, we’ve seen no sign so far that the Biden
Administration even understands, let alone is committed to, what it takes to boost the supply side of the equation.

**THE LEAK OF THE DOBBS DRAFT RULING FALLOUT, SUPREME COURT ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ED’:**

On Tuesday, the House took up and passed the Supreme Court Police Parity Act, which had passed the Senate unanimously more than a month earlier, and which had simply been languishing in the House, with no sense of urgency from the Democrat leadership to pass it – even after the arrest of an armed man in the middle of the night outside the home of a Supreme Court justice.

While you might think passing such a bill would be non-controversial, you would be wrong. Despite the fact that it passed the Senate unanimously, no fewer than 27 Democrats opposed it in the House. As we discussed last week, it’s very clear what’s going on here – the Democrats are actually trying to pressure the justices to reverse themselves on the ruling on the Dobbs case, so they leave Roe v. Wade intact. What the Democrats are doing is outrageous.

**GUN CONTROL:**

The bad news is, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell announced early in the week that if the legislative text reflects the agreement, he’s all-in on what could become the first major gun control legislation to become law since Bill Clinton was president.

The good news is, the four main negotiators – Democrats Chris Murphy of CT and Kyrsten Sinema of AZ, and Republicans John Cornyn of TX and Thom Tillis of NC – could not come to agreement by week’s end on legislative text. They apparently had no trouble coming to agreement on language related to providing more funding for school security and mental health, but they ran into trouble when it came to language regarding offering states money to enact their own so-called “red flag” laws and how to close the so-called “boyfriend loophole.”

Two things could happen here, if they cannot find a way to finesse language that everyone’s happy with: First, that could conceivably tank the entire negotiation. Nothing at all would be done. But the second possibility is, I think, more likely – if they cannot come to agreement on language on those two provisions, they simply drop those two provisions and pass the rest of the items together.

Of course, without the language closing the boyfriend loophole and incentivizing states to enact their own red flag laws, it becomes a much dicier proposition to get such a bill through the House, where the Democrat majority just passed a massive leftwing gun control bill.

Stay tuned.
JANUARY 6 COMMITTEE ACTION:

The January 6 Select Committee held two hearings last week rather than the three that had planned and announced. On Tuesday, the focus of the hearing was testimony from witnesses in the close orbit of President Trump, all of whom shared with the committee their thoughts on the outcome of the 2020 election and what they had discussed about it with President Trump. Not surprisingly, all the witnesses put on display shared with the committee their belief that the 2020 election had been lost by President Trump, and the fact that they had shared their opinions on that with President Trump.

The point of the hearing was to demonstrate that no one in President Trump’s close orbit believed there was significant doubt about the outcome of the election, and, by implication, to demonstrate that President Trump knew that he had lost the 2020 election.

To my mind, the committee failed in this effort. What mattered, for their purposes, was not what anybody TOLD Trump; what mattered was what Trump BELIEVED. No one offered testimony to the effect that President Trump believed he had lost the 2020 election.

On Thursday, the committee held its third hearing, focusing on President Trump’s efforts to convince Vice President Pence that Pence had the authority and the duty to use his position as the official in charge of the January 6 joint session of Congress to reject certain states’ slates of certified Electors. The two main witnesses were former Pence legal counsel Greg Jacob and former 4th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge J. Michael Luttig, both of whom counseled Pence that contrary to what Trump and Trump’s advisers were telling him, Pence did NOT have the authority to reject individual slates of Electors.

TEA PARTY PATRIOTS/JENNY BETH MARTIN:

CNS News: Jenny Beth Martin: Stave Scalise Is Right: 'Red Flag' Are the Wrong Way To Go

DISINFORMATION GOVERNANCE BOARD:

WT: Homeland Security Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas Accused Of Misleading Testimony On Disinformation Board

IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL:

NYT: Fears Grow Over Iran's Nuclear Program as Tehran Digs a New Tunnel Network

Hill: Lawmakers Say New Iran Nuclear Deal Unlikely
ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION:

AP News: Migrant Crossings At U.S. Border Rise For 4th Straight Month

THE LEAK OF THE DOBBS DRAFT RULING FALLOUT, SUPREME COURT ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ED’:

WSJ: 27 Democrats Vs. Supreme Court Protection

JANUARY 6 COMMITTEE ACTION:

WSJ: Peter Navarro, Former Trump Official, Indicted On Contempt Charges

Hill: Five Takeaways: Jan.6 Panel Bears Down On Pence Pressure Campaign

NYT: Trump Lawyer Cited 'Heated Fight' Among Justices Over Election Suits

WaPo: Ginni Thomas Corresponded With John Eastman, Sources In Jan.6 House Investigation Say

WSJ: Jan.6 Committee Signals Interest In Speaking To Virginia Thomas

Hill: Jan. 6 Committee Is Telling a Story, But Plenty of Gaps Remain

WSJ: The Jan. 6 Committee Calls Ginni Thomas

GUN CONTROL:

NYT: Gun Talks Snag On Tricky Question: What Counts As A Boyfriend?

WSJ: Gun Talks Stall On Red Flag Laws, Domestic Abuse Rules

Hill: Gun-Safety Bill Bogs Down On Details

Politico: McConnell’s Gun Safety Gamble

Politico: How A Centrist, A Liberal And 2 Conservatives Achieved 4-Part Harmony On Guns

MISCELLANEOUS:

NRO: Fed Raises Interest Rates 75 Basis Points

Daily Signal: By The Numbers: How Many Men In California Prisons Identify As Women

Politico: National Tracking MC Poll