

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 155

June 16, 2017

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*Any statements in this issue of the Watch which are not sourced are mine and identified by “WW”.

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State of the Nation

32% of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction while 56% say it is on the wrong track. [Economist/YouGov, 6/6/17]

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2017 is 4.3%.

If one takes into account the total number of unemployed + those marginally attached to the labor force + those working part-time who want full-time work, the **unemployment rate for May 2017 is 8.4%**. [BLS data is based on those 16 years of age and older.]

Early in the 2nd week of June 2017, Gallup found an unadjusted unemployment rate of 5.5%. It also found an under-employment rate of 14.0% (unemployed + those working part-time but wanting full-time). [This is based on those 18 years of age and older.]

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In 2016, the unemployment rate for those with at least a bachelor's degree was 2.7% with a median weekly wage of \$1,156. The unemployment rate for those with a high school diploma or less was 5.2% with a median wage of \$692 per week. [BLS]

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In 1975, 47% of mothers worked outside the home, today that number is 70%. Mothers are the primary bread winners in 40% of U.S. families. In 46% of households with a mother and father, both parents are employed full time. [PEW, 5/11/17]

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A new study by economists Lawrence Katz and Alan Krueger of Princeton (the latter was the Chairman of the WH Council of Economic Advisers under Obama) indicates that "94% of the 10 million new jobs created during the Obama era were temporary positions." During the Obama era the number of people

working in these temporary jobs increased from “10.7% of the population to 15.8% of the population”.

Temporary or alternative work includes “temporary help agency workers, on-call workers, contract company workers, independent contractors or freelancers.” The work is generally unsteady, without a fixed paycheck and with virtually no benefits. [US News, 5/15/17]

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EPA administrator Scott Pruitt claimed on at least three occasions that the U.S. created 50,000 coal and mining jobs under President Trump. The reality is that 1,000 jobs have been created, less than the 1,400 jobs created in the last four months of the Obama administration. [FiveThirtyEight Newsletter, 6/7/17]

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44 million Americans owe \$1.4 trillion on their student loans. One in six American adults has a student loan of an average of \$37,172 per person. Nearly two-thirds of these loans are owned by women. Women tend to borrow 14% more than men in a given year. And women typically owe \$1,500 more than men when they complete their degree. [Bloomberg, 6/5/17]

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The richest 0.1% of U.S. households now control about as much wealth as the poorest 90% of the country combined.” [Economists at UC Berkley, 5/24/17]

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70% of U.S. adults think that criticism from news organizations “keeps political leaders from doing things that shouldn’t be done” while 28% say it “keeps political leaders from doing their job.” However, there is a 47% spread between the attitude of Democrats and Republicans when it comes to this question. 82% of Democrats say the media stops leaders from doing things that they should not do while 42% of Republican have that view.

87% of Democrats and 53% of Republicans believe that news organizations tend to favor one side. Only 11% of Republicans believe that “information from

national news organizations is very trustworthy”. 34% of Democrats say it is very trustworthy. [PEW, May 10, 2017]

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The population of the 28 NATO countries is 603,000,000. Since 1983 the European NATO countries have “reduced their military strength in categories considered vital to defending the continent.”

<u>Year</u>	<u>Soldiers</u>	<u>Tanks</u>	<u>Frigates</u>	<u>Destroyers</u>	<u>Fighter planes</u>
1983	2.16 M	15,581	173	84	2,672
2017	1.02 M	6,885	92	54	1,897

[WSJ, 6/17]

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For the first time in the last 130 years, in 2016 those 18-34 years of age are “slightly more likely to be living in their parents’ home than they are to be living with a spouse or partner in their own household.” [Pew Research Center]

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Those age 65 and older (46 million) represent 15% of the overall U.S. population. By 2050 seniors will represent 22% of the population. It’s no surprise but seniors are not as involved in the “digital” life as adults general.

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Here is what U.S. adults say about their use of a variety of electronic devices.

	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Seniors</u> (65 years of age and older)
Internet	90%	67%
Home broadband	73%	51%
Smart phone	72%	42%
Tablet	51%	32%
Social media	69%	34%

As you would expect, the usage of the internet among seniors drops as they grow older.

Use of the internet

65-69 - 82%

70-74 - 75%

75-79 - 60%

80+ - 44%

[PEW, 5/17/17]

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Senate Republicans are considering taxing the value of employer-sponsored health insurance plans as if it was ordinary income. This would affect the roughly “177 million people who get insurance through their employer.” [WSJ, 6/2/17]

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Canadians and Mexicans are more positive than folks in the United States about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). 74% of Canadians and 60% of Mexicans but only 51% of Americans think it has been a good thing for their countries. 39% of Americans think it is a “bad” idea followed by 33% of Mexicans and 17% of Canadians.

In the U.S., 68% of Democrats but only 30% of Republicans think it has been a good thing for the country. 62% of those 18-29 years of age think it is a good deal but only 44% of those 50 and older support the deal. [Pew, 5/9/17]

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There is a growing gender gap between men and women as relates to optimism about the country’s future. In October 2015, 47% of men were optimistic about the future of the country and women were not far behind with 43% being optimistic.

Flash forward to April 2017. Men are even more optimistic than they were in 2015; 53% have a lot of confidence in the future of the U.S., an increase of 6%. The outlook of women has gone the other way. Their confidence in the future has dropped from 43% in 2015 to 29% in April 2017, a drop of 14%. [Pew, 5/18/17]

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When a party becomes consumed with hate and contempt, reason and moderation get thrown out of the window. Knee-jerk behavior replaces careful planning and execution. That's what happened to Republicans. Are Democrats about to follow suit? At a time when Democrats could project themselves as the adults in the room, the clamor for "resistance" and militant rhetoric is growing louder and louder. There is a pressing need for pragmatic, moderate voices on health care, climate change, and panoply of other issues, but Democrats seem to be unhinged by their animus toward the leader of the opposition party. [Charlie Cook, 5/29/17]

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This and That

A 14 year old young man by the name of Gabe Fleishner produces a daily newsletter called, "Wake Up to Politics".

He starts each column with the following "I'm Gabe Fleishner, reporting live from WUTP World HQ in my bedroom."

It is rather interesting. You can email him at gabe@wakeuptopolitics.com. If you want to receive the newsletter in your inbox, go to wakeuptopolitics.com/subscribe.

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The Kansas state legislature on Tuesday voted to override Gov. Sam Brownback's veto and roll back \$1.2 billion of tax cuts over two years. The vote marked a bipartisan repudiation of what Brownback had described as an "experiment" in a particular brand of anti-tax fiscal conservatism.

"Members of the public might not like paying taxes, but they *do* like the services those taxes pay for. When it looked like Kansas's budget gap would lead to big cuts to education and highway spending, voters responded by throwing conservative legislators out of office and replacing them with the Democrats and moderate Republicans who this week overrode Brownback's veto."

[FiveThirtyEight Newsletter 6/9/17]

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"Taste your words before you spit them out." [Andy Card on MSNBC, 4/28/17]

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Mirror, mirror on the wall, which is the most common shared news outlet of them all? MSNBC, Fox News and CNN are the most shared news outlets by the 115th Congress.

	<u>Shares of articles</u>	<u>By Democrats</u>	<u>By Republicans</u>
MSNBC	1,641	1,288	337
FOX News	1,507	196	1,311
CNN	1,395	911	463
The Hill	1102	706	396
Wash Post	631	396	232

[Quorum Analytics]

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90% of Breitbart.com advertisers have deserted it. [WP, 6/9/17]

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According to the Department of Transportation, in 2016 roughly 660 million people flew on commercial airlines. 434,425 people voluntarily gave up their paid seats in that year, presumably for some form of compensation. 40,629 were involuntarily bumped. [WSJ, 4/29/17]

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The number of U.S. households that subscribe to cable in 2017 has dropped to 52 million homes from 68 million homes in 2000.

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The percentage of Americans who say they have donated to someone running for public office has grown from 6% in 1992 to 12% in 2016.

10% of Republicans and those leaning Republican reported making a contribution in 2016 compared to 22% of Democrats and those leaning Democratic.

21% of those who vote regularly said they made contributions compared to 4% of those who seldom voted.

28% of those who say they pay attention to public affairs most of the time make donations while those who say they don't pay much attention to public affairs donate at a rate of 7%.

32% of those aged 65 and older reported making political donations while those 18-29% reported donations at the 9% level. [PEW, 5/17/17]

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Most Loved Brands in the United States:

- 76% Amazon
- 75% Google
- 74% UPS
- 73% Hershey
- 73% FedEx
- 71% Campbell's
- 71% You Tube
- 70% Sony
- 70% Home Depot
- 70% Lowe's

[Morning Consult Intelligence]

\$5 out of every \$10 spent buying products online goes to Amazon.
[Bloomberg]

[At 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 14th, I decided that I wanted a particular add-on photo lens for my Samsung cell phone. I went and ordered it from Amazon and at 3:00 p.m. on Monday May 15th it was delivered to our apartment.]

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10% of the drinks served at my local Starbucks were ordered on an app so they are ready when they arrive. The goal is to have 20% of drinks ordered before the customer gets there. [Conversation with barista]

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A friend who is retiring for the third time passed out the following at a party honoring his retirement:

Retirement

Yes No

Retired	Remorse
Rejoicing	Retread
Recycled	Regrets
Regain	Repeats
Relieved	Refraining
Repose	Retraining
Repurpose	Responsibilities
Reuse	Rebates

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In the 2016 election, voter turnout among whites increased by 2.4% over 2012 and turnout among African Americans dropped by 4.7% . [WP Monkey Cage, 5/8/17]

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Who would believe that the U.S. government, in the form of the Social Security Administration, would keep track of the most popular names of boys and girls when they are named at birth?

My favorite name, Michael, finished as #8 in 2016. Michael was the most selected boy baby name from 1954 – 1998, except for David which took the top place in 1960. In 1954, 4.3% of baby boys were named Michael. Thus Michael remained supreme for 43 out of 44 years.

In 2015 and 2016, the top name for girl babies was Emma and the top name for boy babies was Noah. [WSJ, 5/12/17]

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In 1996, there were 57,000 newspaper journalists. Today there are 33,000. [WP, 6/7/17]

Describing the coming testimony of James Comey, Steve Schmidt described the proceedings as “moral rectitude versus moral turpitude”. [Morning Joe, 6/7/17]

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64% of Americans oppose laws that allow business owners to refuse to serve gay and lesbian people on account of their religious beliefs. 52% of Republicans believe they should be able to refuse service while 66% of independents and 81% of Democrats believe they should not be able to refused service.

63% of Americans favor allowing same sex marriage, a marked increase from the 52% who supported it in 2013. Support includes 66% of independents and 76% of Democrats. 51% of Republicans oppose same sex marriage. [PRRI, 2/17]

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President Trump

On his performance to date, Gallup found on June 11th that 36% of Americans approve of his job performance and 56% disapprove. Below are his job ratings as found by Gallup on the first and 15th of each month.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
6/14/17	38%	5%
6/1/17	39%	55%
5/15/17	38%	57%
5/1/17	41%	55%
4/15/17	41%	53%
4/1/17	38%	57%
3/15/17	42%	53%
3/1/17	43%	51%
2/15/17	40%	54%
2/1/17	43%	52%

The following are some additional looks at his job performance.

<u>Date</u>	<u>NBC/WSJ</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN/ORC</u>	<u>NYT/CBS</u>	<u>FOX</u>	<u>QUPIAC</u>
JUNE	xxx xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	34/57
MAY	39/54 xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	40/53	37/55 36/58
APR	40/54	42/53	44/54	43/49cbs	xxx	35/57
MAR	xxx	xxx	45/52	40/52cbs	43/51	37/56
FEB	44/48	xxx	xxx	39/51cbs	48/47	38/55
JAN	xxx	xxx	44/53	40/48cbs	xxx	36/44

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The following are the job approval/disapproval numbers for this same time period of the last ten presidents before Trump. (Numbers are from Gallup for all the presidents up to Clinton and from NBC/WSJ after that.)

As you will see, Trump's job approval rating by the public at large is the worst of any president going back to Richard Nixon other than Bill Clinton.

Approval – Roughly five months into first term

Kennedy	72% (6/61)
Eisenhower	74% (5/53)
Reagan	59% (6/81)
Carter	63% (6/77)
Obama	61% (6/09)
Nixon	63% (6/69)
George HW Bush	70% (6/89)
G W Bush	55% (6/01)
Clinton	39% (6/93)

On the economy, Trump scores 41% approval /47% disapproval and on foreign policy he scores 38% approval/50% disapproval. [Econ/YouGov, 6/6/17]

Referring to the President's proposed tax plan Americans were asked, "Who do you think will benefit the most from this plan: low income Americans, middle class Americans, or wealthy Americans?" Here is the response:

Low income Americans -- 4%
Middle class Americans -- 27%
Wealthy Americans -- 63%

Proving the point, the President's proposed AHCA tax cuts would benefit the wealthiest among us. The top 1% income bracket would see an average tax cut of \$37, 320. Those in the 80-100% income bracket would see an average benefit of \$2,780. Those in the bottom 60% would see benefits of \$390 to \$150. [Steve Rattner, Morning Joe, 6/13/17]

To further make the point, the Trump budget proposal would make the following cuts in programs that help those with the greatest need. [WP, 5/24/17]

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – 29% cut
Children’s Health Insurance Program – 19% cut
Medicaid – 17% cut
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – 13% cut
Unemployment Insurance – 12% cut
Earned Income Tax Credit – 8% cut
Supplemental Security Income – 3% cut
Social Security Disability Insurance – 2% cut
Medicare – 0.6% cut

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The 1996 Congressional Review Act allows Congress to pass a “joint resolution of disapproval” of a “recently issued” federal regulation which nullifies the rule and stops the federal government from issuing a similar rule in the future. The ability to use the resolution expired on May 11, 2017.

The resolution of disapproval requires a majority vote of the Congress and the signature of the President.

A resolution of disapproval has been enacted only once before this administration, it related to a rule passed during Bill Clinton’s last year in office.

Prior to the May 11th deadline thirteen resolutions of disapproval were approved by Congress and ostensibly signed by the President. Two of the resolutions related to education, three were related to the environment, two were related to health care and six were related to labor and finance.

Sixteen additional proposed resolutions about environment rules never received a vote. [WP, 5/ 12/17]

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61% of Americans believe that Trump fired Comey to protect himself while 27% say he did it for the good of the country. 88% of those who believe he was trying to protect himself are Democrats, 63% are Independents and 22% are Republicans. Holding the “protect himself view” are 77% of those 18-39 years of age and 52% of those 40 years of age and older.

Substantially less than 50% of Americans believe either Trump or Comey on the question of whether there was “possible Russian interference in the 2016

presidential election”. 21% have more trust in Trump while 36% have more trust in Comey. [ABC/WP, 6/4/17]

59% of Americans opposed U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord. This includes 82% of Democrats, 63% of Independents and 25% of Republicans. 67% of Republicans support the decision to pull out.

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Voters were asked in December 2016 and June 2017 whether they think Trump tweets too much.

	<u>Too much</u>		<u>Not enough</u>	
	Dec	June	Dec	June
Registered Voters	56%	69%	4%	4%
Republicans	42%	53%	6%	6%
Independents	48%	70%	6%	3%
Democrats	75%	82%	4%	3%

[Morning Consult/Politico, 6/7/17]

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Trump voters are sticking with him, even those whose hearts had not been won over when they voted for him. FiveThirtyEight conducted a survey of Trump voters, both committed and reluctant, from the end of May through the beginning of June.

	<u>Reluctant Trump voters</u>	<u>All other Trump voters</u>
Do you approve of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?	74% approve	96% approve
Do you approve of the way Donald Trump is handling health care policy?	58%	89%
Do you approve of the way Donald Trump is handling the economy?	77%	96%
Do you approve of the		

appointment of the special
counsel to investigate
possible collusion between
Russian officials and the
Trump campaign? 54% 38%

Do you approve of Donald
Trump's firing of FBI
Director James Comey? 83% 91%

If you had to choose one
of these Republicans to serve
as president, Donald Trump
Mike Pence or John Kasich,
who would it be?
Donald Trump was picked by: 26% 77%

[Survey Monkey, May 26-June 4, 2017]

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About President Trump

When Donald Trump says something that is clearly not true, does he do it knowing that it is not true? Many people think that he does not know some of the things he says are not true, that he does not consciously tell a lie.

Or perhaps it is what he described in his book the Art of the Deal as “truthful hyperbole.” Trump has defined “truthful hyperbole” as “an innocent form of exaggeration – and a very effective form of promotion.”

“Hyperbole is an extravagant overstatement and it can be either positive or negative in character.” “From a logical standpoint ‘truthful hyperbole’ is an impossibility.” “...hyperbole is by definition, not true.”
[blog.talkingphilosophy.com, 12/4/15]

It appears that he does not distinguish between sources, and that if something comes to mind that is supportive of a point he wants to make, he simply says it.

It seems to make no difference to Trump if he says something that contradicts something he has said before.

There seems to be little concern for the consequence of what he says before he says it.

Pretty much everyone who voted in the 2016 election knew that Donald Trump and his family were very wealthy. The actual amount is not important except to Trump himself – it is a lot by any standard. Given the nature of the family business, his new role is likely to have a positive effect on the family’s wealth.

There are people who have their knickers in a snit over whether or not he is violating the emoluments clause or other ethics rules. Frankly, I think these people’s energy would be much better spent by helping those who actually need help to survive because of actions taken or proposed by the administration.

Trump is attempting to run the entire Executive Branch the way he has always run his commercial business, without shareholders or a board of directors and without regard for “expert” advice. This is really not a surprise. This style of operating helped him become wealthy and to win an election which, for a long time, seemed totally outside of his reach.

He has spoken respectfully of autocrats and treated other democratic leaders with disdain.

He seems to be quite comfortable cutting the federal largesse for folks who need it the most (see page 11) and passing it on to the folks who need it the least.

If there is one thing that stands out in the operation of this administration it is the number of leaks to the media from all parts of the administration, including from within the White House. No one can recall seeing this quantity or type of leak in any administration that comes to mind. To what extent might some of these leaks be efforts on the part of the President’s team to push him in one direction or another? [WW]

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Matt Lewis, in the Daily Beast (5/31/17), presents another perspective.

“Conservatives who are viscerally turned off by the Trump cult of personality prize things like the rule of law and balance of powers. Part of what this means is that the idea of a ruling class repels us. We believe the maxim that absolute power corrupts absolutely, and we instead celebrate the system and institutions that check the accumulation of power. We see dissent as patriotic. We see the messianic impulse of some Americans as a very dangerous tendency. We believe that it’s not healthy to put politicians on a pedestal. We believe you should respect your leaders and pray for them—but not to them.

“I’ll confess that sometimes skepticism gets mixed up with cynicism. There is also sometimes a smugness associated with being a rebellious contrarian. Most of us small-r republicans find sycophants and brown-nosers repulsive. Still, it’s one thing to suck up to your boss at the office. It’s another thing entirely to suck up to a president. Part of the reason for this is that Trump’s team views him as the boss—as the CEO of the country. This is a destructive tendency. It also undermines the system America’s Founding Fathers put in place to keep any one person from gaining too much power.

“The people who suck up to him might work for Trump, but we do not. In fact, he works for us. And we shouldn’t ever let him forget it.”

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2020

Now that we have elected the first president in history that has no history as a government official—elected, appointed or otherwise—well known people are suddenly being talked about as in the mix for running for president in the future. The following is a list of people who have been mentioned as potential candidates who have no previous government experience. Folks are on the list whether or not they have disclaimed any interest. On June 13th, Oprah Winfrey was quite specific in disclaiming any interest in being a candidate for president.

Dwayne Johnson – Actor

Bob Iger – CBS

Howard Schultz – Chairman, Starbucks

Oprah Winfrey – Oprah Winfrey Productions

Mark Cuban – Businessman and Owner, Dallas Mavericks

Kanye West – Entertainer

Mark Zuckerberg – CEO, Facebook

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The Congress

“As a country, we are becoming more partisan, with our last election the most parliamentary in our history. Every single Senate race was won by the same party as the presidential race in that state, and 400 out of 435 House districts voted the same way for House and president.” [Charlie Cook, 5/25/17]

There is one thing on which Democrats and Republicans agree; when asked whether local issues or national issues are most important when folks cast their votes for Congress, national issues wins, hands down.

	Overall	Republican	Democratic	Undecided
	<u> </u>	<u>Voters</u>	<u>Voters</u>	<u>Voters</u>
Local issues	21	21	20	32
National issues	70	75	72	46

[Winston Group, 5/25/17]

As of the first week of June, Congress had an approval rating of 11% and a disapproval score of 63%.

66% of Americans are at least somewhat pessimistic (38% are very pessimistic) that Republicans and Democrats in Congress can come together to solve the country’s problems. 21% of Americans are at least “somewhat optimistic” (5% very optimistic) that the opposite is true. [Economist/YouGov, 6/6/17]

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The House

[WW relies on the Cook Political Report for the House data below. As of May 26, 2017]

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Democrats	193
Republicans	238
Vacancies	4 (3 GOP seats/1 DEM seat)

	Democrats	Republicans
Safe in 2017	173	197
Likely	11	18
Lean	8	19
	Tossup	
	3	6

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There is considerable speculation that given the way this administration is operating, the prospects of the Democrats retaking the House in 2018 are getting better and better. These speculations are a bit premature.

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The number of staff members available to each rank and file House member has been dropping. In 1995 there were 7,186 aides available to House members. By 2010 the number had dropped to 7,012 aides. In the next five years there was a dramatic drop in the number of aides. As of 2015 there were 6,030.

Interestingly this cut in the staff available to individual House members has been accompanied by an increasingly steep drop in “The number of people working in congressional agencies that provide lawmakers with analysis and expertise...” In 1979 there were 6,499 people in these positions, by 1993 the number had dropped to 6,166, by 1997 to 4,458 and in 2015 to 3,833 aides.

[WP, Wonkblog, 6/12/17]

During the time periods above the use of electronics made up for some of the staff losses but not the expertise, preparation or advice that staff aides provide.

[WW]

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[WW uses a combination of the Cook Political Report, Inside Politics and Sabato to create the chart below.]

THE SENATE

Republicans	52
Democrats	46
Independents	2

	Democrats	Republicans
Seats not up in 2018	23	44
Safe in 2018	12	7
Likely	5	0
	Stabenow	
	Menendez	
	Casey	
	Kaine	
	King	
Lean	5	2
	Nelson	Flake
	Tester	Heller
	Brown	
	Baldwin	
Toss-ups	3 Democrat	0 Republicans
	Donnelly	
	McCaskill	
	Heitkamp	

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The prospects of the Democrats taking control of the Senate are somewhere between zero and none.

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Women Will Get it Done

In 2000, “female college graduates made 91% of what their male peers earned.” Today the gap has widened to the point that female college grads make 86% of what their male counterparts make. [Economic Policy Institute]

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The following are fifteen college majors where men go on to earn significantly more than women.

	Median base Pay for <u>men</u>	Median base Pay for <u>women</u>	Pay <u>gap</u>
Healthcare Administration	51,250	40,000	22%
Mathematics	60,000	49,182	18.0%
Biology	46,000	40,000	13.0%
Human Resources	50,000	44,222	11.6%
Health sciences	45,000	40,000	11.1%
Biomedical engineering	60,000	53,450	10.9%
Industrial engineering	65,000	58,000	10.8%
Business	50,000	45,000	10.0%
Marketing	50,000	45,000	10.0%
Exercise science	44,232	40,000	9.6%
Statistics	60,000	54,469	9.2%
Physics	55,714	50,800	8.8%
Political Science	47,103	43,000	8.7%
Management Information Systems	65,000	60,000	7.7%
Biochemistry	48,000	44,500	7.3%

[CBS.COM]

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From GenderAvenger Blog on a speech by Janet Yellen [5/10/17]:

“The sweeping movement of women from the home to the workplace during the mid-20th century, she said, was a ‘major factor in America’s prosperity’. But that progress has stalled in recent decades, leaving women less likely than men to hold paying jobs. Bringing more women into the work force with policies like

expanding the availability of paid leave, affordable childcare and flexible work schedules, she said, could help to lift the American economy from a long stretch of slow growth.”

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- “Six of ten black women are in the workforce.”
- “As of 2014, black women who worked full time and year-around had median annual earnings (\$53,000) that were 64.6% of white men.”
- “In 2012, black women owned 15.4% of all female-owned businesses in the United States.”
- The number of black women with at least a bachelor’s degree has grown from 18% to 22% over the decade from 2004 -2014.
- Roughly 25% of black women live in poverty as compared to 11% of white women.

[WP, 6/9/17]

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For the first time since it was created, a woman has placed in the top ten of the Bloomberg pay index. Ginni Rometty, the CEO of IBM, with a 2016 pay package of \$96.8 million sits at #6. [Bloomberg]

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32 reasons to cheer. The 2017 *Fortune* 500, which we unveiled this morning, is a milestone for women in business: This year's list includes 32 female CEOs—the largest number since *Fortune* began compiling the ranking in 1955. It's a particularly cheering stat given 2016's dismal showing, when women held only 21 of the top jobs, a drop from previous years.

This year's newbies include PG&E's Geisha Williams—the first-ever Latina CEO to appear on the 500—Hershey chief Michele Buck, Mattel's Margo Georgiadis, Synchrony Financial CEO Margaret Keane, and Progressive chief Tricia Griffith.

Of course, it's not all rainbows and unicorns: Female CEOs still account for a mere 6.4% of the total list. And there are just two women of color: Williams and PepsiCo chief Indra Nooyi. But while corporate America still has a long, *long* way to go, it's always worth taking a moment to celebrate progress. [Fortune]

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“Late last fall, Sophia Roosth, the Frederick S. Danziger Associate Professor in the History of Science at Harvard, sat in the back row of a packed auditorium at the university’s law school, where a gathering of experts discussed the ethics of growing human embryos in a lab.

“For more than three hours, the panelists delved into the scientific, legal, and ethical considerations surrounding the current guidelines for growing human embryos. They also discussed synthetic embryos — embryo-like entities that scientists are starting to grow with stem cells rather than using a sperm and an egg from human bodies.

“It was a wide-ranging discussion notable both for its importance and for its surprisingly one-sided perspective: The panelists numbered nine, and all of them were men. [GenderAvenger Blog, 6/8/17]

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Restaurants

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Laduree
Georgetown
3060 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20007
646-213-2806
Ladureewashington@laduree.com
Open 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Every day of the week

Debbie, Carol and I went to Laduree on a Sunday morning, six days after its official opening. (I was hesitant to abandon my usual Sunday breakfast at the Four Seasons but Debbie insisted we try it and it turned out to be a worthy choice.)

As you enter the restaurant, directly to the left is a display and counter for purchasing macarons, chocolates, pastries, candles and other related odds and ends. Directly ahead on the right there are three 2 tops.

I am told that overall the décor of the restaurant is very “Parisian”. It is decorated in white and soft pastels and is quite bright.

Carol had freshly squeezed orange juice, Oeufs Brouilles (scrambled eggs) and bacon and Pain au Chocolat. The scrambled eggs were served in a circular portion suggesting how they were prepared. She also had tea.

Debbie had the Omelette Laduree, mushrooms, cheese, ham, tomatoes, onions, fresh cream and fine herbs. She also had a Rose Croissant. We never did find out how they created the rose coloring of the dough. Debbie had coffee which came in an odd shaped topless pot which resulted in it not being hot. The server brought her a fresh, hot portion.

I had Rose Les Jus, a juice made from beet roots, tomatoes and strawberries followed by Le Pain Perdu Laduree, warm French toast served with a choice of maple syrup, jam or whipped cream. I chose the maple syrup. The bread was also round and had a nice taste. I followed that with a Cannele, which is a pastry I had never seen before; it was tiny, firm, and tasty, made with rum added.

There are twenty-eight different kinds of tea, seven juices and a variety of milks, hot chocolates and coffee drinks from regular coffees to espressos.

While the shop specializes in macarons, none of us tried them.

The restaurant seats 38 people on two levels at a variety of 2 tops, 4 tops and 6 tops. At the back of the dining area is a banquette which provides seating at several 2 tops.

The Georgetown location offers breakfast, lunch, brunch, afternoon tea and early dinner.

It is relatively pricey but one can get tastes that are quite reasonable.

So far, Laduree is open in Paris (its original home), New York, Los Angeles and of course Georgetown. Laduree will soon open at Union Station but it will only include macarons, other pastries, chocolate and salads and sandwiches to go as well as a variety of beverages.

[I did not check the restrooms but my guess is at this stage they are A-okay.]

On Sunday mornings, as the shop opens at 8:00 a.m. there is ample parking on M Street.

Le DeSales
1725 DeSales Street
Washington, DC 20036
202-506-6856
ledsales.com

Whitney, Lee, Debbie and I went to Le DeSales about two months after it opened.

The restaurant has two primary sections. As you enter the restaurant there is a greeter's stand and a series of dining tables that seat up to 72 people. Just beyond the greeter's station are two back-to-back booths each seating two. To the far left there is a leather banquette with seating for several 2s and 4s.

To the right of the entry is a curved bar and a series of high chairs and tables of appropriate height that can be used to seat an additional 25 people. Overall there is an interesting series of seating options.

The menu has a French accent but it is quite casual.

Whitney started with Broccoli covered with mustard and peanuts. She shared the very large portion with several of us. She finished by ordering an 8oz Beef Burger with Cabot Clothbound Cheddar and "Jambon Cru" (cured ham).

Debbie opted for Green Asparagus with boiled eggs followed by Beef "Bavette" (flap meat) Dry Aged with Grapes, Shallot and Parsley.

Lee and I both started with Beets, Avocado, Miso and Quinoa. Lee followed the beets with Friggitelli (hot peppers), Orange and Lemon and Pate de Campagne with Pistachos and Pickles (the latter are served from a very large jar with what looks to be a large tweezer).

I ordered Duck Pastrami (sliced very thin) and Bass with Cranberries, Cashews, Celeriac and Chive Oil. I also ordered a second serving of Broccoli, Peanuts and Mustard. (I had not paid attention when Whitney ordered the same dish but both portions were finished off.)

For dessert I ordered and the others tasted the chocolate tart with espresso ice cream on the side. As a chocoholic this dessert was quite special.

The service was very attentive and helpful. There was a primary server who was with us through the evening and was great at describing various dishes. Our dishes were served by various other staff who knew exactly who ordered what.

This is not the place for an important conversation, it is very noisy. As tables emptied during the evening it became easier to hear one other.

Three of the four of us would go to this restaurant again.

There are three restrooms. One is designated as a men's room. It has a single raised white ceramic wash basin, two wall hanging urinals with nothing separating them, and two fully enclosed commode rooms. The lower half of the room is covered in a marble like wall covering. The upper half of the room is covered with wallpaper adorned with very large blue and gray flowers and butterflies.

The other two restrooms are designated as WCs. Both of these WCs are single person facilities with single white ceramic wash basins next to white commodes. There is a mirror about the wash basin and commode. I only checked the wall coverings in one of them. In that room the wallpaper was large red and grey flowers with butterflies.

Parking is available at the PMI parking garage about 40 feet from the restaurant

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the grilled oyster co.
3701 Newark Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-362-1719
Info@thegrilledoyster.com
Open daily 11:30 a.m.
Closes at 11 p.m. Sunday – Thursday
Closes at 1:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday

Sherry and Mike, Diane and John and Debbie and I had dinner on a Sunday night at “the grilled oyster”.

Once we sat down a couple of plates were placed in the center of the table, each containing several pieces of carrot, celery and a form of cracker and a sauce.

John ordered Fresh Maine Mussels for the table and I ordered Fried Calamari. The mussels were slightly more popular than the calamari, although even those who are not calamari fans were quite positive about these.

Mike, Diane and I ordered the Roasted Red & Golden Beet Salad, including mixed greens, goat cheese, and spicy Chili Lime Vinaigrette.

As main courses Debbie, Mike, Diane and Sherry selected the Jumbo Lump Maryland Crab Cakes, with grilled corn and cucumber succotash, fennel & whole grain mustard sauce. John ordered the Seared Sea Scallops, with shitake & Portobello mushroom risotto, sauce romesco. I ordered the Sautéed Monkfish with shaved Brussel sprouts, Maine lobster, lobster cappuccino cream. A while later our server came back to the table to tell me that they were out of Monkfish and suggested I try the Pan Roasted Chesapeake Rockfish with sautéed kale, bacon, roasted sweet potato with almond brown butter.

There are various sections to the restaurant. As you enter, the reception desk is straight ahead. To the left is a section of 2s, 4s, and 6s which can readily be combined. There is a wall separating this section from the back section of the restaurant. The wall is about person height. The ceiling is very high.

The back section contains three types of seating. There is a long curved bar that is split in two about two-thirds of the way down. It has high chairs that will seat at least 25 people. There are a series of high tables with related chairs. There are a number of 2s and 4s.

One of the interesting features of the bar is the bottle storage behind it. There are a series of shelves from waist height to the high ceiling and on each shelf a variety of bottles of various type and sizes. There is a sliding ladder that allows the bartender to reach the upper selves. On each side of the fore described section there is a more narrow section on which are stored what appear to be wine bottles on their sides.

The restaurant seats 130 people inside with an additional section for 70 people at various size tables on the outdoor patio at the front of the restaurant. (The

patio was not being used the night we were there except for a group of six people sitting by a fire enjoying a libation.)

Because this is a relatively new restaurant the men's restroom is quite fresh. There are two wall hanging urinals with a shiny metal partial wall, attached to the wall between them. Across the way are two sunken metal wash basins in a brown marble counter with accompanying wall mirrors. At the end of the room there is a metal encased commode room. Like so many new restaurants the walls are covered with mid-size tan tiles and the floor with very large rectangular tiles.

When the check arrives I take a quick look and pay it. Mike tends to examine the check more carefully and this time it paid off. You will recall I ordered the Monkfish and then was told the restaurant was out of that selection. I then picked the Rockfish. The check contained a charge for each of the two fish selections. Mike pointed that out and of course it was changed.

The service left something to be desired. Even though the restaurant was not full our meals were quite slow in arriving. And when the time came to get our check we couldn't get anyone's attention.

Notwithstanding the service and the check, we will go again.

Parking is available and free up to 1.5 hours in the Cathedral Commons garage below the Giant with a validation of the parking ticket in the restaurant.

Addendum – Diane reported that she had been to the restaurant since our joint visit and had an excellent dinner.

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Mirabelle – an addendum

A friend by the name of Carol, having read the Mirabelle review in the last Watch noticed that WW had not checked out the restrooms.

Following her first visit to the restaurant she sent WW an email with a photo attached.

“There wasn't much – two unisex rest rooms, each with a black commode and sink. I remember thinking they didn't put a lot of thought into them.”

Mike

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mberman@dubersteingroup.com