Welcome to What Happens Next

My name is Larry Bernstein.

What Happens Next offers listeners an in-depth analysis of the most pressing issues of the day. Our experts are given only SIX minutes to present. This is followed by a Q&A period for deeper engagement.

I think you will find this discussion to be informative and provocative.

This program is moderated to be politically neutral. Our speakers will give their opinions and then we encourage you to make up your own mind.

This week’s topics include Presidential Power under the Constitution, Islamism in France, the Electoral College, and the Myth of the Entrepreneurial State.

Our leadoff speaker today is Michael McConnell who is the Richard and Frances Mallery Professor at Stanford Law School and a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. Michael is a former Federal Judge with the US Court of Appeals in the Tenth Circuit. Michael will be discussing his new book entitled The President who Would Not be King: Executive Power under the Constitution. The book is provocative because it looks back to the original constitutional debates to figure out which branch of government has designated responsibilities. Based on this framework, Michael disagrees with some of the most important 20th century Supreme Court cases on Presidential Power.

Our second speaker is Ayaan Hirsi Ali who is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and the author of several books including Infidel and Heretic. In fact, we did a book club with Ayaan years ago on Infidel, and I am thrilled to have her back for What Happens Next. Ayaan will speak today about Islamism in France and about the murder by a Muslim Terrorist of a French Schoolteacher who discussed the Charlie Hebdo shootings in class.

What Happens Next then shifts to a debate about the electoral college. Jack Rakove who is the William Robertson Coe Professor of History and American Studies at Stanford will argue for abolishing the electoral college. To be followed by Robert Hardaway who is a Professor of Law at University of Denver Sturm College of Law who will discuss his book The Electoral College and the Constitution: The Case for Preserving Federalism.

Our final speaker today is Deirdre McCloskey who is Distinguished Professor of Economics, History, English, and Communication at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Deirdre will be discussing her new book The Myth of the Entrepreneurial State.

All right that is today’s session.

Since the beginning of What Happens Next, I have spent a few minutes each month to discuss the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Report because the data are the most important real time estimate for what is happening in the economy and because the data has been the most volatile in our lifetime.
I think the top story this month is that employment growth has stalled likely due to the spike in COVID cases. The establishment survey has jobs for the month down by 140,000 jobs. This was led by a job loss of 370,000 in restaurants that was caused by state restrictions closing restaurants and bars. This means away from restaurants; the economy grew by 230,000 jobs which is trend growth.

Some good news from the report was that 750,000 employees moved from part-time work to full-time employment last month.

Now, let’s look at the big picture. How has employment changed since the beginning of COVID? There have been 9 million job losses in 2020, so we have a long way to go. Currently, 57.4% of the working age population works which is 3.5% less than pre-COVID levels, which is pretty good considering.

The biggest challenge facing the American economy is how do we reemploy these 9 million workers if many of those workers previously worked for firms that have closed permanently. There are always transitional problems for businesses to hire new employees because they do not know them.

Our first speaker today is Stanford Law Professor Michael McConnell, please go ahead.