

*Mike Berman's*

# WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

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\*Any statements in this issue of the Watch which are not sourced are mine and identified by “WW”. And for the first time WW will start using the Real Clear Politics average now and then.

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## **State of the Nation**

35.3% of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction while 56.3 say it is on the wrong track. [Real Clear Politics, 1/28-3/1]

According to a Fox News poll, 36% of Americans are satisfied with the direction of the country while 63% are dissatisfied. This is the highest satisfaction level since November 2016 when 37% expressed their satisfaction. By November 2017, the satisfaction level had fallen to 21%. These findings indicate a significant jump in the public satisfaction level over the last four months.

67% of Republicans are satisfied with the direction of the country. This is the highest level of satisfaction since prior to January 2016. On the other hand, only 13% of Democrats are satisfied and 31% of Independents are satisfied.

63% of Americans are optimistic about the U.S. economy, 38% think the job situation in their area is getting better. In terms of their personal financial situation, 23% say they are getting ahead and 24% say they are falling behind. Folks are equally divided--29% Yes/28% No--on whether they have more money in their pockets as compared to a year ago. [Fox News, 2/13/18]

34% of Americans are satisfied with the size and power of the federal government while 38% are satisfied with how well the U.S. government works. [Gallup, 2/14/18 and 2/28/18]

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## **Employment**

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for February 2017 is 4.1%, this is identical to the October and November numbers and the lowest it has been since January 2001 when the rate was 3.9%.

The unemployment rate for African Americans in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2017 was 7.0% and the white unemployment rate was 3.4%. [BLS]

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 February 2018 is 8.2%. [BLS data is based on those 16 years of age and older.]

In February 2018, initial claims for unemployment benefits hit the lowest level since December 1969. [WSJ, 3/2/18]

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SEC regulations now require that companies report the pay of their chief executives and the pay of their median employee. A recent survey of 356 public companies found that the CEO-to-median pay ratio was 140 to 1. Companies above \$15 billion in annual sales had a ratio of 263 to 1. Companies with 43,000 or more employees had a ratio of 318 to 1. So far, the information for roughly 20 companies has been released. Honeywell reported a ratio of 333 to 1 and Teva Pharmaceuticals disclosed a ratio of 302 to 1. [WP, 2/24/18]

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The Southern Poverty Law Center has identified 954 organizations which it describes as a “hate” groups. The number of organizations fitting that definition has grown from 917 groups in 2016 and 892 groups in 2016.

The number of groups defined as neo-Nazi groups has grown from 99 to 121, the number of anti-Muslim groups grew from 101 to 114 groups, and the number of anti-immigrant groups grew from 14 – 22. Two “men’s rights” groups have been added to the lists for the first time. [WP, 2/22/18]

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“Total U.S. household debt hit an all-time high of \$13.15 trillion at the end of 2017. Mortgage debt is at \$8.88 trillion.” [FiveThirtyEight newsletter, 2/15/18]

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The American Customer Satisfaction Index finds the following levels of satisfaction with the federal government. (These are not measures of political satisfaction per se.) Citizen satisfaction is up by 2.5% year to year.

Federal Departments 2017

Justice	81%
Interior	78%
Defense	76%

Commerce	75%
State	74%
DHS	72%
<b>Federal Govt</b>	<b>69.7%</b>
Agriculture	69%
HHS	69%
Soc Sec Admin	69%
Veterans Affairs	67%
Treasury	61%
HUD	60%

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### About Guns

There are between 270 million and 310 million guns in the United States.  
(PEW Research, 2013)

Several surveys asked the following questions about gun ownership. Their findings are noted below.

What is the percentage of people who live in households with guns?

Gallup and Pew	42%
General Social Survey	32%

What percentage of Americans personally own guns?

Pew	30%
Gallup	29%
GSS	21%

What percentage of gun owners own hand guns?

GSS and PEW	70+%
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What percentage of gun owners own shotguns?

GSS	63%
Pew	54%

What percentage of Republicans and Democrats own guns?

Democrats	16%
Republicans	41%

67% of gun owners say their ownership of guns is for protection. 68% say they own guns for hunting or sport shooting.

When asked to rank the essential elements of freedom, U.S. adults responded as follows:

	Non-gun owners	Gun owners
Freedom of Speech	92%	94%
Right to vote	89%	92%
Right to privacy	86%	89%
Freedom of religion	85%	88%
Right to own guns	35%	74%

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### Attitudes toward various gun proposals

The numbers indicate “strongly or somewhat favor”.

	Non-gun owners	Gun owners
Creating a federal data base to track gun sales	80%	54%
Background checks for private sales and at gun shows	87%	77%
Allowing concealed carry in more places	37%	67%
Banning assault-style weapons	77%	48%
Banning high capacity magazines	74%	44%

The percentage of people who say each of the following contributes “a great deal or a fair amount” to gun violence in the country today.

	Non-gun owners	Gun owners
The ease with which people can illegally obtain guns	87%	83%
The ease with which people can legally obtain guns	67%	44%
Family instability	77%	66%
Lack of economic opportunity	68%	59%

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19% of U.S. gun owners say they belong to the National Rifle Association.

44% say the NRA has too much influence over gun legislation while 40% say it has the right amount of influence and 15% say the NRA has too little influence.

44% of Americans say they personally know someone who has been shot either accidentally or intentionally.

57% of black adults are more likely to know someone who has been shot as compared to 43% of white adults and 42% of Hispanic adults.

[Pew Research Center, June 2017]

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The Gifford Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, started by former Congresswoman Gabby Gifford (who was shot) and her husband, the former Astronaut Mark Kelly, has put out its annual scorecard grading states from A to F.

1 state is graded A: California

6 states are graded A-: New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey,  
Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland

2 States are graded B+: Illinois and Rhode Island

2 States are graded B: Washington and Delaware

1 State is graded C+: Minnesota

4 states are graded C: Pennsylvania, Michigan, Oregon, Colorado

2 states are graded C-: Wisconsin, Iowa

4 states are graded D: Nevada, Nebraska, Ohio, Virginia

3 states are grade D-: Tennessee, North Carolina, Indiana

25 states received a grade of F.

For more information go online to [GiffordLawCenter.org](http://GiffordLawCenter.org).

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78% of registered voters say that gun policy will be “extremely/very important” to their vote in November.

45% of registered voters say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress in their district if they heard that the candidate had accepted a

campaign donation from the National Rifle Association. 14% would be more likely to vote for that candidate. [CNN SSRS, 2/23/18]

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The National Rifle Association is now basically aligned with the Republican Party.

In 1992 the NRA backed 115 Democrats for Congress. By 2010 that number dropped to 65. And by 2016 the number of Democrats supported by the NRA had dropped to 4.

The NRA is no longer just about guns. The group recently gave its “Courage under Fire Award” to the Federal Communication Commission for repealing net neutrality.

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### **15-24 year olds**

The Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), along with MTV, conducted a survey of young people 15-24 years of age. Here are select findings from that survey.

- 25% of young people report having been targeted or treated unfairly in the last 12 months because of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, immigration status or religion.
- 84% of young people say Muslims face substantial discrimination in the United States
- 49% of young women who have been targeted fear for their personal safety. 32% of men have the same fears.
- Young women are more politically and socially engaged than young men. 48% of young women and 39% of young men say they have signed an online petition.
- 63% of young women believe that women face a lot of discrimination in the U.S. 56% of young men take the opposite view.
- 75% of young people believe that there is at least some pressure for men to act in traditionally masculine ways.
- 77% say America is very divided by politics, 57% say it is very divided by wealth or income, 48% say the country is very divided by race but only 38% say it is divided by religion.

- 56% of young people say discrimination against transgender people has increased in the last 12 months as has discrimination against black people.
- 74% of young people say that Muslims are portrayed in the news media and entertainment in a way that promotes negative stereotypes.
- 66% of young people say that the media/entertainment industries promote negative stereotypes of black people.
- 59% of young people who experience discrimination say it was direct and purposeful. 40% percent say the discrimination was indirect and possibly unintentional.
- 44% of young people say they have witnessed someone being targeted or treated unfairly because of their gender or have experienced it themselves in the last year. Only 12% of young people report having been personally targeted or mistreated due to their gender.
- 58% of young people report that they have personally intervened when they witnessed a friend or family member being targeted or treated unfairly. But only 33% reported intervening when they did not know the person being targeted.
- 68% of young Americans agree that women often have to be more qualified than men to be considered for the same job. 67% of the public as a whole have the same view. [PRRI, 7/19-8/3/27]

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### **This and That**

Here is a story of love and marriage in America.

When folks were asked to name the most important reasons for getting married...

- 88% said love
- 81% said making a lifelong commitment
- 76% said companionship
- 49% said having children
- Several other reasons were mentioned, each getting 30% or less.

71% say it is important for a man to be able to support a family financially in order to be a good husband or partner. 32% said the same thing for women to be a good wife or partner.

7% of adults were cohabiting in 2016. Half of cohabiters are younger than 35 years of age.

40% of new marriages involve a remarriage for at least one of the people.

Intermarriage in the United States has steadily increased from 3% in 1967 to 17% in 2015.

Support for same-sex marriage has gone from 37% in 2007 to 62% in 2017.

Of people married before 1960, 81% were married to a spouse of the same religion. In 2014 that number was 61%.

As of 2015, 15% of American adults have used an online dating site or mobile dating apps. That is an increase from 11% in 2013.

[Pew Research Center, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017]

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China has now surpassed the United States as the leading trading partner of several South American countries, including Brazil, and stepped up investments in the region dramatically at a time when U.S engagement is on the wane. [Axios]

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The recently enacted tax bill is gaining in popularity.

	December	January	February
Approve	37%	46%	51%
Disapprove	57%	49%	46%

[Winston Group, 2/23/18]

The Tax Policy Center has provided the following analysis of the recent tax law change.

- The lowest 20% of earners (incomes of \$25,000 or less) should see an average tax of \$60 in 2018.
- Those in the second lowest 20% should see a reduction this year of \$380.
- The top 20% of earners should see an average cut of \$7,640.
- The top 1% of earners should see an average cut of \$51,000.

[Vox, 2/21/18]

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1.2 billion golf balls are produced annually. 300,000 golf balls disappear every year in the United States. [FiveThirtyEight newsletter, 2/26/18]

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Roughly 3.6 billion people use the internet. Of those, 1.6 billion are regular Facebook users. Regular Facebook users are defined as someone who logged in or posted a comment on the service at least one time in the last 30 days. Half the people who are not Facebook users are in China where Facebook is banned.

[Bloomberg]

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The City of Los Angeles consumes 587,000 acre-feet of water annually. A single farmer, Steward Resnick, the biggest farmer in California consumes 400,000 acre-feet to water the 15 million trees he has in the San Joaquin valley.

[FiveThirtyEight Newsletter 2/2/18]

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Americans are increasingly concerned that government will not go far enough to regulate big tech. The number concerned has grown from 40% in November 2017 to 55% today. Those concerned now include 45% of Republicans, 57% of Independents and 64% of Democrats. [Axios-surveymonkey, 2/23/18]

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As a reminder, here are the age ranges of various generations as used in survey research.

<u>Generation</u>	<u>Age Range</u>	<u>Share of Adult Population</u>
Silent	73-90 years	11%
Baby Boom	54-72 years	29%
Gen X	38-53 years	26%
Millennials	22-37 years	28%
Pre-millennials	18-21 years	5%

What are the general political values of various generations?

	<u>Percentage of adult population in 2017</u>			
	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer	Silent
Consistently or mostly conservative	12%	23%	32%	39%
Mixed	31%	34%	28%	32%
Consistent or mostly liberal	57%	43%	39%	28%

62% of the Silent Generation, 49% of the Boomers, 43% of Gen X and 29% of Millennials say it is necessary to believe in God to be moral and have good values.

79% of Millennials, 66% of Gen X, 56% of Boomers and 47% of the Silent Generation say that immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents.

[PEW, 3/1/18]

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3.5 ounces of Seaweed Salad at WWs local Safeway costs \$4.99 or \$1.43 per ounce. 28 ounces of Seaweed Salad at Costco costs \$11.31 or \$.40 per ounce.

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### Diapers

WW received the following message from an old friend who receives my newsletter.

“You will be pleased to know that my 8 year old granddaughter is requesting diapers for Happy Bottoms for kids to bring to her birthday party instead of presents (she still has gifts from her last birthday that she hasn't even opened). Very proud of her.”

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Notwithstanding the efforts of the Trump administration to undercut the Affordable Care Act, a signature achievement of the Obama administration, a recent survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 54% viewed the law favorably and 42% viewed it unfavorably.

A person’s perception of the law is driven by her/his political party identity.

85% of those who identify as Republicans view the law unfavorably while 19% view it favorably. Only 15% of those who identify as Democrats view the law unfavorably while 83% view it favorably.

55% of Independents view the ACA favorably while 40% view it unfavorably. [KFF 2/20/18]

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### Quotes

The worst kind of person is the one who wakes up on 3<sup>rd</sup> base thinking they hit a triple.

[Provided by Erin Hohlfelder]

**“My generation** gets a lot of flak for being lazy and being addicted to our phones. Well, social media is powerful.”

-Veronica Carbonell, age 17, is a senior at Cypress Bay High school in Weston, FL, not far from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High school.

“He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts...for support rather than illumination.”

-Andrew Lang

“Even paranoids have enemies.”

[First seen on a button without ascription]

“These young people get to be literally warriors of the light...They’re trying to – through their voices, through the March for our lives – say: We will not let this happen again. We are going to do what we can to banish the darkness”

-Oprah Winfrey (AP)

“I think confidence is silent and insecurity is loud. America is the most powerful country in all of human history, everybody knows it, and we don’t need to show it off.”

-Senator John Kennedy (R-LA)

“The news gods must be going crazy.”

[MSNBC Morning Joe, 3/1/18]

“The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity. The fears are paper tigers. You can do anything you decide to do. You can act to change and control your life; and the procedure, the process is its own reward.”

-Amelia Earhart

“Life is like a landscape. You live in the midst of it but can describe it only from the vantage point of distance.”

-Charles Lindbergh

“It is the greatest shot of adrenaline to be doing what you have wanted to do so badly. You almost feel like you could fly without the plane.”

-Charles Lindbergh

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### **President Trump**

On March 4, 2018, Gallup found that 39% of Americans approve of President Trump’s job performance and 55% disapprove.

Beginning in 2018, Gallup is no longer providing a daily approval rating of the president. In the future, these reports will be dated weekly.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
3/4/18	39%	55%
2/25/18	39%	56%
2/11/18	40%	57%
1/28/18	38%	58%
1/14/18	38%	57%
12/31/17	39%	55%
12/15/17	34%	61%
12/1/17	33%	62%
11/15/17	37%	57%
11/1/17	38%	58%
10/15/17	38%	58%
10/1/17	37%	57%
9/1/17	34%	61%
4/1/17	38%	57%

The following are some additional looks at the President's job performance. The numbers below are of registered voters unless followed by an "A" which means all voters. [QUPIAC = Quinnipiac]

<u>Date</u>	<u>NBC/WSJ</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN/</u>	<u>NYT/CBS</u>	<u>FOX</u>	<u>QUPIAC</u>
FEB '18	xx	xx	39/56	xxx	43/53	37/38
JAN '18	39/57A	38/58	43/53	37/58cbsA	45/53	36/58
DEC	41/56	xxx	36/59	36/57 cbsA	xxx	37/57
NOV	xxx	xxx	38/57	xxx	xxx	38/55
OCT	38/58 A	37/59	38/57	39/55cbsA	38/57	38/56
SEPT	43/52 A	42/54	37/56A	xxx	42/53	36/57
JULY	xxx	36/58A	xxx	xxx	41/53	xxx
MAY	39/54	xxx	xxx	xxx	40/53	37/55
APR	40/54	42/53	44/54	43/49cbs	xxx	35/57
JAN	xxx	xxx	44/53	40/48cbs	xxx	36/44

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The following are job approval numbers from Gallup for the last nine presidents and Trump. As you can see, Trump's job approval rating by the public at large is the worst of any president at this point in their tenure going back to Ronald Reagan.

Job Approval – Roughly 14 months into the 1<sup>st</sup> term

GW Bush	81% (3/02)
Kennedy	79% (3/62)
GHW Bush	68% (3/90)
Eisenhower	67% (3/54)
Nixon	56% (3/70)
Clinton	50% (3/94)
Carter	49% (3/78)
Obama	49% (3/10)
Reagan	46% (3/82)
Trump	39 % (3/18)

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72% of young people (15-24 years of age) view President Trump unfavorably while 25% view him favorably. [PRRI, 8/3/17]

On the economy, Trump's approval ratings have been within a 5 point range since the spring. His disapproval rating has been within an 11 point range since the spring.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
2/27/18	49%	44%	(Economist/YouGov)
1/16/18	46%	49%	
12/5/17	42%	52%	
10/30/17	46%	47%	
9/24/17	43%	46%	
8/6/17	46%	45%	
6/18/17	42%	51%	
4/24/17	43%	49%	
3/28/17	44%	55%	[CBS News]

On foreign policy, Trump's approval ratings have been within a 7 point range since the spring and his disapproval rating been in a five point range since the spring. Trump has not been even close to a positive rating this past year.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
3/5/18	33%	61%	
2/5/18	37%	57%	
1/16/18	36%	60%	
11/13/17	37%	58%	
10/10/17	38%	58%	
9/26/17	38%	57%	
8/15/17	39%	58%	
6/27/17	38%	57%	
4/18/17	40%	56%	[Quinnipiac]

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## About President Trump

The President seems to think he knows everything and therefore does not listen to those who truly do know. He clearly has no idea of the consequences. [WW]

Other than on his old television program is Trump able to fire anyone directly? Or does he find a way to make their role untenable for one reason or another so that they quit? [WW]

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The president has announced tariffs of 25% on steel imports and 10% on aluminum. It is not clear whether any trading partners will be exempt. The open question is whether this decision will trigger a trade confrontation with China, the European Union and other world trade players. [Politico, 3/1/18]

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, Sarah Sanders said in her daily press briefing that there may be exceptions to the tariff for countries like Canada and Mexico.

U.S. companies that use aluminum, like soda companies, will be forced to raise prices for U.S. consumers as will automobile companies and construction companies that use steel.

The provision that the President is planning to use to impose these tariffs is Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. It requires a finding that there is a national security reason for imposition of the tariff. Given the appropriate finding, the President is authorized to impose tariffs without the involvement of Congress. (If you would like more information about Section 232 and these two metals go to [commerce.gov](http://commerce.gov).)

While the President talks about trying to pressure China for underwriting exports and the Chinese are not particularly large suppliers of steel or aluminum to the U.S. (10% of steel imports and 2% of aluminum) they are expected to respond if the President goes ahead with his plan for tariffs.

Folks who follow this issue believe the Chinese will respond in a proportional fashion, probably going after U.S. financial institutions and U.S. agriculture products. [WW]

There is always the chance that the President will change his mind before the rules are set forth, as he has done with gun control. He has until mid-April to make a final decision on both tariffs.

“I don’t believe any country in the world is going to retaliate for the simple reason we are the most lucrative and biggest market in the world.” -Peter Navarro, the White House trade advisor who along with the Secretary of Commerce pushed for the policy against the advice of other senior White House Staff like Economic advisor Gary Cohn. [WSJ, 3/3/18]

Cohn announced his resignation from the White House on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Reportedly, Cohn considered resigning after Charlottesville. Apparently the President’s decision to announce these tariffs without any advance discussion let alone following Cohn’s advice was the last straw.

These potential actions on tariffs have apparently been opposed by Secretaries Mattis and Tillerson.

Here is a list of foreign suppliers of steel to the United States in 2017: Canada 16% , Brazil 14%, S. Korea 10%, Mexico 9%, Russia 8%, Turkey 6%, Japan 5%, Taiwan 4%, Germany 3%, India 2%, China 2% ; other countries 21%.

Here are the foreign suppliers of aluminum to the United States in 2017: Canada 43%, UAE 10%, China 10%, Russia 11%, Other 26%.

Of particular note is the amount of each of these metals that come from Canada and Mexico. Here are some facts about trade between the United States and Canada and the United States and Mexico.

U.S. goods and services trade with Canada totaled an estimated \$627.8 billion in 2016. Exports were \$320.1 billion; imports were \$307.6 billion. The U.S. Goods and services trade surplus with Canada was \$12.5 billion.

U.S. good and services trade with Mexico totaled an estimated \$579.7 billion in 2016. Exports were \$262.0 billion; imports were \$317.6 billion. The U.S. goods and services trade deficit with Mexico was \$55.6 billion in 2016.

Canada is currently the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest goods trading partner of the United States. Mexico is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest goods trading partner of the United States.

Canada was the United States' 1<sup>st</sup> largest goods export market in 2016 and Mexico was the second largest goods export market in that year.

[Source of the above – Executive Office of the President of the United States; United States Trade Representative]

Reuters has reported that the European Union as targeted \$3.5 billion of U.S. import for trade retaliation.

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President Trump's proposed tariffs on imported steel and aluminum will increase U.S. employment in those sectors by 33,000 jobs, but cost 179,000 jobs in other areas of the economy, according to a new report by The Trade Partnership, a consulting firm, this isn't accounting for any potential retaliation from other countries. [Axios, 3/5/18]

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“(Trump)... is incapable of not lying.” [Charles Sykes, MSNBC 2/6/18]

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An appeals court upheld a \$25 million settlement that President Trump will pay to resolve several lawsuits that alleged fraud in his for-profit real estate seminars dubbed “Trump University.” [Politico, 2/7/18]

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“Trump's refusal to defend the integrity of the US election system and our Democracy from Russian attack represents an unconscionable dereliction of duty and utter faithlessness to his oath of office. This betrayal is unprecedented in American history.” [Steve Schmidt Tweet, 2/26/18]

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President Trump claimed that his first State of the Union speech on January 30, 2018, which was watched by 45.6 million people watched, had the highest number of viewers in history.

That claim does not exactly comport with the facts.

Five other State of the Union addresses have exceeded Trump's in terms of audience size. The largest was President George W. Bush who drew 62.06 million viewers in 2003; followed by Bill Clinton with 53.08 million viewers in 1998;

followed by George W. Bush with 51.77 viewers in 2002; followed by Barack Obama with 48.1 viewers in 2010; followed by Bill Clinton in 1994 with 45.8 viewers.

Trump did have an audience of 47.74 million viewers for a joint session of Congress in January of 2017. Obama had 52.37 million viewers for the same speech in 2009.

[Statistics portal]

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57% of Americans believe that the president is a racist. [AP-NORC poll] One point made by Jenn Agiesta, the head of polling for CNN, is that the number may be driven at least in part by folks who disapprove of Trump generally who will agree with any negative comment about Trump. [Chris Cillizza @CNN.com, 3/1/18]

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### **Disassembling**

In 2016 the government proposed a requirement that new, heavy trucks have potentially life-saving software that would electronically limit speeds. It has been delayed indefinitely by the Transportation Department as part of a retreat from various regulations.

The Associated Press reports that Trump's first year in office shows that a dozen safety rules under development or already adopted have been repealed, withdrawn, delayed or put on the back burner. [AP]

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The U.S. Department of the Treasury intends to scrap nearly 300 tax rules in keeping with President Donald Trump's executive order to cut back on regulatory burdens. [Public Policy Law360, 2/13/18]

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The 2019 Trump budget proposes to cut the funding of 11 departments and agencies and raises the budgets of 7 departments and agencies.

The EPA and Small Business Administration are the entities with highest percentage of cuts and Veterans Affairs is the agency whose budget has grown by

the greatest percentage. (These numbers do not include mandatory spending programs like Medicare and food stamps.)

- 25% EPA
- 25% Small Business
- 23% State Department
- 18% Transportation
- 15% Agriculture
- 15% Interior
- 14% HUD
- 10% Labor
- 5% Education
- 3% Treasury
- 1% Justice
- + 1% NASA
- + 2% Energy
- + 6% Commerce
- + 11% HHS
- + 12% DHS
- + 14% Defense
- + 15% Veterans Affairs

Among other things, the proposed budget will freeze federal pay in 2019. The government will pay less and federal employees pay more toward their retirement and reduce the interest rate on a popular investment vehicle, the Thrift Savings Plan for federal employees. [WP, 2/12 and 2/14/18]

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President Donald Trump's March 5 deadline to wind down the DACA program arrived Monday, largely mooted by federal court injunctions. But the lives of thousands of DREAMers could still be upended, POLITICO's Ted Hesson reports.

**"The problem arises chiefly** from the Department of Homeland Security's refusal to prioritize those DACA renewals due to expire soonest," writes Hesson. "Instead, the applications are being processed in the order in which they were filed. Consequently, many so-called Dreamers who've applied to renew will see their DACA protections expire before DHS acts, increasing

their risk of being fired from their jobs or, possibly, being arrested and deported." [Politico, 3/6/18]

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The Trump administration has proposed raising entry fees at our most popular parks by as much as 180%. Apparently there is not enough money to maintain our public lands after passing a \$1.5 trillion tax cut. [Ron Wyden, 2/18/18]

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Despite being allocated \$120 million since 2015 to oppose foreign efforts to interfere in American elections, the State Department has spent \$0 of that. At the current time, zero of the 23 analysts in the Global Engagement Center assigned to counter Russian misinformation campaigns speak Russian.

Tillerson has voiced skepticism that the United States is even capable of countering the Russian threat. "If it's their intention to interfere, they're going to find ways to do that," Mr. Tillerson said in an interview last month with Fox News. "And we can take steps we can take, but this is something that once they decide they are going to do it, it's very difficult to pre-empt it." [NYT]

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The Trump administration has drafted new rules making it harder for current foreigners in the United States who receive tax-funded public benefits, to obtain permanent residency. The proposed rules by DHS would be used "to determine if they could become a public burden." This would be a departure from current long standing policy of not using the benefits a foreigner uses to determine how eligible they would be for U.S. citizenship. [The Daily Beast, 2/8/18]

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The Department of Homeland Security under the leadership of Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, has said it is considering separating parents from their children as a means of deterring other families, most of them Central American, from undertaking the perilous trip necessary to reach the United States and seek asylum.

In a particular case cited in a Washington Post editorial on 3/5/18, a 7 year old girl was separated from her mother. There is no evidence that the child or her mother is a terrorist or otherwise dangerous. The mother is being held at a detention center in San Diego and the little girl at a detention center in Chicago. Mother and child could have been detained together in a family detention center.

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The administration is moving to give restaurants and other employers more control over workers tips. Under the new proposal, employers could use workers tips for essentially any purpose, as long as the workers were directly paid at least the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. The Labor Department estimated that the rule would affect about one million waiters and waitresses and over 200,000 bartenders. Workers in other industries like hairstylists and manicurists would also be affected. [NYT, 2/4/18]

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The recent tax cuts are affecting America's balance sheet. The Treasury Department projects that the government will borrow \$955 billion this fiscal year, up from \$519 billion borrowed last year. [WP, 2/5/18]

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## 2020

The following is a list of people who have been mentioned (by either themselves or others) as potential candidates in 2020. Folks are on the list whether or not they have claimed or disclaimed any interest in running.

The list of people without government experience is followed by a list of current or past government officials who have been mentioned or have done something to suggest they are thinking about running for president.

Dwayne Johnson – Actor

~~Bob Iger – Disney~~

Howard Schultz – Founder & Exec. Chairman, Starbucks

Mark Cuban – Businessman and Owner, Dallas Mavericks

Kanye West – Entertainer

Mark Zuckerberg – CEO, Facebook

~~Oprah Winfrey – CEO, OWN~~

Andrew Cuomo (D) – Governor of New York

John Hickenlooper (D) – Governor of Colorado

Steve Bullock (D) – Governor of Montana

Jerry Brown (D) – Governor of California

Martin O'Malley (D) – former Governor of Maryland

Terry McAuliffe (D) – former Governor of Virginia

Deval Patrick (D) – former Governor of Massachusetts

Congressman John Delaney (D) – Announced 7/22/17

Congressman Luis v. Gutierrez (D)

Congressman Tim Ryan (D)

Congressman Seth Moulton (D)

Cory Booker (D) – U.S. Senator

Amy Klobuchar (D) – U.S. Senator

Kamala Harris (D) – U.S. Senator

Bernie Sanders (D) – U.S. Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand (D) – U.S. Senator

Elizabeth Warren (D) – U.S. Senator

Chris Murphy (D) – U.S. Senator

Sherrod Brown (D) – U.S. Senator

Lincoln Chafee (D) – former Rhode Island mayor, governor, and U.S. Senator

~~Al Franken (D) – former U.S. Senator~~

Joe Biden (D) – former Vice President, former U.S. Senator

Eric Garcetti (D) – Mayor of Los Angeles

Mitch Landrieu (D) – Mayor of New Orleans

Julian Castro (D) – Obama Secretary of HUD

Jason Kander (D) – former MO Sec of State/failed U.S. Senate candidate

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Congress**

State partisanship is shifting toward the Democrats as the 2018 election is on the horizon. The following is based on adults being asked for their party identification and if they say they are independent they are probed for the party leanings. (Solid states are those in which a party has a 10 point or greater advantage; leaning states are those in which a party has an advantage of 5-10 points; competitive states are those in which the advantage of either party is 5 points or less.)

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Solid Democratic	13	15
Lean Democratic	1	4
Competitive	15	15
Lean Republican	7	3
Solid Republican	14	13

[Gallup, 2/1/18]

If the elections for Congress were held today, 54% of respondents said they would vote for the Democratic candidate while 38% would be voting for the Republican candidate. [CNN SSRS, 2/23/18]

Congress' approval rating continues at a subterranean level.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Politics	15.2%	73.7%
USA Tdy/Suff 2/24/18	15%	75%
Quinnipiac 2/5/18	17%	77%
Fox News 1/23/18	15%	70%
CNN 1/18/18	16%	78%
CBS News 1/16/18	18%	75%
Quinnipiac 1/16/18	16%	78%
Quinnipiac 12/4/17	12%	80%
Reuters/Ipsos 11/28/17	19%	69%
Reuters/Ipsos 10/31/17	22%	69%
Reuters/Ipsos 9/26/17	20%	69%
Monmouth 9/19/17	15%	73%
Fox News 8/29/17	15%	74%
Quinnipiac 8/23/17	10%	83%
CBS News 8/6/17	19%	73%
CNN/ORC 4/25/17	22%	75%
Quinnipiac 3/6/17	18%	20%
NBC/WSJ 2/22/17	29%	60%

\* \* \* \* \*

As of February 22, 2018, 431 women are running or are likely to run for the U.S. House of Representatives. This compares to 212 women who were running at this time in 2016. [NPR]

[WW uses David Wasserman and the Cook Political Report for the House chart below.]

## THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Democrats	195
Republicans	240

	Democrats	Republicans
Safe in 2018	175	166
Likely	11	29
Lean	5	19
	Tossup	
	3	27

\* \* \* \* \*

For those of you who do not follow Congress and particularly the House of Representatives on a regular basis you might find interesting the full House's "important" schedule for March 6, 2018.

### **The House of Representatives: In Session**

- Voting on a bill to require financial regulators to review current rules more frequently to ensure they're not outdated.
- Voting on a bill to prohibit tax dollars from being spent on paintings of federal officials and employees.
- Voting on a bill to prohibit political appointees from taking career civil service jobs and "burrowing" into the bureaucracy

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE SENATE

[WW used a combination of the Cook Political Report and Inside Elections to create the Senate chart below.]

Republicans	51
Democrats	47
Independents	2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Seats not up in 2018	23	43

Safe in 2018	15	4
Likely	5	2
	King	Tennessee (open)
	Tester	Cruz
	Casey	
	Smith	
	Baldwin	
Lean	2	0
	Brown	
	Nelson	
Toss-ups	4	2
	Donnelly	Heller
	McCaskill	Arizona (open)
	Manchin	
	Heitkamp	

Looking at the recent Gallup partisanship ranking of states above in which the Senate elections are other than safe—

- Maine is Solid Democratic
- Minnesota has moved from Competitive to Democratic
- Ohio, Indiana and West Virginia have moved from Republican to Competitive
- Missouri Leans Republican
- Pennsylvania, Texas, Wisconsin, Florida, Nevada and Arizona are Competitive
- North Dakota, Montana and Tennessee are Solid Republican

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## Women Will Get It Done

“Not harassing us is important but basic. We need more. We need an equal share of time and attention that gets women into the roles they need.” - Facebook CEO Sheryl Sandberg at a Morgan Stanley investor Conference, 2/28/18

A new study by Accenture reveals that just having one woman in the C-suite can triple the number of women in a company's management pipeline. [Broadsheet, 3/6/18]

### A woman's place

The qualities that have made Warren Buffett such a successful investor are more common to female investors, yet women are still well underrepresented. [Source: Academic and industry research, Bloomberg Gadfly analysis]

In a 2001 study out of the University of California at Davis titled, "Boys Will Be Boys: Gender, Overconfidence, and Common Stock Investment," researchers famously came to this conclusion: Since men are more overconfident than women, men will trade more and perform worse than women.

Then in 2010, Vanguard Group found that men were more likely to panic and sell stock during the financial crisis, and therefore less likely to capture the beginning of the market recovery. That same year, a Boston Consulting Group report about female wealth-management clients determined that they're generally not as "distracted by short-term performance."

[Bloomberg L.P., 2/28/18]

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**“Despite reckoning on Hollywood diversity, TV industry has gotten worse”:**

The television industry's exclusion of female show creators and people of color has only gotten worse in the new season, according to a study that paints a grim picture even as Hollywood has made bold commitments to improve diversity and representation.

Creators of new shows in the 2017-18 season were 91% white and 84% male, marking a step backwards for both gender and racial diversity behind the camera, researchers with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) reported on

Tuesday. Despite modest gains in the diversity of casts in film and TV – and widespread evidence that diverse content yields box office success and high ratings – white men still occupy the vast majority of creative positions, the study found. [Gender Avenger Blog, 3/1/18]

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### **Restaurants**

Passion Fish  
7187 Woodmont Avenue  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814  
301-358-6116

Debbie and I have eaten dinner three times at Passion Fish. The first visit was with Florence and Peter, the second with Gail and the third with Peter and Florence and Bonnie and Lou.

The second visit did not diminish our positive feelings after the first visit and the third visit continued the positive pattern.

As you enter the restaurant the greeter stand is to the left and ahead there is an L-shaped padded banquette and bench where guests can wait if their table is not ready. Just past that bench there is a tall table with 8 high seats.

The bar, a very large square with high chairs, is ahead slightly to the left. There are also several tables in the front. You then go down an aisle that takes you past a floor to ceiling glassed-in wine cabinet on the left and the open kitchen on the right.

Weather permitting there is a substantial outside dining area with umbrellas.

On our first visit Debbie and Florence had egg rolls and then the Chinese style Smoked lobster with Stir Fried Vegetables, Crispy spinach, Ginger-Garlic Soy Glaze.

Peter started with egg rolls with seafood and Jumbo Lump Crab Cakes. I opened with the Crab & Corn smoked Chowder followed by the Whole Crispy Flounder with Spicy Tamarind Chilli Nam Pla, Cucumber Sunomono Salad.

On our second visit Debbie and Gail had the Crab & Corn Chowder as well as the Soft Shell Crab Rolls and the Firecracker, which includes Tempura Shrimp, Spicy Crab, Seaweed Salad and Dynamite Tobiko Crunch.

I had the Char-Grilled Baby Octopus, Harissa Hummus, Smoked Tomato Chutney, Roasted Chickpeas and Blackend Mahi Mahi.

On our third visit Peter started with the shrimp egg roll followed for the second time by the Jumbo Lump crab cakes. Florence opened with fried oysters followed by the crab cakes.

Bonnie had oysters and the Sushi Tuna Roll. Lou had crab and corn chowder and the Jumbo Lump crab cakes.

Debbie had corn chowder and the Firecracker again. I had grilled oysters and Grilled Arctic Char and sweet potato fries.

The service was excellent on all three visits.

The restroom is fairly new and well maintained. There are two commode rooms. One is larger than the other to accommodate those with special needs. There is a single wall handling urinal with partial walls on each side but open at the front.

As you enter there is a large white counter that houses two sunken washbasins with a tall split mirror above the washbasin counter. The floor is made up of very long tile-like pieces.

Above and to the sides of the washbasin counter, the walls have a series of strips of striated wood like tiles. Inside the commode rooms there are very large tile-like walls to waist height. Above waist height the walls are painted in a yellowish color.

\* \* \* \* \*

Succotash  
915 F Street NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
202-849-6933  
Succotashrestaurant.com

Debbie and I went to Succotash with Bev and Brady.

Succotash is located in the Old Equitable Co-operative Building Association building. The building was completed in 1912.

When you enter the restaurant you cannot help but be overwhelmed by the sheer size and particularly the height of the restaurant. There is a large, heavy wood square greeters stand straight ahead as you come through the front door.

The restaurant has two levels. On the main floor to the right there is a very long bar with many high chairs. To the left there is a banquette running the length of the room with tables on both sides and then farther to the left there are additional tables.

The second level is really a balcony that runs in a U shape around the entire room with the open end at the front door. At the far end of the second floor there is a separate room for dining and drinking. This room has old wood décor whereas the main restaurant is much more formal and very white.

The ceiling running the length of the building is a tent like glass structure.

Tom Sietsema in the Washington Post when reviewing the restaurant described it as, “9,500 square feet of gleaming dining rooms, multiple bars, free floating mezzanine and seemingly endless ceiling.”

The restaurant seems to be a bit noisy. Brady wisely requested a table on the second level at one end. It was quieter than the rest of the restaurant and provided the opportunity to see most of the restaurant from above. The upper level had booths and banquettes and four tops all the way around.

The menu is basically Southern fare with Asian accents.

Bev started with Fresh Burata, Crispy Pig Ears, shaved Brussel sprouts, Toasted Baguette with Miso Honey. For her entrée she chose Duck Schnitzel Country Ham, Mushroom Duxelle, Persimmon, Asian Pear, Celery Root Puree, Gravy.

Debbie opened with Maryland Goat Cheese Salad, Mirliton Pepper Relish, Poached Pears, Crispy Collards and Bourbon Vinaigrette. For her main course

she chose Dirty Fried Chicken Legs & Thighs, Honey Gochujang Sauce, Blue Cheese, Pickles, Nori Flakes.

Brady began with Blackened Octopus Smashed Red Potato, Broccoli Salad, Plum BBQ Sauce, Sour Cream and Chives followed by Spice Rub BBQ Pork Ribs Apple Cider Vinegar BBQ Sauce, Pickled Peppers, Fried Black Eyed Peas.

I went with one of my favorites Fried Green Tomato Salad, arugula, radishes, Buttermilk Dressing Feta Cheese. I then selected Crispy Blue Catfish Mint-Jalepena Aioli, Red Grapes, Lettuce Slaw, Burnt Lemon.

As you might expect there was considerable tasting of each other's selections.

The service was quite good.

Open 7 days a week. The restaurant does not have valet parking but there are a number of parking garages in close proximity and The Smith restaurant which is basically next door on the 9<sup>th</sup> street side, does have valet parking.

*Mike*

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