

# Wheaton Business Journal

## Inside the Beltway: Kavanaugh drama: Buckle up, pay attention

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The first act is over, but the drama escalates. We're talking, of course, of Judge 's quest to become a Supreme Court justice — an important event played out on a complex set with a huge cast of characters, myriad distractions and much media orchestration — complete with partisan agenda, timpani drums and hand-wringing. Will this dramatic tableau have an extended run? Maybe.

Republicans would like to see Judge 's confirmation take place forthwith, followed by a few curtain calls and some good reviews. Democrats prefer the extended run, past the 2018 midterms — now just 34 days off — and right into 2020.

“The confirmation hearings for started as cheap theater and ended in blood sport. The process by which we elevate someone to the highest court in the land sunk to the lowest common denominator — and didn't stop. And now the national disaster will be aided by more time and a fresh supply of dynamite,” writes New York Post columnist **Michael Goodwin**. “Friday's agreement to give the FBI a week to supplement its background check by looking into existing misconduct allegations against guarantees the nightmare will continue, especially for him and his battered family. You don't have to be a cynic to assume the rabid left will come up with more outlandish accusations in an effort to make up in quantity what it lacks in quality.”

Plots, subplots and cliffhangers have multiplied.

In his outspoken support of Judge , Sen. **Lindsey Graham** has forged a new role as a straightforward voice amid the din. The South Carolina Republican has now called for the Senate Judiciary Committee to investigate how **Christine Blasey Ford**'s once anonymous letter went public in what the Mr. Graham told ABC News was “a despicable process.”

He has also become the subject of much press coverage himself.

“Democrats need to match Lindsey Graham's fury,” advised The Huffington Post while The Los Angeles Times countered, “What's the matter with Lindsey Graham?” and the Charleston Post and Courier declared, “Lindsey Graham finally found the recipe to win back those right-wing voters.” Washington Post columnist **Kathleen Parker**, meanwhile, called Mr. Graham “Sen. Jiminy Cricket.” Recent criticisms of the lawmaker on late night TV and in social media have gone, in a word, extreme.

**AND A REMINDER ABOUT THE FBI**

So will there be an FBI investigation into the matter, as envisioned by the Democratic Party? **Thomas Jipping**— deputy director of the Edwin Meese Center for Legal and Judicial Studies and senior legal fellow at The Heritage Foundation — has some advice here.

“This demand for another FBI investigation is not valid and based on a complete misunderstanding of the bureau’s role. First, ’s opponents want people to think that the FBI is on standby, ready to run down all the leads and figure out what really happened. That may be what a law enforcement agency does in the criminal justice system — as seen on TV — but not in the confirmation process,” Mr. Jipping writes in an essay for The Daily Signal.

“That distinction between the criminal justice system and the confirmation process is critical. The FBI is in the executive branch, which has authority over the criminal justice system. The confirmation process, however, occurs in the legislative branch. The Constitution gives the Senate sole responsibility for evaluating presidential nominees,” he continues.

“In the criminal justice system, the FBI investigates by not only gathering information but evaluating it, making judgments about the credibility of witnesses or the truth of what they say, pursuing leads, and offering conclusions or even recommendations. In other words, they figure out what really happened. In the confirmation process, the FBI gathers information and stops there. The Senate must do the rest,” Mr. Jipping advises, adding, “Additional information-gathering by the FBI simply cannot provide anything that the process has not already uncovered and thoroughly examined. The mantra of ‘FBI investigation’ by ’s opponents is misleading in its purpose and has no validity.”

## **A CHEERFUL UNRELATED MATTER**

Yes, the world is still going around despite myriad dramas. The National Park Service is seeking applications from those interested in performing at the National Christmas Tree throughout December on the Ellipse near the White House — which is technically part of the federal parks system. Things get underway Dec. 5 with volunteer choirs, bands and dancers performing for three hours most evenings.

“Family-friendly performances must be holiday themed and no more than 30 minutes long. The stage is not covered and is exposed to the elements. Groups must be under 100,” the federal parks agency advises.

Find the particulars and an application at [nps.gov/whho](https://nps.gov/whho).

## **SCHOOL DAZE**

A new book title says all: “The coddling of the American mind: How good intentions and bad ideas are setting up a generation for failure.” The book has inspired a Cato Institute forum on Monday featuring authors **Greg Lukianoff**, president of Foundation for Individual Rights in Education and **Jonathan Haidt**, Thomas Cooley professor of Ethical Leadership at New York University’s Stern School of Business.

“Something has been going wrong on many college campuses in the past few years. Rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide are rising. Speakers are shouted down. Students and professors say they are walking on eggshells and are afraid to speak honestly. How did this happen?” ask the organizers.

The event will be moderated by Cato Vice President **John Samples**; the event will be streamed live online at 5 p.m. ET from [Cato.org/live](http://Cato.org/live). The book itself was just published by Penguin Press.

### **POLL DU JOUR**

- 63 percent of Americans says private companies and individuals should be able to travel in space; 64 percent of Republicans, 67 percent of independents and 57 percent of Democrats agree.
- 57 percent overall favor sending U.S. astronauts to explore Mars; 64 percent of Republicans, 51 percent of independents and 58 percent of Democrats agree.
- 56 percent overall favor sending them to the moon; 66 percent of Republicans, 49 percent of independents and 57 percent of Democrats agree.
- 54 percent overall would not want to take a commercial flight to the moon; 64 percent of Republicans, 47 percent of independents and 58 percent of Democrats agree.
- 37 percent favor increasing government funding of space exploration; 40 percent of Republicans, 33 percent of independents and 37 percent of Democrats agree.

Source: A YouGov poll of 1,500 U.S. adults conducted Sept. 23-25.