

*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**

36.9 % of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction, 54.7% say it is on the wrong track. [Real Clear Politics, 5/1]

58% of Americans say that economic conditions in the country are only fair or poor. 43% say conditions are good or excellent. In the same survey respondents were asked whether the President's economic policies helped them. 57% said they helped people with more money than they have, 29% said they help everyone, 5% said they help people like themselves. [Fox News, 4/24/18]

In early April, 29% of us were satisfied with the way things are going in the United States. This is down from 36% in February. Between February and March, satisfaction among Republicans dropped from 67% to 51%. Among Independents it dropped from 31% to 25%. Among Democrats it remained in the tank. [Gallup, 3/11/18 and 4/11/18]

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## **Employment**

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2018 is 3.9%. This is the lowest it has been since 2000.

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 April 2018 is 7.8%.

The number of unemployed persons vs the number of jobs opening is now 1 to 1. In July 2009 there were 6.6 unemployed persons per job opening.

## **The Demographics of Unemployment**

Unemployment by Race:

White - 3.6%; Black - 6.6%; Hispanic - 4.8%; Asian - 2.8%

Unemployment by Education level:

Less than high school - 5.9%; High school - 4.3%; Some college - 3.5%;  
Bachelor's or higher - 2.1%

[BLS data is based on those 16 years of age and older.]

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70% of Americans believe that undocumented immigrants working in the U.S. should be offered a chance for legal status. This includes 69% of southerners and 60% or more in each of the following states: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee.

26% nationwide and 28% in the South say these immigrants should be deported to the country from which they came. [NBC/Survey Monkey, 3/25/18]

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A majority of the residents of 44 states support the right of same-sex couples to get married. This is up from 30 states in 2014. A majority of the residents of 6 states do not support this right: Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, West Virginia, Louisiana and North Carolina. In Alabama, a majority oppose same-sex marriage.

61% of Americans favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally. This includes 77% of those 18-29 years of age but only 47% of those age 65+. [PRRI 2017, American Value Atlas]

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For the first time ever the 2020 U.S. Census will ask about same sex relationships. The responses for “husband or wife” and “unmarried partners” will be broken out into “opposite-sex” and “same-sex” options. [NBC News]

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The number of Americans without health insurance is growing. Since 2016 the number of uninsured has grown from 3% to 15.5%. [Commonwealth Fund, Axios]

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As the country heads toward the midterm elections, Morning Consult asked 250,000 registered voters about the issues on their minds. Here are the results:

<u>All Americans</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independents</u>	<u>Democrats</u>
Economic 27%	Security 35%	Economic 20%	Economic 24%
Security 21%	Economic 29%	Security 18%	Health care 16%
Health care 17%	Seniors 13%	Health care 16%	Seniors 20%
Seniors 16%	Health care 12%	Seniors 14%	Security 11%
Education 7%	Education 4%	Education 8%	Education 8%
Women’s 4%	Women’s 2%	Women’s 4%	Women’s 6%

[Morning Consult – from 250,000 interviews]

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In the next fiscal year the U.S. budget deficit will reach the modest amount of \$1 trillion (\$1,000,000,000,000). [A stack of a trillion one-dollar bills would go almost one quarter of the way to the moon and weigh approximately ten tons.]

Half of that amount will be the result of legislation that Congress passed in the last three years. [SteveRattner.com]

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20% of Americans now live in multigenerational households. That is about the same percentage of Americans who lived in these households in 1950. The low point was in 1980 when only 12% lived in multigenerational households.

The current 20% level represents 64 million people. The 21% who lived this way in 1950, represented 32.2 million people. Those 25-29 years of age are the most likely to live in multigenerational households. [Pew, 4/5/18]

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There are signs that 18-29 year olds will be increasingly politically active in the years ahead. Here are some indicators of how much they trust various institutions. [WW has ranked them from most to least trusted]

	<u>All/Most of the time</u>	<u>Some/Never</u>
College or University Admin	61	37
Local police department	52	45
U.S. Military	51	36
The Supreme Court	43	54
FBI	42	55
United Nations	40	56
Local government	38	60
EPA	38	59
U.S. Dept of Justice	35	62
State government	34	63
U.S. Dept of Education	29	68
Facebook	27	71
Twitter	27	70
U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)	25	72
The President	22	75

Federal government	21	75
Congress	17	79
The media	16	80
Wall Street	12	85

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### **This and That**

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#### National Diaper Bank Network (NDBN) & Alliance for Period Supplies

The NDBN has established a new program dealing with yet another need of more women than you would ever imagine, the Alliance for Period Supplies.

The organization is comprised of allied programs that collect, warehouse and distribute menstrual period supplies in local communities.

The goal is to raise awareness of the fact that millions of women living in poverty miss out on daily life because they lack access to essential period products and to provide the necessary supplies to those in need.

1 in 4 women have struggled to purchase period supplies in the past year due to lack of income. A month's worth of supplies costs a woman from \$8-10.

U Kotex is a founding sponsor of the Alliance for Period Supplies. So far it has donated 2 million period products to help those in need.

Think about it this way: a woman with two children, one a six months old and the other a 2 year old, could be facing monthly costs for diapers and period supplies of \$128 – \$150 per month (diaper costs per child of \$60-\$70 and period supplies of \$8-10).

To learn more and to contribute, go to [www.allianceforperiodsupplies.org](http://www.allianceforperiodsupplies.org).

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The average age of the members of Congress who questioned Mark Zuckerberg when he appeared before the House Energy and Commerce Committee is 61.5 years of age. Zuckerberg is 33. [WW]

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In a new survey from the Winston Group (April 28-30), respondents were asked if capitalism or socialism is the better economic system.

52% said capitalism  
17% said socialism  
31% said they did not know

Among Democrats:  
30% said capitalism  
30% said socialism  
39% were undecided

Among Moderate Democrats:  
33% said capitalism  
23% said socialism  
44% were undecided

Among Liberal Democrats:  
Split among all three with a slight edge toward socialism (35%).

Among those who said they voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016:  
36% said capitalism  
28% said socialism  
36% did not know

There is a clear lack of consensus among Democrats about the best economic system.

[Winston Group, 5/3/18]

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## Do the benefits of college still outweigh the costs?

In recent years, students have been paying more to attend college and earning less upon graduation—trends that have led many observers to question whether a college education remains a good investment.

A key reason why a degree remains a relatively valuable asset despite rising tuition is that the wages of those Americans without a degree have been falling, keeping the college wage premium near an all-time high...Between 1970 and 2013, workers with a bachelor's degree (excluding those who went on to a postgraduate degree) had annual earnings of about \$64,500 after adjustment for inflation. Workers with an associate's degree earned an adjusted \$50,000 per year, and those with only a high school diploma earned \$41,000. The authors calculate that, over four decades, workers with a bachelor's degree earned on average 56 percent more and workers with an associate's degree averaged 21 percent more than high school graduates.

Assuming that all workers retire at age 65 and that those who went to college spent 4 years in school to earn a bachelor's degree or 2 years for an associate's degree, workers with a bachelor's degree earn well over \$1 million more than high school graduates during their working lives. Workers with an associate's degree earn about \$325,000 more than high school graduates. [Fed Reserve Bank of NY, 11/3/14]

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The wealthiest 10% of Americans own 77% of the wealth in the United States. The least wealthy 50% of Americans own 1.3% of the wealth in the United States. [Washington Post, 4/8/18]

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The number of letters sent through the U.S. Post Office has declined by more than 40% since its peak in 2001. [Washington Post, 4/8/18]

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There is at least one thing on which Republicans and Democrats agree. 50% of Democrats and 54% of Republicans wear jeans at least four days of the week. [Morning Consult, 5/3/18]

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There were 4.5 million complaints about robo calls to the Federal Trade Commission in 2017. This is a 114% increase in the number of complaints received in 2015. [New York Times]

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Does your heart rate jump when your iPhone battery dips below 20%? When you realize your iPhone battery is at 7% do you get the feeling, “Oh my God, I’m lost.” Do you find yourself fearful when you are completely out of mobile contact?

If the so, you have “nomophobia” – short for no-mobile-phobia. [Wall Street Journal, 5/5/18]

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### **More on guns**

There is increased support for a variety of new or enhanced gun laws.

By 72% to 26% there is support for raising the long gun buying age to 21. 85% support red flag laws.

57% say enacting laws to reduce gun violence is a priority as opposed to the 34% who say the priority should be protecting gun rights. This represents a substantial change since 2013 when 52% said the priority should be protecting gun rights with 40% supporting enacting new laws.

68% of women say it is a higher priority to reduce gun violence. Men split 46% to 45% when the choice is to reduce gun violence versus protecting gun rights.

By 62% to 35% folks support an assault weapons ban. In 2013, 53% opposed an assault weapons ban. [ABC/WP poll, 4/13/18]

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A majority (57%) of teenagers are at least somewhat worried that a shooting could happen at their school. This includes 64% of girls and 51% of boys.

The level of their parents’ fear is connected to income. 82% of parents in households with an income less than \$30,000 per year are at least somewhat



worried. 64% of parents in households with income levels of \$30,000 to \$75,000 are worried. In households with income levels of \$75,000 or higher only 53% are at least somewhat worried.

When it comes to adult views about what should be done to prevent school shootings there is bipartisan agreement for solutions like improving mental health screening and treatment, preventing people with mental health illnesses from purchasing guns and having metal detectors in schools. But that is where agreement ends.

81% of Republicans and R-leaning Independents favor allowing teachers to carry guns in schools. This is supported by only 24% of Democrats and D-leaning Independents.

78% of Democrats and D-leaning Independents support banning assault weapons. They are joined by 35% of Republicans and R-leaning Independents.

[PEW, 4/18/18]

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“A striking detail stands out in nearly three decades of American mass school shootings: The killers mostly use guns owned by a family member, not purchased on their own.”

5% of students age 12-18 living in rural areas, 4.4% of students living in suburbs and 3.4% of students living in urban areas live in homes in which they have access to loaded guns without adult supervision.

5.2% of white teens, 3.3% of black teens and 2.8% of Hispanic teens live in households where they have access to loaded guns. [Wall Street Journal, 4/6/18]

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Have the Baby Boomers made things better or worse for your generation?

	<u>Worse</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>Better</u>
Millennials	51%	33%	13%
Gen X	42%	36%	19%
Boomers	30%	34%	32%
Silent Gen	32%	40%	24%
Total	40%	35%	22%

Millennials – ages 18 to 34  
Generation X – ages 35 to 50  
Boomers – ages 51 to 69  
Silent Generation – ages 70 to 87

[Survey Monkey, 4/13/18]

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Millennials (currently 71 million) are expected to surpass Boomers (currently 74 million) as the country’s largest living adult generation sometime in 2019. This is due to the number of millennials rising and the number of boomers declining. [Pew, 3/1/18]

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Of the 1.379 billion people in China there are 34 million more men than women. Of the 1.324 billion people in India there are 37 million more men than women.

In the United States there are 100 women for every 97 men. [Washington Post, 4/18 & WW]

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Starbucks has 15% of the U.S. coffee market. Dunkin’ Donuts has 6% and Nestle has 3%.

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### **Quotes**

“It took me a long time to get my public voice. Once I found my voice, I’m not going to shut up.”  
Madeleine Albright

“Hospice care cannot allow people to control their lives if they are going to deny them the right to die at a time of their own choosing.”  
Ann Jackson, former CEO of Oregon Hospice Association

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“You’re damn right, I’m a champion of compromise.”  
Senator John McCain

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“The way to turn our economy around is not by making rich people poorer, it’s by making poor people richer.”  
Senator Marco Rubio

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“This is the only country in the world where today’s employee, is tomorrow’s employer.”

Senator Marco Rubio

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“It takes a minute to find a special person, an hour to appreciate them, and a day to love them, but it takes an entire lifetime to forget them.”

Anonymous

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“We can’t make progress on the issue of sexual harassment until women feel like they can speak up without getting blamed.”

Suzy Elkouarti, cocktail server at the W Hotel in Boston [WP]

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“I finally realized it. People are prisoners of their phones and that’s why they are called Cell Phones.”

Author unknown

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### **President Trump**

On May 6, 2018, Gallup found that 42% of Americans approve of President Trump’s job performance and 52% disapprove. This is the highest job approval rating that Gallup has reported since Trump became president.

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>
5/6/18	42%	52%
4/22/18	38%	57%
4/8/18	41%	54%
3/11/18	39%	56%
2/11/18	40%	57%
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>
MAY’18	xxxx	xxxx	44/51	40/55cbsA	xxxx	xxx
APR’18	39/57A	44/54	xxxx	xxxx	44/53	39/54
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 ‘17	41/56	xxx	36/59	36/57 cbsA	xxx	37/57
NOV ‘17	xxx	xxx	38/57	xxx	xxx	38/55
OCT ‘17	38/58 A	37/59	38/57	39/55cbsA	38/57	38/56
SEPT ‘17	43/52 A	42/54	37/56A	xxx	42/53	36/57
JULY ‘17	xxx	36/58A	xxx	xxx	41/53	xxx
MAY ‘17	39/54	xxx	xxx	xxx	40/53	37/55
APR ‘17	40/54	42/53	44/54	43/49cbs	xxx	35/57
JAN ‘17	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 since Eisenhower at this point in their tenure with the exception of Jimmy Carter.

Job Approval – Roughly 15 months into the 1<sup>st</sup> term

GW Bush	76% (5/02)
Kennedy	74% (5/62)
GHW Bush	65% (5/90)
Eisenhower	60% (5/54)
Nixon	59% (5/70)
Clinton	51% (5/94)
Carter	41% (5/78)
Obama	48% (5/10)
Reagan	45% (5/82)
Trump	42 % (5/18)

On the economy, Trump’s approval ratings have been within a 3 point range since the spring. His disapproval rating has been within an 8 point range since the spring. [Real Clear Politics]

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
5/6/18	50.3%	44/8%	RCP average 4/6-5/6
5/6/18	47%	46%	CBS News – all voters
5/5/18	54%	42%	CNN – Reg voters
4/24/18	47%	47%	Fox News
4/11/18	49%	46%	ABC/WP
4/9/18	47%	48%	Quinnipiac
3/11/18	46%	48%	CBS News
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%	“

On foreign policy, Trump's approval ratings have been within a 10 point range since the spring and his disapproval rating has been in a 9 point range since the spring. Trump has not been even close to a positive rating this past year.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
5/8/18	43.2%	52.6%	RCP average 4/20-5/8
5/6/18	45%	49%	CNN – Registered Voters
4/9/18	39%	55%	Quinnipiac
3/25/18	41%	52%	CNN
3/5/18	33%	61%	Quinnipiac
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%	“

A quick review of polls shows that the President does better on all of the approval questions when the respondents are registered voters than when the sample includes all voters.

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The following are a series of responses to a survey taken by CBS from May 3 to 6 about how President Trump is handling certain issues.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
The situation with North Korea	51%	39%
Immigration	40	57
Trade	40	48
Relations with Israel	41	43
Imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum	36%	50%

Do you think Donald Trump's policies are making the United States more respected around the world, less respected or do they have no effect?

More respected	29%
Less respected	55%
No effect	15%

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### **About President Trump**

With the release of three American prisoners by North Korea (one of whom was captured during the Obama administration and two of whom were captured during the Trump administration), Trump has another significant accomplishment under his belt.

On May 8<sup>th</sup>, President Trump, refusing to heed the requests of our major European allies, pulled the United States out of the so-called Iran deal which was negotiated during the Obama administration. As a result, U.S. sanctions on Iran have been restored. Trump claims the Iranians have violated the deal. No one in the intelligence community of the U.S. or any other government shares that view. What happens next is anyone's guess. [WW]

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In February 2018, the tax reform law passed by President Trump and the Republican-held Congress was approved of by 51% of the public. 46% disapproved. In April, approval ranged from 27% to 42% and disapproval ranged from 36% to 52%. [Real Clear Politics]

There was a 17% drop in international students in the U.S. last year — mostly due to a 28% decline in Indian students and a 24% decline in Chinese students receiving visas. The downturn, which can be partially attributed to President Trump's immigration policies, could have a notable economic effect. Foreign students contributed \$36.9 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2016-2017 academic year. The fall off is having a substantial adverse impact on U.S. colleges and universities.

There has been a large increase in the number of foreign students who have chosen to go to countries like Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand, Japan and Spain to name a few. [Morning Shift, Politico.com, 4/23/18]

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In commenting about funding for the border wall, President Trump said in a speech in Michigan on April 28<sup>th</sup>, “We come up again on September 28<sup>th</sup>, and if we don’t get border security, we’ll have no choice. We’ll close down the country because we need border security.” [Morning Shift, Politico.com, 4/30/18]

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As of May 6, 2018 the Washington Post has identified 3,001 false or misleading claims President Trump has made since taking office. He is now averaging 6.5 false or misleading claims a day. During the president’s first 100 days he was only averaging 4.9 false or misleading claims a day.

It remains an open question whether Trump knows when he is uttering a falsehood or actually believes what he is saying.

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### **Disassembling**

The Treasury Department has relinquished some of its authority over implementation of the Trump tax cuts to the White House Office of Management and Budget. [New York Times, 4/13/18]

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The Trump administration has begun scaling back protections for transgender people. [New York Times, 4/22/18]

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The administration is increasingly taking young children from their parents as they attempt to cross the border seeking asylum from the political violence in their home countries such as Honduras. The idea is to take children from their parents as a way of deterring migrants from coming to this country. At the latest count more than 700 children have been taken from their parents at the border. [New York Times, 4/17/18]

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The administration in the “person” of the USCIS plans to rescind the work authorizations for spouses of H-1B visa holders. [Morning Shift, Politico.com, 4/23/18]

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President Trump has ordered the EPA to make it easier for states and industries to comply with national air emission standards for pollutants like ozone, nitrogen dioxide and lead. The goal seems to be to allow states to create their own compliance plans instead of being forced to use a federal plan. [Law 360, 4/13/18]

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A year ago for Russians seeking a U.S. tourist visa it took less than a week. Now the wait is about 250 days. [Washington Post, 4/23/18]

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"[EPA] chief Scott Pruitt announced he would seek to bar the agency from relying on studies that don't publicly disclose all their data, a major policy change that has long been sought by conservatives that will sharply reduce the research the agency can rely on when crafting new regulations. The unveiling of the proposed rule delivers a win to Republicans like House Science Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas), who unsuccessfully pushed legislation to impose the same type of change."

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An appeals court teamed up with President Donald Trump's Labor Department to deal a huge blow to the Obama-era fiduciary rule, which would have required brokers to put their customers' best interest ahead of their own



compensation considerations. It's a win that a large swath of the financial sector has been chasing for years, though it's not the end for any type of regulation in this space; the SEC last month proposed requiring brokers to provide reasonable disclosure about conflicts of interest while protecting them with a safe harbor from liability.

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The Department of Housing and Urban Development is proposing to raise the rents of people living in federally subsidized house from the current 30% of their adjusted income as rent, to 35% of gross income. Roughly 2.37 million families who receive these benefits will be affected. [Washington Post]

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The U.S. Department of Justice is in the process of overhauling its manual for federal prosecutors. A section titled “Need for Free Press and Public Trial” and references to the department’s work on racial gerrymandering are gone. Language about limits on prosecutorial power has been edited down. Prosecutors are directed to report contacts with the media. [Buzzfeed]

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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. When an individual suggests publicly that he or she is not interested in running, their name is struck through.

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~~

Eric Holder (D) – former Attorney General  
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

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### Congress

During the campaign and again in a tweet on the last day of April, President Trump called for congressional term limits. His proposal would limit members of the House to three terms (6 years of service) and members of the Senate to two terms (12 years of service).

If those limits were currently in force, how many members of Congress would be out of a job in 2019?

318 members of the House will have served three or more terms in Congress roughly, 161 Republicans and 157 Democrats.

46 members of the Senate will have served two or more terms, 23 Democrats and 22 Republicans. [Quorum]

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Congress' approval rating continues at a subterranean level.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Politics 5/1	16.6%	72.6%
Real Clear Politics 4/2	13.6%	75%
Real Clear Politics 3/2	15.8%	72.6%
Real Clear Politics 2/4	16.2	73.9%
Real Clear Pol. 1/4/18	15.8%	72.6%

\* \* \* \* \*

While Democrats generally have had an advantage in the coming 2018 elections, it seems to be slipping. The current ABC/WP survey shows that while all adults support Democrats by 50% to 40%, among those who are actually registered to vote that spread shrinks to 4 points, 47% to 43%. In January, the Democratic margin among registered voters was 12 points, 51% to 39%. [ABC/WP, 4/11/18]

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## THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

	Democrats	195
	Republicans	240
	Democrats	Republicans
Safe in 2018	179	155
Likely	12	30
Lean	9	26
	Tossup	
	2	22
	Something Unusual	

First, Colorado's state Supreme Court ruled Monday that GOP Rep. Doug Lamborn cannot appear on the primary ballot in his district due to a problem with his ballot petitions. [Politico, 4/23/18]

Then a U.S. District Court Judge ruled that he should be placed back on the primary ballot. That ruling all but ensures that Lamborn will be able to defend his Republican-leaning seat against GOP rivals. [Denver Post]

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## THE SENATE

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

There have been a few changes since the last issue of the Watch.

On the Democratic side, safe seats dropped from 17 to 16; Likely Dem dropped from 3 to 2; Lean Democrat grew from 2 to 3 and Toss Up moved from 4 to 5 with the addition of the Florida seat.

On the Republican side, safe seats moved from 5 to 4; Likely Republican moved from 1 to 2 with the addition of the Texas seat.

Republicans	51
Democrats	47
Independents	2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Seats not up in 2018	23	42
Safe in 2018	16	4
Likely	2	2
	Casey	Fischer
	Baldwin	Cruz
Lean	3	0
	Brown	
	Smith	
	Tester	
Toss-ups	5	3
	Donnelly	Heller
	McCaskill	Arizona (open)
	Manchin	Tennessee (open)
	Heitkamp	
	Nelson	

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Women Will Get It Done**

Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois is the first sitting senator to have a baby while serving in Congress. Only 10 women have given birth while serving in Congress. Shortly after Senator Duckworth gave birth, the Senate changed its rules allowing her and future senators to bring a child under 1 year old onto the Senate floor and breastfeed them during votes. [CNN.com, 4/10/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

59% of women say they have personally received unwanted sexual advances or verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. 27% of men make the same statement.

Among women this includes 63% of white women and 50% of black and Hispanic women. Women with bachelor's degrees or higher (70%) are far more likely to have had these experiences than women with a high school education or less (46%).

Slightly more Americans (50%) are concerned about men getting away with committing sexual harassment/assault than are concerned with women not being believed 46%.

Among adults, 51% say that the increased focus on sexual harassment has made it harder for men to know how to interact with women in the work place. A similar number – 51% – say that this new focus on harassment will not make much of a difference in the number of opportunities available for women. 20% think it will result in fewer opportunities. [PEW, 4/4/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

Male physician specialists (i.e. non-primary care doctors) make 38% more than female physician specialists. Black physicians across the spectrum of medicine make \$50,000 less than white doctors annually. [Fortune/Broadsheet, 4/12/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

For years women have struggled to gain equality in all areas of life—from the home to the workplace, and especially in positions of leadership. Despite being 50.8 percent of the population, only 14.6 percent of executive officers in companies are women, and overall, women only earn 80 cents for every dollar men make. These discrepancies are even larger among women of color.

Yet women of faith have historically played a pivotal role in challenging gender inequality, and they continue to defy stereotypes in politics, the workplace, and houses of worship. Women of faith are fighting for gender equality at work and in broader society by empowering young women as feminist and womanist theologians, faith community leaders, social justice advocates, and elected officials. [GenderAvenger Blog, 3/5/18 and Center for American Progress by Rachel Koehler and Gwen Calasis]

\* \* \* \* \*

In S&P 1500 companies only 5.1% of CEOs are women and just 11.5% of executive positions, just below the CEO in the corporate hierarchy, are women. [PEW, 4/30/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

Only 10% of portfolio managers in the entire mutual fund industry are women. Among the 25 biggest companies the proportion of women ranged from 6% of all portfolio managers to 30%.

Here are the top five and the bottom five of the group of 25 funds.

Top 5

Dodge & Cox - 30%  
Schwab - 28%  
SPDR State Street Global - 19%  
Franklin Templeton - 19%  
TIAA Investments - 18%

Bottom 5

Lord Abbett - 8%  
T. Rowe Price - 8%  
SEI - 7%  
Hartford Mutual Funds - 7%  
MFS - 6%

[New York Times, 5/6/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

Lijia Zhang, a journalist who covers gender, calls out Chinese tech companies and the Chinese government for their egregious and sexist practices. According to a new Human Rights Watch report that analyzes tens of thousands of recent job advertisements, the government and private companies in China widely discriminate against women in job recruitment. [New York Times, 4/25/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1985, 70% of American women ages 25-54 were in the labor force (they had a job or were actively searching). Today, 74% of American women are in the labor force.

In this same time period, in this same age group women in the work force

In Australia – went from 57% to 77%

In Germany – went from 59% to 83%

In France – went from 68% to 83%

Sweden is still the world leader among advanced economies with 88.5% of prime age women working.

It appears that the differences between the U.S. and these other countries are driven by “better access to childcare, longer maternity leave and greater flexibility in work arrangements.” [Washington Post, 4/12/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

Japan ranked 114<sup>th</sup> in the World Economic Forum's global gender gap index last year. A recent incident describes the inequality of women in that country most vividly.

Women are not allowed to enter a Sumo wrestling ring. During a break in a recent Sumo wrestling match the local mayor was making a speech while standing in the ring. He suddenly collapsed. A woman, who is a nurse, and then several other women rushed into the ring to give him first aid. (He was later diagnosed with bleeding in his brain.)

An official of the Sumo Association ordered the women to leave the ring over the public address system. Another official of the Association apologized saying the announcer was flustered.

“Women in Japan face myriad obstacles to equality. A law requiring that married couples share a surname means that the vast majority of women must give up their names after their weddings. Japan has one of the world's worst records for women in politics...Earlier in the week news emerged of a private day care center where the supervisor scolded a female employee for reportedly getting pregnant before it was her ‘turn’.” [New York Times and Wall Street Journal, 4/6/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Restaurants**

Bas Rouge  
19 Federal Street  
Easton, MD 21601  
410-822-1637  
[www.basrougeeaston.com](http://www.basrougeeaston.com)

Simma and Ron and Debbie and I dined at Bas Rouge on a Saturday night with a 6:45 p.m. reservation. We were seated immediately.

The hours during which the restaurant is open are quite different than anything I have seen. On Thursday and Friday it is open for lunch from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. On Friday and Saturday it is open for dinner from 6 – 9:00 p.m.

The restaurant seats 24 people at two tops and four tops.



There is a semi-circular beautiful dark wood counter at the back of the dining room where the servers work when they are not among the guests.

The kitchen is behind a wall with a windowed door.

Once we were seated we were offered champagne. Ron accepted the offer; the rest of us did not. This was followed by an amuse bouche – Seafood Sausage on finely sliced white cabbage.

Throughout dinner the servers offered a selection of sourdough bread, and three small rolls: brioche, cheddar and rye.

Simma began with Warm Artichoke with Roasted Spargel with Mache, parmesan foam, red wine reduction and puffed wild rice. Ron started with Crudo of Scottish Organic Salmon with Blood Orange, fresh wasabi, aged soy sauce and pickled jalapeno. Debbie and I opted for Grilled Lobster Tail, Hon Shimeji mushrooms, citrus segments, Styrian pumpkin seed oil and brown butter.

Debbie and Ron selected as their entrée Whole Roasted Dover Sole for Two, with potato puree, roasted spargel and brown butter pan sauce. Simma selected the Poached East Coast Halibut with fennel potato puree, confit tomatoes, macadamia and asparagus salad, Yuzu citrus emulsion. I chose Rack of Lamb Pommes Dauphine, Spring pea cassoulet with squash & Tomatoes. [“Spargel” is asparagus.]

The Dover sole was fileted by the chef table side on an old fashioned rolling silver serving cart.

The selected desserts were:

Debbie – Austrian Coffee with Almond Ice Cream and Tuile,

Simma and Ron – Lingonberry and Almond ice cream

Mike – Chocolate Cake with Frangelico Anglaise and Hazelnut Crunch

None of us have experienced better service. There were two servers plus a maître d’ who was also the sommelier and assisted with the service.

The dishes are quite beautiful with white on white designs. The walls are adorned with a series of paintings.

When dinner was over, little paper origami cups filled with madeleines straight out of the oven were delivered to the table. As we left each couple was given a small black paper bag containing the restaurant's signature olive oil cakes.

There is a single unisex restroom. As you enter there is on the right a square white ceramic washbasin on a black counter with a mirror above. Further to the right is a small glass-top table with towels, tissues and a liquid soap container. To the left is a white ceramic commode.

There is a safety bar at around waist height from the small table to the wall at the far end of the room and over the commode.

The top of the wall is tan colored while the bottom is a light brown. The floor is covered with beautiful large tile that is similar to the floor in the restaurant.

Bas Rouge is part of a group of food service locales on a single block called BluePoint Hospitality. The other sites are:

Sunflower & Greens which has a menu that offers salads, soup, and premium proteins. It is open on Monday – Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (The head chef at this restaurant and Bas Rouge are the same person.)

Bumble Bee Juice is a cold-pressed juice company. It serves fresh juices, acai bowls, artisan honey and smoothies. It is open Monday – Saturday from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Weather Gage offers various coffees and pastries Monday – Saturday from 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

There is also a yoga studio on this block and plans for a trattoria on the street behind Bas Rouge.

BluePoint Hospitality is owned by Paul Prager, a business man from New York who is resettling in Easton.

\* \* \* \* \*

Centrolina  
Mercato e Osteria  
974 Palmer Alley  
Washington, DC 20001

202-898-2426  
Centrolinadc.com

Debbie and I went to Centrolina for dinner with Tony. (This was my second visit. Previously I had lunch there with Mike.)

The décor is light and modern. There is a u-shaped bar to the right as you enter. It has twelve high seats and has one feature that I had not encountered before. There is attached to the bar at each guest chair a large hook that can be used to hang a purse, jacket or other object.

There is an open kitchen at the back of the restaurant

About in the middle of the restaurant there is an area dedicated to the equivalent of an Italian deli with cooked and uncooked products for sale. There is also a coffee bar with tall stools.

The restaurant seats 60 people at 2s, 4s, 6s or 8s or combinations thereof plus two booths each seating up to four people.

Debbie and Tony started with Bassano chilled white asparagus, egg gribiche and greens.

For her main course, Debbie selected Fettuccine porcini carbonara, pancetta, peas, permigiano and cracked pepper. Tony chose Bianca spaghetti of scallop, calamari & mushroom ragu, basil, parsley and olive oil.

I started with Funghi roasted porcini mushrooms with garlic & herbs.

I followed that with the Pesce, the simply grilled fish of the day, which was cod.

We shared Cipolla tempura fried ramps, with shishito aiolis.

After a short pause we agreed on Bundino di Cioccolato, caramelized banana, white chocolate crema, orange zest, banana sorbetto and hazelnut-chocolate crunch.

As our dinner was coming to an end, Amy Brandwein, the Chef-Owner of the restaurant, stopped by to say hello to Tony.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Rakes Progress  
Line Hotel  
1770 Euclid St. NW  
Washington DC 20009  
202-588-0525

This restaurant is located in the new Line Hotel. The hotel has been created in what was once the First Church of Christ Scientist to which a seven story addition has been built. The hotel is located on the corner of Euclid and Champlain Streets in Adams Morgan.

This use of the church reminds me of the inside of the restaurant Succotash in the Old Equitable Cooperative Bank building at 9<sup>th</sup> and F Streets NW. (WW 161).

When you arrive at the Euclid Street entrance, which is the primary entrance to the hotel and the various restaurants, you are faced with a rather impressive massive set of stairs. There is no sign of or directions to an accessible entrance. I have since learned there is an accessible entrance around the corner on Champlain Street.

The hotel houses three restaurants, two bars and a coffee shop. Brothers and Sisters is one of several restaurants on the lobby level of the hotel. This restaurant takes reservations.

Spoken English is a standing room only restaurant. Rakes Bar is a third location for which there is a raw bar and lounge menu prepared by the chefs of A Rakes Progress. And then there is The Cup We All Race 4 which is a coffee bar. It sells sandwich breads, savorys and whole grain pastries cooked on site daily.

A Rakes Progress is where Virginia and Tom and Debbie and I had dinner on a Sunday night. This restaurant is located on the mezzanine level and surrounds an atrium. From the edge of A Rakes Progress you can look down at the other restaurants and bars. (Reservations are required.)

The restaurant is the creation of Chef Spike Gjerde who also owns the Baltimore restaurant, Woodberry Kitchen.

The primary entrance to A Rakes Progress is up a winding set of stairs. However, there is an elevator at the other end of the restaurant to which you are readily directed as soon as you ask.

The main dining area seats 64, there is an upstairs balcony area that seats 28, there is room for 14 at the bar and an additional 37 in the lounge. There are 2 tops, 4 tops and 6 tops as well as bars.

A Rakes Progress has two menus. One is starters, small plates, salads, items intended to be shared, and suppers. The second menu offers desserts. The menus are printed on heavy cream colored paper folded in thirds and sealed with a nickel size piece of black sealing wax.

The menus are dated with the day of the month and the number of days that the restaurant has been open. The night we were there was day 70 and April 8, 2018.

Having gone through the menu we decided to share everything. This is the list of the dishes that we ordered: cured tidewater hams, sweet potato biscuits , gougeres and cherry jam; vegetable mille feuille, campfire cream; grilled cabbage, turmeric dressing, peanut, puff buckwheat and cilantro; winter lettuces for two with buttermilk, raw roots, torn sweet potato bread; hearth roasted young chicken buttermilk potatoes, creamed greens, roasting jus; hearth roasted lamb shoulder mint dumplings, mushrooms, carrots and herbed crumbs. It was an interesting smorgasbord.

The meal starts with a healthy piece of bread that is composed of white spelt and whole wheat. It is then grilled, slathered in butter and sea salt from West Virginia.

A woman came by to describe the origin of the butter and salt on the toast. She introduced herself as Ashley the manager of A Rakes Progress. Prior to coming to this restaurant she worked in Miami. She was extremely friendly and somewhat entertaining.

We all agreed that each of the items above was excellent.

(I tried a dessert that was really more about the design of the dessert than the taste of the dessert.)

The service is excellent, attentive and enthusiastic. The servers and helpers are dressed casually as they choose. There are no uniforms.

The restaurant is generally quite noisy, in part because of folks having a good time and in part because of music being played from above. At some point during the evening it suddenly became much louder. I motioned to Ashley and pointed out to her that it was too loud. She acknowledged my concern (the table across from ours did the same thing) and the sound was quickly lowered.

The restrooms are a flight of stairs up to the balcony seating area of the restaurant. There is an elevator but Tom offered to handle the review of the men's room. He returned with a series of photographs which I have used for the following. (There is some suggestion that he may have freaked out a gentleman who was using the restroom.)

The floors are covered with rectangular tiles. The walls are covered with a marble-like covering to about shoulder height. Then there is a wooden strip running around the whole room with painted surfaces above the strip except over the washbasins which are topped by a counter to ceiling mirror.

To the left as you enter there are two wall hanging urinals open to the restroom with a floor to ceiling partial wall between them. Farther to the left are two fully enclosed commode rooms with a single wall hanging white ceramic commode in each with a properly placed wall railing.

At the far end of the restroom between the commode rooms and the washbasins is a rather weird structured mirror. Tom can be seen in the mirror shooting pictures with his cell phone as someone enters or leaves the restroom.

Across from the commode rooms and the urinals there is a white streaked marble counter top with three sunken white ceramic washbasins and "gold faucets."

A Rakes Progress is only open for dinner but there you can find somewhere to eat in the Line Hotel just about 24 hours a day.

Valet parking is available.

*Mike*

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