

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”.

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State of the Nation

34.5% of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction while 57.7% say it is on the wrong track. [Real Clear Politics, 3/2-3/27/18]

47% of Americans are nervous about the nation’s economy. 40% are confident about the economy. [Fox News, 3/21/18]

28% of us are satisfied with way things are going in the United States. This is down from 36% in February. 52% of Republicans are satisfied with the way things are going, down from 67% in February. Not surprisingly, only 13% of Democrats are satisfied. Independents’ satisfaction level is at 25%, down 6 points since February. [Gallup, 3/15/18]

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March 2018 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%.

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 March 2018 is 8.0%. [BLS data is based on those 16 years of age and older.]

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A Changing American Society

In recent NBC/WSJ surveys (August 2017 and March 2018) respondents were asked whether they are comfortable with changes in American society and with the country becoming more diverse and tolerant of different lifestyles, gender roles, languages, cultures and experiences.

The responses in the two surveys were almost identical. In August 2017 Americans said they were comfortable with the changes by 55% to 24% and in March they were comfortable by 54% to 25%.

In the March 2018 survey:

58% believe that the increasing attention to sexual harassment in the workplace is an appropriate response to what is going on in the workplace.

78% say it is a positive development that more women are working and having a career at the same time they are raising children.

52% say that men do not accept and treat women as equals.

62% of women said they are currently employed for pay.

49% of women who are employed for pay are the primary wage earner in their families. This has increased from 37% who played that role in 2000. 22% of others who are not the primary wage earner in their family are working to make it possible for their household to make ends meet.

33% of women who are married and 73% of single women are the primary wage earners of their families.

78% say it is a positive development that more women are working and have a career at the same time they are raising children. But 52% say men do not accept and treat women as equals while 42% say men do treat women as equals.

44% of women and 20% of men say they have experienced discrimination because of their gender.

49% of employed women have “received an unwelcome sexual advance or other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature at work.

68% of women say that the increased attention to sexual harassment has not changed the behavior of men in their workplace.

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This and That

For every 100,000 live births in the District of Columbia, 41 women die. For every 100,000 live births in the United States as a whole, 21 women die. [WP, 3/15/18)

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As of 2017 there were 27,339 Starbucks stores in the world of which 13,930 are in the United States.

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False claims are far more likely to spread far and wide than true ones. Lies were 70% more likely to get shared on Twitter than the truth, while true stories took about 6 times as long to reach 1,500 people as fake ones. [NYT – 538 Newsletter, 3/12/18]

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Over the last 50 years, how much progress do you think has been made in achieving equal treatment for African Americans? The following is the view of blacks and whites.

	<u>Great deal</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>No progress</u>	
	<u>of progress</u>		<u>progress</u>			
	Black/White		Black/White		Black/White	
Economic opportunities	9%	39%	39%	39%	51%	21%
Reducing Segregation in public life	24%	55%	34%	28%	39%	15%
Treatment by police	3%	30%	22%	31%	73%	39%
Voting rights	34%	64%	29%	25%	33%	9%
Criminal justice system	6%	28%	25%	31%	66%	40%

[AP-NORC poll, 2/19/18]

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74% of us have a friend who is gay, bisexual or transgender. 68% of us use social media once a day or more often. 39% of us know somebody who was the victim of gun violence. 21% have used a ride-sharing app like Uber or Lyft in the last month.

On the question of abortion, 54% say it should be legal always or most of the time. 36% say it should be illegal with exceptions while 7% say there should be no exceptions.

58% believe that gun ownership does more to increase safety by allowing law-abiding citizens to protect themselves. 38% say that gun ownership reduces safety.

[NBC/WSJ, 3/14/18]

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“President Trump’s attacks on Chinese trade practices may be garnering the headlines, but underpinning that dispute lies a more consequential struggle, between liberal democracy and state-directed capitalism.

“Of late, it’s a competition in which the Chinese approach has been delivering the more robust economic result. Indeed, implicit in the ferocity of the Trump administration’s attacks on China’s protectionism is the success of that nation’s economy.

“Skeptics notwithstanding, China’s model, which has brought more people out of poverty faster than any other system in history, continues to flourish, as I’ve seen firsthand in a decade of regular visits. Meanwhile, liberal democracy — the foundation of the post-World War II order — is under pressure, most significantly for having failed in recent years to deliver broadly higher standards of living.

“Here’s one stark example: Last week, Congress finally managed to pass appropriations legislation for the current fiscal year — six months after the budget year began. The 2,232-page bill was cobbled together in a frenzy, without any discussion of national priorities or careful examination of the expenditures. In contrast, China is driving hard toward its ‘Made in China 2025’ plan, an ambitious set of objectives to upgrade Chinese industry so that, among other things, it can manufacture its own high-value components, like semiconductors. And while we retreat internationally, China’s One Belt One Road Initiative will physically connect China to more than 65 percent of the world’s population.”
[Steve Rattner, 3/27/18]

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In an expected vote, China’s National People’s Congress voted 2958 to 2 to remove a 35 year old part of the Chinese constitution that limited the president to two consecutive terms. [NYT – 538 Newsletter, 3/12/18]

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In 2016 - 63,632 Americans died of drug overdoses. This was an increase of 21.5% over the 2015 total. [Time, 3/29/18]

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The tax law passed by the Congress at the recommendation of the White House last fall will result in the greatest tax relief to those in the United States who are the wealthiest.

<u>Annual earnings</u>	<u>Tax break</u>
Above \$732,000	\$32,650
Above \$148,000	5,790
\$86,000-148,000	1,480
\$48,000-86,000	780
\$25,000-48,000	320
Under \$25,000	40

If you factor in all of the law's provisions including the corporate rate cut, the wealthiest Americans get a tax break of \$51,140 while the poorest Americans receive a tax break of \$60.

The wealthiest 1% will get a cut of 1.5% while the poorest get a tax cut of 0.3%

According to the Tax Policy Center, more than 60% of residents in all 50 states and the District of Columbia will see a tax cut.

Those who earn \$200,000 or more are responsible for 59% of federal income taxes. [WP, 3/30/18]

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90% of retail sales still happen in physical stores, but that figure is decreasing and the company that stands to gain the most is Amazon. \$0.44 of every dollar spent online is spent on Amazon. [Bloomberg – 538 Newsletter 3/15/18]

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Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO and one of the founders of Facebook, has agreed to appear before the House Energy and Commerce Committee on April 11, 2018.

The following are several options being considered for regulating Facebook and other consumer interfacing companies.

- **Data portability:** Giving consumers the ability to yank their data from any company at any time. This option is getting some traction.
- **Transparency:** Requiring companies to clearly disclose how they are collecting, using, and sharing consumers' data.
- **Opting in:** Facebook has said it will give users more control over how information is shared with third-party apps and will clarify privacy settings.

[Mike Allen, Axios, 4/3/18]

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Did you know that Bloomberg produces an annual “Bloomberg Global Vice Index”? This is the calculation of what it costs to buy a basket of “vice” products. That basket includes a pack of cigarettes, a bottle of an alcoholic beverage, a gram of Amphetamine-type stimulants, a gram of cannabis, a gram of cocaine and a gram of opioids.

In the United States the basket costs \$617.10. It is the cheapest in the Congo where the basket costs \$18.30. The most expensive baskets are in Japan at \$1,366.40; New Zealand at \$1,241.60 and Australia at \$1,028.70. [Bloomberg, 4/3/18]

In 2000, there were 1,643,679 illegal border crossings from Mexico. In 2017, the illegal crossings had dropped to 303,916 and the number of Mexicans involved in those illegal crossings had dropped to 192,969. 222,847 illegal crossings were by non-Mexicans. [Steven Rattner, 4/4/18]

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More on guns

"I am here today to acknowledge and represent the African-American girls whose stories don't make the front page of every national newspaper. These stories don't lead on the evening news," [Naomi Wadler (age 11), March for Our Lives Rally].

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67% of Americans support stricter gun sale laws. This is the highest number recorded by Gallup since 1994 when it was also 67%. 28% say they are sufficiently strict now.

Even among Republicans, support for stricter laws has grown from 33% in November 2017 to 41% today. [Gallup, 3/14/18]

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(WW usually does not comment on people quoted in its pages. The following is an exception.)

WW cannot recall a dumber statement than that spoken by former U.S. Senator and former presidential candidate Rick Santorum following the recent massive gun control protests.

On a recent airing of CNN's State of the Union show, Santorum said, "How about kids, instead of looking to someone else to solve their problem, do something about maybe taking CPR classes or trying to deal with situations where there is a violent shooter?"

Santorum added that while he's "proud" of the teenage activists who organized Saturday's protests, their energy would be better spent tackling the problem at the individual level. [Time, 3/25/18]

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Former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens in NYT:
"Repeal the Second Amendment"

"In 2008, the Supreme Court overturned Chief Justice Burger's and others' long-settled understanding of the Second Amendment's limited reach by ruling, in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, that there was an individual right to bear arms. I was among the four dissenters.

"That decision -- which I remain convinced was wrong and certainly was debatable -- has provided the N.R.A. with a propaganda weapon of immense power. Overturning that decision via a constitutional amendment to get rid of the Second Amendment would be simple and would do more to weaken the N.R.A.'s ability to stymie legislative debate and block constructive gun control legislation

than any other available option. That simple but dramatic action would move Saturday's marchers closer to their objective than any other possible reform."

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According to the CDC, firearms are the leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds. Firearms are the third leading cause of death of children ages 1-17 years. [NYT, 3/25/18]

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About 11.9 million guns are manufactured in the United States every year, a quarter of which – over 3 million – are produced in Massachusetts. That state edges out New Hampshire, Arizona, New York and Florida as the largest firearms producer in the country. [Bloomberg/538 Newsletter, 3/12/18]

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In a majority of states there is no minimum age requirement for owning a rifle. In most states a person can buy an AR-15 rifle at age 18. To buy alcohol in all states one has to be 21 years of age.

A friend pointed out to me that her 18 year old high school senior can buy a gun but can't rent a car until she is 25 years of age.

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In Texas, a gun permit is a valid voter ID but a student ID is not. [Ari Berman, 3/6/18]

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44% of Americans think that passing stricter gun control laws would make the country safer while 12% think they would make it less safe. 42% think the laws would not make it safer or less safe. [Fox News, 3/21/18]

53% think it is more important to protect citizens from gun violence while 40% think it is more important to protect the right of citizens to own guns. [Fox, 3/21/18]

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In the most recent NBC/WSJ survey, the National Rifle Association is rated negatively by 40% to 37%.

The NBC/WSJ has asked the same question seven times since January 2011. In the 2011 survey the NRA was rated positively 41% to 29%. The last time this question was asked was in April 2017 when the NRA was rated positively 45% to 32%. [NBC/WSJ, 3/14/18]

In 2016, gun homicides made up 74.5 of all homicides. [538 newsletter, 4/4/18]

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The Panel

Recently, a WW reader said he was interested in knowing whether Facebook ads made any difference in the 2016 election.

This question has driven the creation of a new feature for the Washington Watch of which this is the first iteration. Whether it will exist after this first attempt remains to be seen.

The panel I have put together does not in any way, shape or form claim to be a representative sample of anything but the views of the people who have responded.

To create the panel I sat and wrote down the names of people who came to mind as one whom, in one way or another, follows politics. I am the only one who knows the names of everyone on the list.

As you might expect the political persuasion of the majority of people on the list is Democratic. If this “idea” goes beyond this issue of the Watch I intend to add more Republicans to the panel.

There are 42 people on the list. 25 people responded to the first two questions.

Question 1. Did Facebook ads make any difference in the 2016 election?

Answers: Yes – 15 No – 9 Don’t know – 1

Question 2. Will the Democrats retake the U.S. House in 2018?

Answers: Yes – 21 No – 4

Let me know what you think of this panel idea.

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Quotes

“Be depressed, discouraged, and disappointed at failures and the disheartening effects of ignorance, greed, corruption and bad politics – but never give up.”

[Marjory Stoneman Douglas]

“If they continue to ignore us, to only pretend to listen, then we will take action where it counts. We will take action every day in every way until they simply cannot ignore us anymore.”

[Delaney Tarr, a Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School student, speaking to the crowd in D.C. at the March on Our Lives rally on 3/24/18.]

“You miss 100% of the shots you never take.”

[The movie “Love at the Shore”]

“...the convergence of Passover and Easter and their stories of deprivation and desolation. They couldn’t come at a better time. They bring the message of suffering, but also triumph. That’s what Passover and Easter brought fifty, a hundred, thousands of years ago. They bring us hope. We live in hope. No other way, then or now.”

[Colbert I. King, WP, 3/31/18]

“I’m a good girl. I don’t live my life trying to piss people off, but honestly sometimes I can’t help it.”

[Bobbi Brown]

“We know that there is no tool for development more powerful than the education of girls and the empowerment of women.”

[Kofi Annan, 2003]

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President Trump

On March 31, 2018, Gallup found that 40% 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>
3/31/18	40%	55%
3/25/18	39%	55%
3/11/18	39%	56%
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%
12/1/17	33%	62%
11/1/17	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>
MAR '18	43/53A	xxx	42/54	38/57cbsA	45/52	40/53
FEB '18	xx	xxx	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 is a partial breakdown of the participants of the CNN survey in March.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Men	50%	45%
Women	34	63
Whites	48	47
Non-white	29	67
18-34 years	30	64
35-49 years	45	50
50-64 years	50	48
65+ years	43	53
Republicans	86	11
Independents	41	52
Democrats	5	93
Registered voters	43	53

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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 15 months into the 1st term

GW Bush	76% (4/02)
Kennedy	77% (4/62)
GHW Bush	68% (4/90)
Eisenhower	68% (4/54)
Nixon	56% (4/70)
Clinton	51% (4/94)
Carter	48% (4/78)
Obama	47% (4/10)
Reagan	45% (4/82)
Trump	40 % (4/18)

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>	
3/11/18	46%	48%	
2/27/18	49%	44%	
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 8 point range since the spring and his disapproval rating been in 9point since the spring. Trump has not been even close to a positive rating this past year.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
3/25/18	41%	52%	[CNN]
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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Here is what American voters say about the President:

- by 62 to 35% that he is a strong person
- by 57 to 38% that he is intelligent
- by 57 to 38% that the President is not honest.
- by 56 to 41% that the President does not have good leadership skills
- by 53 to 43% that he does not care about average Americans
- by 64 to 32% that the President is not level headed
- by 59 to 37% that he does not share their values

[Quinnipiac, 3/20/18]

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45% are less confident about the Trump administration given recent staffing changes at the White House and in the cabinet. 16% are more confident. [Fox News, 3/21/18]

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About President Trump

Peter Hart describes the underlying fear and uncertainty among voters as being driven by the events and decisions President Trump is making and, more importantly, how he seems to arrive at these decisions. To the voters, life, government and their President seems unbalanced. There is a sense of chaos and uncertainty that comes from the President who provides no road map or stable plan which is laid out or carefully considered to deal with the issues of the day. The 2018 election is not about a new agenda, but a psychological state of re-balancing and stabilizing things that seem to have spun out of control. [Peter Hart is one of the authors of the NBC/WSJ survey]

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In Trump's world, FAKE NEWS is defined as news reports that the President does not agree with, like or accept.

Jim Vandehei, the co-founder of Axios, suggests doing the following if you want to get President Trump to do something:

- Tell him it has never been done before.
- Tell him the lawyers would never allow it.
- Tell him the establishment would go crazy.

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The President continues to lack the fortitude to fire people directly if the person is someone who reports directly to the President in a senior role.

The most recent example is Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin. The day before he was terminated he had a long conversation with Trump about issues at the VA. His potential termination – which was obviously in the works – never came up according to Shulkin.

The next day Shulkin received a phone call from Chief of Staff Kelly informing him what was about to happen. His firing was once again announced by the President on Twitter. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was the first to be fired by Tweet. Tillerson refused to accept his demise until he talked to Trump. [WW]

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The President has nominated as the new head of the Veterans Administration Rear Admiral Ronny Jackson, the Navy physician who for the last 12 years has served as the White House physician. He served in this role during the last two years of the administration of George W. Bush, the eight years of the Obama administration and the time since Trump took office. He is best known for his televised discussion of President Trump's "excellent" health.

Jackson has no administrative experience other than running the White House medical office which has some 40 members. [WW]

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60% believe that President Trump does not respect women as much as he respects men. 37% say he respects women as much as men. Among 18-34 year olds, 69% say he does not respect women as much as men. [Quinnipiac, 3/20/18]

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While giving a speech in Richfield, Ohio on March 29th, President Trump dismissed the community college system. He said, "We do not know what a 'community college' means".

In fact, "more than 40 percent of the country's undergraduates are enrolled in community colleges." Roughly 9 million undergraduates were enrolled in community colleges in the 2015-2016 school year. One in three community college students transfer to a bachelor granting institution within six years. [The Atlantic, 3/30/18]

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Disassembling

Protection of consumers is taking a back seat as the Trump administration moves to unwind and undercut as many existing or proposed regulations that protect individuals from financial institutions, corporations and other entities.

For example, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has stopped enforcement actions; the Labor Department has delayed implementation of rules that affect the behavior of financial advisors as relates to their clients and the Education Department has withdrawn an effort to protect student borrowers. [WP, 3/11/18]

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“The State Department has ended an Obama-era program to grant visas to foreign entrepreneurs who want to start companies in the United States. It is more aggressively scrutinizing visas to skilled workers from other countries. And it is contemplating ending a provision that allows spouses of those skilled workers to be employed in the U.S. The administration and its backers contend it's trying to fix flaws in the existing, employer-centric skilled immigration system while advocating for a complete overhaul of America's immigration system.” [AP, 4/2/18]

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As Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico, FEMA made a fateful decision. It kept its top disaster recovery expert in Houston, working on Hurricane Harvey, even though Texas was far more stable. This was the start of a pattern. A Politico investigation shows that the Trump administration – and the President himself – was slower to ramp up recovery efforts for Puerto Rico than Texas, even though the damage in Puerto Rico exceeded that in Houston. FEMA then moved much more slowly to approve individual assistance and permanent aid. [Politico, 3/27/18]

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The Commerce Department announced Monday, March 26th that the 2020 census respondents will be asked whether they are U.S. citizens. Civil rights groups say the move will undermine the survey's accuracy and participation rates. Civil-rights groups and minority advocates said the question will dissuade immigrants, particularly noncitizens, from answering the census altogether, resulting in undercounts. The census aims to count every “person” for the purpose of determining the number of congressional seats to which the state is entitled and for the distribution of federal funds for such things as Medicaid and highway funds.

A variety of states and organizations are lining up to sue. [Time, 3/27/18]

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The federal government censored, withheld or said it couldn't find records sought by citizens, journalists and others more often last year than at any point in the past decade. The calculation covers 8 months under President Trump, the first hints about how his administration complies with the Freedom of Information Act. [AP – Playbook, 3/13/18]

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President Trump has issued an order which will ban transgender troops from serving in the U.S. military except under “limited circumstances.” Trump had announced in July 2017 that the U.S. would “not accept or allow...transgender individuals to serve in any capacity”. The statement was designed to reverse an Obama administration plan to allow transgender individuals to serve openly.

Current transgender service members who have not yet undergone reassignment surgery are allowed to remain in the military, as long as they have been medically stable for 36 consecutive months in their biological sex before joining the military and are able to deploy across the globe.

It also allows currently serving service members to remain if they were diagnosed with gender dysphoria since the Obama administration's policy took effect and prior to the start of the new Trump policy. Those service members are allowed to serve in their preferred gender and receive medical treatment for gender dysphoria. [WP, 3/24/18]

This action is quite different from a recent federal appeals court ruling that held that discrimination on the basis of transgender status was inherently sex discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Trump's position is consistent with the position taken by Attorney General Sessions in a memorandum to Justice Department lawyers. He said that “Title VII prohibition on sex discrimination encompasses discrimination between men and women but does not encompass discrimination based on gender identity per se including transgender status.” [NYT, 3/25/18]

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Trump's EPA rejected Obama era greenhouse gas standards for 2022-2025 models and light trucks. This is a victory for car manufacturers. [Public Policy Law 360, 4/2/18]

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The White House is considering limits on visas to Chinese students as part of a broad package of measures targeting Beijing. Foreign students paying U.S. tuition have made schools one of America's most successful export industries. Foreign students attending U.S. schools accounted for \$39.4 billion in U.S. exports. Chinese students account for approximately one-third of 1.1 million international students enrolled in U.S. schools in the 2016-2017 academic year. [WSJ, 3/16/18]

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Acting Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Chief, Mick Mulvaney who is also the Director of OMB, is recommending changes (which will require congressional action) to rein in the CFPB.

Among the changes proposed:

- The head of CFPB would report directly to the President instead of being independent as he is now.
- New rules proposed by the CFPB would need congressional approval.
- The CFPB funding instead of coming from the Federal Reserve as it does now would be handled by Congress.

[WSJ, 4/3/18]

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Disassembling efforts that did not work as planned or were modified

The White House request for budget cuts ran into a Congress that was having none of it. Here is how the White House proposal was dealt with in the Omnibus bill passed by Congress and signed by the President.

	<u>White House Requests</u>	<u>Omnibus</u>
Transportation, HUD	-16.9%	+21.9%
Energy and Water	- 9.3%	+14.3%
Homeland Security	+3.8%	+12.5%
Military Con &VA	+8.0%	+12.0%
Agriculture	-24.7%	+10.1%
Labor,HHS,Education	-15.2%	+10.0%

Financial Services	+6.6%	+9.9%
Defense	+5.4%	+9.4%
Interior&Environment	-15.7%	+9.2%
Legislative Branch	-13.1%	+9.5%
Com,Justice,Science	-13.1%	+5.7%
State & Foreign Ops	-23.7%	+1.7%

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The Trump administration has backed away from a proposed regulation that would have allowed restaurant owners and managers to pocket the tips of their workers. [NYT, 3/24/18]

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An effort by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to spend more than \$1 billion to promote choice-friendly policies and private school vouchers was rejected by Congress. Rather than cut the Department budget by \$3.6 billion as Devos had proposed it increased the budget by \$3.9 billion. [WP, 3/23/18]

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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.

Ultimately, the list will narrow for a variety of reasons. Among those reasons is “opposition research” done by folks who are supporting other candidates. Events from a person’s past inevitably come to light in a presidential campaign and take on additional significance as a result of the standards of the time.

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

Tom Steyer – Billionaire philanthropist
~~Sheryl Sandberg – COO, Facebook~~
~~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
Jay Inslee (D) – Governor of Washington
Gina Raimondo (D) – Governor of Rhode Island
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
Mark Warner (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
Bill de Blasio (D) – Mayor of New York City
Pete Buttigieg (D) – Mayor South Bend, Indiana
Julian Castro (D) – Obama Secretary of HUD

* * * * *

Congress

Congress' approval rating continues at a subterranean level.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Politics 3/27	13.8%	75%
Reuters/Ipsos 3/27/18	20%	73%
Quinnipiac 3/5/18	13%	80%
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 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%
Fox News 8/29/17	15%	74%
CNN/ORC 4/25/17	22%	75%
Quinnipiac 3/6/17	18%	20%
NBC/WSJ 2/22/17	29%	60%

* * * * *

As of this writing, just 379 of 435 House districts will have incumbents running this November. That's the second-lowest total of the post-World War II era.

- The 56 total open seat districts include 37 Republican-held seats and 19 Democrat-held seats.
- The best pickup opportunities for both parties come in these open seats.
- Since our last open seat update, the Democratic potential in these seats has grown. It's possible the Democrats could get a third or more of the way toward flipping the House just through netting gains among the open seats. [Sabato]

* * * * *

When voting for Congress in 2018, will voters be signaling support or opposition to Trump?

That is the question that the Winston Group asked in its most recent survey of “Winning the Issues”. 30% said they would be voting in support of Trump while 39% said their vote will be in opposition to Trump. Here are the other results.

	<u>Overall</u>	<u>GOP</u>	<u>Ind</u>	<u>Dem</u>
Support for Trump	30%	69%	17%	6%
Opposition to Trump	39	7	34	71
Trump will not be a factor	22	18	37	14
Don’t plan to vote	3	2	5	4
Don’t know	6	4	7	5

[WG Discussion Points, 3/28/18]

* * * * *

Americans currently prefer a Congress controlled by Democrats by 50% to 40%. [NBC/WSJ, 3/14/18]

If the 2018 election were held today, 46% of Americans would vote for the Democratic candidate while 41% would vote for the Republican candidate. [Fox News, 3/21/18]

At least at this time, high interest in the November election is about the same as it was for the last three mid-term elections.

At the present time, 44% of Americans say they are very interested in the November 2018 elections.

At this time in 2014, 41% said they were very interested in the November elections.

In 2010, 47% said they were very interested

In 2006, 45% said they were very interested.

[NBC/WSJ, 3/14/18]

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

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

	Democrats	195
	Republicans	240
	Democrats	Republicans
Safe in 2018	177	167
Likely	12	26
Lean	10	19
	Tossup	
	3	21

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	42
Safe in 2018	17	5
Likely	3	1
	Tester	Nebraska
	Casey	
	Baldwin	
Lean	2	0
	Brown	
	Nelson	
Toss-ups	4	3
	Donnelly	Heller
	McCaskill	Arizona (open)
	Manchin	Tennessee (open)
	Heitkamp	

Women Will Get It Done

“If you're a woman who's uttered a few words in public, chances are good that you've been interrupted. If you've been audible in an office, it's almost inevitable. Men interrupt you in closed-door meetings and in the middle of presentations and over lunch. Call it out, risk that hated rejoinder—God, don't be so emotional about it. None of us are immune. Not senators like Kamala Harris or Supreme Court justices. Not Michelle Obama. Not Arianna Huffington or Oprah. And not women on live television, who endure sexism, condescension, and countless, endless interruptions, all while millions of people watch.” [Gender Avenger Blog, 3/17/18]

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“The federal government once led the way in addressing sexual harassment in its ranks. But now it lags behind the private sector as the problem gains prominence in the #MeToo era, according to federal officials and employment lawyers. A new study shows that sexual harassment is commonplace in federal offices. One in five women at large agencies say they have experienced some form of inappropriate behavior from a co-worker or supervisor. Nearly 9 percent of male employees report similar problems.” [WP, 4/2/18]

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Martina Navratilova, who won a combined 59 major titles in singles, doubles and mixed doubles was paid £15,000 by the BBC to provide commentary for broadcasts at Wimbledon, while John McEnroe – who won 17 combined titles was paid between £150,000 and £199,999 for a similar role. [Think Progress, 3/19/18]

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“The tech industry has a persistent problem with gender inequality, particularly in its leadership ranks, and a new study from LivePerson underscores just how depressingly persistent it truly is. When the company asked a representative sample of 1,000 American consumers whether they could name a famous woman leader in tech, 91.7% of respondents drew a complete blank, while only 8.3% said they could. But wait, it gets worse: Of those 8.3% who said they could name a famous woman tech leader, only 4% actually could—and a quarter of those respondents named “Siri” or “Alexa.” Now, granted, this represents only about 10 people in the survey group, but that’s 10 people for whom the most

famous woman in tech is a virtual assistant.”

[Gender Avenger Blog, 3/27/18]

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Claire Foy, who played Queen Elizabeth II on Netflix’s “The Crown”, despite playing the head of state and the show’s primary protagonist, was paid \$40,000 per-episode, less than her male co-star, Matt Smith who played Prince Phillip. [Vanity Fair – 538 Newsletter]

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Restaurants

Bibiana
1100 New York Avenue, NW
(Corner of 12th and H St)
Washington DC 20005
202-216-9550

Gwen, Debbie and I went to Bibiana for dinner on a Friday night.

The food was very good but the service was exceptional. (I had previously dined at Bibiana for lunch with David.)

As you enter the restaurant there is a greeter’s podium to the left. Straight ahead is a bar with a wall full of bottles and 12 high chairs. To the left is a dining room with a glass wall and door which is filled with round tables. To the right is a room filled with four tops and two tops.

At the far end of this room there is an alcove that can seat up to 8 at a single table or handle several smaller tables. It has somewhat opaque curtains blocking it off from the rest of the dining room. (It was in this alcove with the curtains pulled back that David and I had lunch.)

We were seated immediately upon arrival in the room with the 2 and 4 tops. We were seated at a four top next to the “private” alcove which was separated by a floor to ceiling screen.

The area was fairly loud so Debbie asked whether we could be reseated. The waiter immediately said “yes” and took us across the room to a four top at a banquette that hosted two 4 tops and two 2 tops. It was less noisy.

Gwen started with Isalata Tricolore; Red Radicchio, Endive, Arugula, Fried Shallots, Shallot Mustard Dressing followed by Royal Bass with Artichokes.

Debbie began with Sformatino; Butternut Squash, Parmesan Fonduta, Amaretti Crumble, Grappa Pickled Raisins. For her main course she ordered Brodetto; Seafood & Tomato Stew, Bass, Prawns, Calamri, Shellfish, Roasted Garlic Crostini.

I ordered Polipo; Grilled Octopus, Romesco Lime Pistachio Dressing, Saffron Pickled Potatoes followed by Coniglio; Rabbit Porchetta, Sunchoke Puree, Braised Cabbage.

For dessert, Gwen had Chocolate Ice cream; Debbie and I ordered Affogato al Caffè; Fior di Latte Gelato Drowned in Espresso.

Gwen’s fish was not sufficiently cooked for her taste. She asked the waiter if she could get it cooked a little more. He apologized and immediately took her plate to get that done. Before it was returned one of the managers came over to apologize and asked if there was anything she wanted while she waited. The waiter apologized once again before he returned with her fish, done perfectly this time.

The restaurant seats 120 people. It is a bit on the noisy side.

As you enter the restroom, to the left there are two tall white ceramic washbasins with towels on an open table between them. They are fronted by a large wall mirror. Further into the room are three commode rooms. Each of them has a square white ceramic washbasin and next to it a white ceramic commode.

Bibiana is a part of the Knightsbridge Restaurant Group in Washington which includes 701, Bombay Club, The Oval Room, Rasika West End, Rasika Penn Quarter, Ardeo+Bardeo, Nopa-Kitchen & Bar, bindaas and Sababa.

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A regular reader of the Washington Watch joined me at Rare Steak and Seafood on I Street in D.C. but has not yet seen a review even though it is several

Watch editions later. Because he has bugged me about this several times I remind him and all others who may be interested in the WW restaurant review policy.

WW does not provide reviews of restaurants at which I have a less than satisfactory experience. As a further policy, when a restaurant does not measure up I give the restaurant a second chance to see whether the first experience was an anomaly. I have not had a chance to schedule that second visit.

The regular reader wishes to note that he will not be joining me for the return visit.

Mike

Suite 825
325 7th St, NW
Washington, DC 20004
202- 728-1100
mberman@dubersteingroup.com