

*Mike Berman's*

# WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

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State of the Nation – page 2

Employment – page 2

This and That – page 4

\* \* \* \* \*

Quotes – page 10

\* \* \* \* \*

President Trump – page 12

About President Trump – page 15

Disassembling – page 17

2020 – page 19

\* \* \* \* \*

Congress – page 20

House – page 21

Senate – page 22

\* \* \* \* \*

Women Will Get It Done – page 23

\* \* \* \* \*

Restaurants – page 26

Convivial – Washington, DC

Lupo Verde Osteria – Washington, DC

\*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 % of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction, 55% say it is on the wrong track. 63% are satisfied with the state of the U.S. economy while 37% are not satisfied. [NBC/WSJ, 6/4/18]

In early May, 37% of us were satisfied with the way things were going in the United States. This is up from 29% in April. In March, satisfaction among Republicans had fallen to 52%; in May it rebounded to 63%. A similar rebound occurred among Independents which had dropped to 25% in March; in May it was 35%. Among Democrats the March to May increase is 13% to 14%. [Gallup - March and May, 2018]

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## **Employment**

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2018 is 3.8%. This is the lowest it has been since April 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 May 2018 is 7.6%. This is the lowest it has been since May 2001.

### **The Demographics of Unemployment**

Unemployment by Gender (The last time the numbers were this low was December 2000.):

Women – 3.3%

Men – 3.5%

Unemployment by Race:

White - 3.5%; Black - 5.9%; Hispanic - 4.9%; Asian - 2.1%

(Hispanic ticked up 0.1%)

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over):

Less than high school – 5.4%; High School – 3.9%; Some college – 3.2%;

Bachelor's Degree or higher – 2.0%

(The last time the “Bachelor's Degree or higher” number was this low was February 2008.)

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Notwithstanding that recent “economic benchmarks look really good”, “an alarming number of Americans are still struggling to get by.”

- 40% of American adults don't have enough savings to cover a \$400 emergency.
- 43% of households aren't earning enough to cover the basic costs of living
- 25+% skipped medical care last year because they couldn't afford it.
- 22% of adults are able to pay their bills every month
- 38% of non-retired Americans think their retirement savings are on track
- 77% of whites, 66% of Hispanics and 65% of African Americans say they are doing okay
- 48 million households aren't saving or are unable to save
- More and more people who have jobs still don't have enough income for food and rent and are showing up at food pantries
- 3 in 10 adults say their work hours vary greatly from month to month

[WP, 5/29/18]

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"A study by the McKinsey Global Institute predicts that almost a quarter of work activity performed in the U.S. could be automated by robots and artificial intelligence by 2030. These changes present both challenges and opportunities. The changes in the job market will demand more skilled and more highly educated workers.

"This is one of many reasons why it is a shame that our leaders in Washington have not enacted a policy that would staple a Green Card to every graduate diploma handed out to a foreign student in the U.S. today. And why the U.S. should honor our tradition and welcome immigrants to our country." --Former CEA Chair Alan Krueger at Hofstra.

[Politico.com, 5/21]

U.S. job openings rose to 6.7 million at the end of April, compared with the 6.3 million Americans who were unemployed. That's "the first time since such record-keeping began in 2000" that "the number of available positions exceeded the number of job seekers," according to the Labor Department. [BLS]

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## **This and That**

55.7% of the U.S. voting age population and 86.8% of registered voters cast ballots in the 2016 presidential election. This compares to the record year of 2008 when 58.3% of the U.S. voting age population and 89.8% of registered voters cast ballots. [PEW, 5/21/19]

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In the past 15 months, the number of people in the U.S who say this country has a responsibility to accept refugees has dropped from 56% to 51%. Among the GOP it has dropped from 35% to 26% but among Democrats it has grown from 71% to 74%. [PEW, 5/24/18]

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72% of Americans — including 63 percent of Republicans and 81 percent of Democrats — favor allowing illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to gain legal resident status if they join the military or go to college. [PRRI's 2017 American Values Survey]

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A new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine estimates that Hurricane Maria in September 2017 was the cause of 4,645 deaths in Puerto Rico. The official estimate was 64 deaths. [Axios, 5/29/18]

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2.2 million couples got married in 2017 while 800,000 couples were divorced. [FiveThirtyEight significant digits, 5/24/18]

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In 2017, 4.5% of all U.S. adults including 3.9% of men and 5.1% of women self-identify as LGBT. This reflects a steady increase of self-identifying adults over the last five years. In 2012, 3.5 % self-identified as gay.

In 2017, the self-identifiers include:

- 4.0% whites (non-Hispanic)
- 5.0% blacks (non-Hispanic)
- 6.1% Hispanic
- 4.9% Asian (non-Hispanic)

There is a steady increase of self-identifiers by age:

- 1.4% of those born between 1913-1945 – traditionalists
- 2.4% of those born between 1946-1964 – baby boomers
- 3.5% of those between 1965-1979 – generation X and
- 8.2% of those born between 1980-1999 – the millennials.

[Gallup.com]

22 of the 28 member states of the European Union permit same sex marriage. The European Union’s Court of Justice has ruled that E.U. members who do not allow same sex marriage must grant residency to the same sex partners of E.U. citizens. [Numlock, 6/8/18]

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of a cake shop owner, who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple’s marriage celebration. The 7-2 decision “is in contrast to popular opinion.” 60 percent of Americans oppose allowing a small business owner in their state to refuse products or services to gay or lesbian people if providing them would violate their religious beliefs. Even among those who oppose same-sex marriage, nearly half (45 percent) are against allowing small business owners to refuse service to gay or lesbian people. [PRRI survey]

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“...In traveling around the country—I figure I’ve spent the night in 17 states since January 1—there is a group of Americans who don’t seem to be particularly far on the left or right, but still feel alienated from the media and have, as a result, tuned out.

“It’s not that they are seeking validation of a point of view—they don’t seem to believe anyone, from any point on the ideological or partisan spectrum. For them, the line between reporting and opinion, between news and commentary is no longer visible, or recognizable.

“That seems to be true among a substantial segment of readers, viewers, and listeners, and frankly, among quite a few journalists as well. As a result, a large segment seems to have tuned out of news and current events, thus disengaged from the political process. What this means for elections in 2018 and 2020 is anyone’s guess.” [Charlie Cook, 5/18/18]

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68% of Americans are “exhausted” by the amount of news there is today. This includes 77% of those who are Republicans or lean Republican and 61% of those who are Democrats or lean Democratic. [PEW, 6/2018]

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### About tweeting – Twitter, for better or for worse

[Full disclosure – I opened a Twitter account in April 2009. I follow 317 people and am followed by 456 people. I have sent out 225 tweets over these 9 years.]

There are 69,000,000 Twitter users in the United States and 336,000,000 in the world. The following are the percentage of U.S. Twitter users by age, as captured at the end of 2016.

18-24 years old	17.7%
25-34 years old	22.5%
35-44 years old	19.5%
45-54 years old	17.9%
55-64 years old	16.5%
65+ years old	5.9%

Some folks seem to live on twitter and must spend all day at it. The other day I received a notice on my Twitter account that I had 74 notifications. When I logged on I found that all of those notifications were from two people. One had 34 notifications including 1 tweet, 14 retweets and 19 likes. The second person had 20 retweets and 20 likes. A couple of days later, the same two people had a similar number of tweets.

President Trump has 20,000,000 Twitter followers and has effectively used that platform to systematically disparage, denigrate or challenge any governmental body, public or private organization, person or norm that he chooses to undercut for his own purposes.

Recently, a single tweet by Roseanne Barr sank her career. The tweet was, “Muslim brotherhood & planet of the apes had a baby=vj.” She was referring to Valerie Jarrett who is black and was born in Iran. Within 24 hours ABC cancelled the sitcom in which she starred and which was about to start filming its second season.

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Which comes closer to your point of view? “The news media is the enemy of the people” or “the news media is an important part of democracy”?

	Enemy of <u>the people</u>	Important part of <u>democracy</u>	
All	22%	66%	
GOP	51%	37%	
Ind	16%	70%	
Dem	3%	91%	[Quinnipiac, 4/24/18]

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Are you on a diet or attempting to not gain weight? Here is one more weight control prescription: avoid restaurants that are particularly noisy.

“A new study published in the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science has found that if ambient music played in a restaurant is louder, the customers are more susceptible to choose unhealthy foods.” [WP, 5/30/18]

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

Jan, a friend in Kansas City, Missouri sent me the following note:  
“My granddaughter collected 900 diapers and \$110 for Happy Bottoms diaper warehouse, in lieu of birthday presents.”

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When is a necessity not a necessity? When it’s a product used by half the population every month for 35 to 40 years, but never even once by the other half. In case you haven’t figured it out yet, I’m talking about menstrual supplies. Pads and tampons cost women up to \$120 a year – and that’s not counting pain relievers like Midol or Advil. Over a lifetime, it can add up to as much as \$4,500.

Menstrual supplies have been in the news thanks to attempts by activists in several states to repeal the so-called “tampon tax”, a sales tax levied on menstrual supplies in 36 states. The rationale for applying sales tax to menstrual products is that they are luxuries, not necessities, which any woman can tell you is ridiculous.

These are not products women can simply choose not to use, like perfume or cosmetics. It is indeed insulting that women, who already earn less than men, are taxed for an essential product that only women use. A tax, let us not forget, originally levied by male lawmakers, and sometimes preserved by them, too. Four states have dropped the tax in recent years, but when California legislators voted to do the same, Governor Jerry Brown vetoed it. The state, with its proposed \$190 billion budget, just couldn’t do without the \$20 million women paid in each year. (He vetoed getting rid of the tax on diapers, too.) [The Nation, Katha Pollitt, 6/4-11/18]

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### About the Russia Investigation

On May 17, 2017 Robert Mueller was appointed as special counsel to investigate possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

[The information below is from the 6/4/18 NBC/WSJ poll unless otherwise noted.]

37% of Americans believe that the Trump campaign did collude with Russia during the 2016 campaign. A relatively equal number, 34%, say the campaign did not collude with the Russians. The remaining 28% say they don’t know enough to have an opinion.

30% are following the news coverage of Mueller’s investigation very closely. An additional 33% say they are following the investigation somewhat closely. The remaining 36% are not following it closely.

53% of Americans have a great deal or some confidence that Mueller will conduct a fair and impartial investigation. 40% have little or no confidence. The following are the positive and negative feelings about Mueller as the investigation had gone on.

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
June 2018	30%	19%
April 2018	28%	19%



March 2018	28%	19%
December 2017	28%	21%
June 2017	24%	11%

46% of Americans think this investigation should continue while 36% say it is time to end the investigation.

The Russia probe is barely registering in the campaigns by Democrats seeking to wrest control of Congress in November — even as the year-long investigation has consumed Washington. Candidates barely mention it, TV ads don't highlight it, and polls show Americans aren't voting on it. [Bloomberg Politics, 5/29/18]

Which of these should Republicans in Congress do about the Russia investigation? Should they try to end the investigation, or let the investigation continue?

	<u>Try to end it</u>	<u>Let it continue</u>	
All	33%	64%	
GOP	68%	29%	
Ind	31%	65%	
Dem	9%	90%	[CBS, 5/6/18]

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While the FBI has come under a fair amount of fire from the White House and related sources during the Russia investigation, the attitude of Americans toward the Bureau has remained quite consistent. About half of Americans are quite positive about the FBI, about 20% are negative and about a third are neutral.

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	
June 2018	50%	18%	
March 2018	48%	20%	
January 2018	53%	19%	
December 2017	47%	19%	
June 2017	54%	14%	
May 2017	52%	16%	
April 2017	47%	18%	[NBC/WSJ poll 6/4/18]

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The following is an excerpt from a Charlie Cook article called “America’s Seismic Political Shifts.” It is one of the best descriptions I have seen of political America. [WW]

“Across the country, we are seeing political division—some say the greatest since Reconstruction (even likening Trump to President Andrew Johnson). But these divisions aren’t just political; they are social, cultural, and economic as well. We are seeing seismic shifts, not just Republicans on one side and Democrats on the other, not just conservatives on one side and liberals on another, but on a geographic level: people who live near the coasts and in urban/suburban areas on one side, and those in the heartland and rural and small-town areas on another. We also see it on an economic level, with whites working in the knowledge economy tending to go one way, and many working-class whites going the opposite way. Then there are internationalists versus isolationists, and protectionists versus free-traders. We are seeing tectonic plates collide, with the disruptions that one might expect.”

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### Quotes

"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." -- Robert F. Kennedy, speech in Capetown on June 6, 1966

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"Maybe I'll be gone before you read this...I'm getting prepared. I have some things I'd like to take care of first, some work that needs finishing, and some people I need to see...**I made a small place for myself in the story of America and the history of my times**...The bell tolls for me. I knew it would...I hope those who mourn my passing, and those who don't, will celebrate as I celebrate a happy life lived in imperfect service to a country made of ideals, whose continued success is the hope of the world. And I wish all of your great adventures, good company, and lives as lucky as mine." --John McCain, in his new book The Restless Wave

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“Let me be clear: I understand that many people believe that only God should determine the time of their death, and I support them 100 percent. Others want every additional minute of life that medical science can give them, and I support these people 100 percent. But the end of life is an extremely personal experience. If, when my time comes, I see only unbearable suffering ahead of me, then I want my preference to have access to medical aid in dying to be supported 100 percent, as well.

“As Archbishop Desmond Tutu has written, ‘Regardless of what you might choose for yourself, why should you deny others to make this choice?’”--Excerpt from Diane Rehm’s Op-Ed in the New York Times on 6/7/18

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“If our leaders seek to conceal the truth, or we as people become accepting of alternative realities that are no longer grounded in facts, then we as American citizens are on a pathway to relinquishing our freedom.” --Former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at Virginia Military Institute

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“I didn’t know what I wanted to do, but I always knew the woman I wanted to be.” --Diane von Furstenburg

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“He is wicked smart. But he also combines that with a good bedside manner. He always projects a sense of being much more concerned about getting the job done than who’s getting the credit.” -- Barack Obama about Jeff Zients

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“What companies need to do is put aside their short-term interests and say we have to be playing a longer game here in addressing these challenges.” --Peter Sher, JPMorgan Chase

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“There is no Republican Party. There’s a Trump party. The Republican Party is kind of taking a nap somewhere.” --Former House Speaker John Boehner (Republican)

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"If I were President of the United States and I had a lawyer that told me I could pardon myself, I think I would hire a new lawyer." --Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley to CNN

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"Cynicism has a good batting average in U.S. politics." --538.com

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"I'm very well prepared. I don't think I have to prepare very much. It's about attitude. It's about willingness to get things done." --Donald Trump, in advance of the summit with North Korea

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### **President Trump**

President Trump consistently does better among registered/likely voters than among all adults.

On June 10, 2018, Gallup found (among All Adults) that 42% of Americans approve of President Trump's job performance and 54% disapprove. This is the highest job approval rating that Gallup has reported since Trump became president.

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

Beginning with this edition of the Watch I am including a first day of the month polling summary (Registered and Likely Voters) by FiveThirtyEight.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Gallup (All Adults)</u>		<u>FiveThirtyEight (Reg/Likely voters)</u>	
	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
6/11/18	--	--	41.5%	52.7%
6/10/18	42%	54%	--	--
6/1/18	--	--	41.6%	52.7%
5/20/18	42%	54%	--	--
5/1/18	--	--	43.8%	52 %
4/8/18	41%	54%	--	--
4/1/18	--	--	41.4%	53.7%
3/11/18	39%	56%	--	--

3/1/18	--	--	42.7%	53.2%
2/11/18	40%	57%	--	--
2/1/18	--	--	42.0%	53.3%
1/14/18	38%	57%	--	--
1/1/18	--	--	39.5%	55.8%
12/1/17	33%	62%	38%	55.9%
11/1/17	38%	58%	37.8%	56.8%
10/1/17	37%	57%	38.7%	55.4%
9/1/17	34%	61%	37.3%	57.3%

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>
JUNE ‘18	44/53	xxx	xxx	xxx	45/51	44/51
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
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 at this point in their tenure.

Job Approval – Roughly 18 months into the 1<sup>st</sup> term

GW Bush	74% (6/02)
Kennedy	71% (6/62)
GHW Bush	67% (6/90)
Eisenhower	62% (6/54)
Nixon	55% (6/70)
Clinton	49% (6/94)

Obama	46% (6/10)
Reagan	45% (6/82)
Carter	44% (6/78)
Trump	42% (6/18)

On the economy, Trump's approval ratings have been quite consistent over the last couple of months. Since February his approval rating has exceeded his disapproval rating.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
6/5/18	49%	46%	Quinnipiac
6/5/18	49.2%	44.8%	RCP average 5/2-6/5
5/6/18	50.3%	44/8%	RCP average 4/6-5/6
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%	“

On foreign policy, Trump's approval ratings have not even come close to his disapproval rating during this year.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
6/5/18	40%	52%	Quinnipiac
6/5/18	41.6%	51%	RCP average 5/2-6/5
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%	“

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## About President Trump

President Trump's favorite rallying cry is "Make America Great Again." After the manner in which he has attacked most if not all of America's allies, perhaps his new rallying cry should be "America Will Go It Alone."

His continued fascination with authoritarians is once again evidenced by his declaration that Russia should be readmitted to what was once the G8. Interestingly he was joined in this suggestion by the new Prime Minister of Italy. [WW]

And while we cannot know how it will all come out in the end, he is the first U.S. president to sit down with the head of North Korea. Here is a short summary of the event by NBC's Andrea Mitchell in Singapore: "Now that we've been given their statement it is far less than advertised. No new commitments. No timetable. No definitions. Glad they met but no breakthroughs."

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The unemployment rate has dropped one full point from 4.8% to 3.8% in the time since Trump was inaugurated.

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Trump has shown that if you can write in a real and captivating way, you can dominate the conversation — for free. The cost of entry on Facebook, Twitter and whatever platform follows is zilch. He also showed early in the campaign that if you're not too constipated to roll with the news, cable shows will give you billions in free airtime. (As president, he has hidden out on "Fox & Friends," proving the pipeline to true believers is equally easy and free). [Axios AM, 5/13/18]

"It is not possible to overestimate the influence cable TV has over Trump. And we should never forget that." [Chris Cillizza, 5/31/18]

"Trump believes he is always right." --Tony Schwartz, Co-Author of Trump's book, "The Art of the Deal"

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One thing is certain, whether he is in office for 4 years or 8 years, Trump will have a long term effect on the federal judiciary. His goal seems to be to appoint "originalists" in the image of Justice Anton Scalia. The number of Appeals Court Judges that he has appointed is particularly dramatic.

There are 94 judicial districts in the United States including at least 1 in each state, D.C and Puerto Rico. There is 1 Supreme Court, 13 Courts of Appeals, including the District of Columbia, and 667 District Courts. [There are some specialty federal courts that are not included in the following totals.]

There are 9 Supreme Court Justices, 167 Appeals Court Justices and 667 District Court Judges.

	Nominated and Confirmed to date			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supreme Ct</u>	<u>Appeals Ct</u>	<u>District Ct</u>
Trump – thru 6/8/18	42	1	21	20
Obama – 8 years	329	2	55	268
GW Bush – 8 years	327	2	62	261
Clinton – 8 years	378	2	66	305
GHW Bush – 4 years	193	2	42	148
Reagan	383	3	83	290
Carter	262	0	56	203

[uscourts.gov]

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President Donald Trump mistakenly said he approved a military pay raise for the “first time in 10 years.” He meant to say it was the largest pay raise, the White House says. It is the largest in eight years. But pay increases are determined by a statutory formula.

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Usually when people say stupid or cruel things they apologize and move on rather than defiantly stand by their statements. But apologies don’t happen in Trump world, and it certainly didn't happen in the case of White House staffer Kelly Sadler's callous remarks about John McCain.

Subsequently, Kelly Sadler did leave the White House staff but not because of her comment about McCain. She got cross ways with Mercedes Schlapp, the WH strategic Communications Director. [USA Today]

Once you’ve worked for Trump for a while you learn that the worst thing you can do, the biggest show of weakness, is to apologize. Trump never does and never did (with one exception--the "Access Hollywood" tape). So, staff know that if they publicly apologize they’re actually MORE likely to incur Trump’s wrath than if they just move on. [Axios, 5/10/18]



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## **Disassembling**

Donald Trump seems determined to, one way or another, do away with anything Obama did that can be undone. [WW]

Under a new rule proposed by the National Park Service, Alaskan game officials can decide whether bear cubs can be killed alongside their mothers; caribou can be shot from a boat while they are swimming; wolves, including pups, can be hunted in their dens; and other animals can be targeted from airplanes and snowmobiles. Animals could also be baited with sweets and killed or poisoned. [WP, 5/25/18]

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President Trump has signed three executive orders making it easier for the federal government to fire employees it considers poor performers. [WSJ, 5/26-27]

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Emails newly released under the Freedom of Information Act contain evidence that the EPA and White House are attempting to prevent the release of a report that finds that two classes of chemicals endanger health at a lower level than the EPA currently describes as safe. The chemicals are contaminating U.S. water systems, and the cost to clean up the contamination and deal with the deleterious health effects could be enormous. The Department of Defense has 126 facilities where nearby water had evidence of unsafe levels. [Politico]

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The Trump administration has quietly eliminated funding for NASA's research program that tracks greenhouse gases around the world. [Huffington Post, 5/11/18]

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The Trump administration is proposing to bar clinics that provide abortion services or referrals from receiving federal family-planning funds, a far reaching move that would deprive Planned Parenthood and other women's health centers of millions of dollars a year.

To qualify for Title X money under the new policy an organization would need to have a "bright line of physical as well as financial separation between family planning programs and facilities where abortion is performed, supported or

referred for as a method of family planning according to a summary of the proposal obtained by the New York Times.” [WP, 5/19/18]

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The Energy Department is proposing a new plan to bail out failing nuclear and coal-fired power plants by forcing grid operators to use the electricity they produce, a move that could upend competitive power markets and raise prices for consumers. [WSJ, 6/2-3/18]

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The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau told members of its consumer advisory board on Wednesday that it's letting them go. This occurred two days after some board members accused the agency's acting director, Mick Mulvaney, of trying to sideline the statutorily-required group. [Public Policy Law 360, 6/7/18]

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EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt unveiled a long-awaited plan to require that EPA studies used in future regulations must have open and transparent data. Pruitt said the proposed rule is part of his larger effort to dramatically reform the way science is used at the agency, which also included the removal of Science Advisory Board members who received EPA grants and were replaced with industry-friendly researchers.

“The science we use is going to be transparent, it’s going to be reproducible, it’s going to be able to be analyzed by those in the marketplace, and those that watch what we do can make informed decisions about whether we’ve drawn the proper conclusions or not,” Pruitt said yesterday at EPA headquarters.

The proposed rule would allow some data to avoid public scrutiny, as it carved out an exemption for industry data that is considered confidential business information, something the chemical industry has sought.

Critics argue that Pruitt’s plan would prevent the use of groundbreaking studies, including those that draw on decades of research that links air pollution to human health. At the same time, it would allow the use of studies, including those conducted by Science Advisory Board members selected by Pruitt and funded by the American Petroleum Institute, that downplay health risks of air pollution. (*Climatewire*, 4/11/18)

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## 2020

“One of the bigger challenges for Democrats is that their losses in 2010 and 2014 midterm elections were so awful, they lost the better part of a generation of non-congressional leaders. A lot of potential presidential timber was chopped down over the last decade, limiting their non-DC options in the 2020 presidential contest.” [Charlie Cook, 5/22/18]

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. It should be noted that Senators who are up in 2018 deliver an obligatory denial that they are not planning to run for president. There is no penalty for changing their minds after they have been re-elected.

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  
Tim Kaine (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  
John Kerry (D) – former U.S. Senator, former Secretary of State, former general  
election candidate for president

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 6/5	16.6%	70.6%
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%

\* \* \* \* \*

32% of Americans say that their member of Congress deserves to be re-elected but 53% would prefer to give a new person a chance.

In general, 50% of us would prefer that Congress be controlled by Democrats while 40% prefer Republican control. [NBC/WSJ poll, 6/4/18]

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## **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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

	Democrats	Republicans
	195	240
	Democrats	Republicans
Safe in 2018	180	157
Likely	12	29
Lean	9	26
	Tossup	
	2	21

\* \* \* \* \*

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The current consensus seems to be that the Democrats are “likely” to take over the House. Estimates by people or entities on which WW relies, range from 50/50 to 65/35.

Part of the Democratic optimism is based on the fact that so far 59 congressional districts – 39 held by Republicans and 20 held by Democrats – will not have an incumbent running for re-election.

\* \* \* \* \*

**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. Likely Dem grew from 2 to 4; Lean Democrat dropped from 3 to 1. On the Republican side, Safe seats moved from 4 to 5; Likely Republican moved from 2 to 1.

At the moment the best that the Democrats can hope to do is get to 50/50. In order for that to happen, the Democrats would have to hold four of the five seats in the Democratic toss-ups below and the Republicans would have to lose two of the three seats they have in the toss-up column.

Republicans	51
Democrats	47
Independents	2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Seats not up in 2018	23	42
Safe in 2018	16	5
Likely	4	1
	Casey Baldwin Tester Smith	Cruz
Lean	1	0
	Brown	
Toss-ups	5	3
	Donnelly McCaskill	Heller Arizona (open)

Manchin  
Heitkamp  
Nelson

Tennessee (open)

More than 1,900 men have been U.S. senators. Only 52 women have had that distinction in the history of the country – 23 are serving today. [Senator Amy Klobuchar in Axios, 5/29/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Women Will Get It Done**

### Women in Elective Office 2018

107 (20.0%) of the members of the U.S. Congress  
23 (23%) of the members of the U.S. Senate  
84 (19.3%) of the members of the U.S. House

72 (23.1%) of Statewide Elective Executive Offices  
6 Governors  
12 Lt. Governors  
8 Attorney Generals  
11 Secretary of States  
7 Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer  
2 State Comptroller  
9 State Auditor  
17 Other elected officers

1,878 (25.4%) State Legislators  
450 (22.8%) State Senators  
1,428 (26.4) State Representatives

285 cities with populations 100,000 people and over  
59 (20.7%) of the mayors are women

1,365 cities with populations 30,000 people and above  
297(21.8%) of the mayors are women

[Center for American Women and Politics 5/30/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

The number of female CEOs of Fortune 500 companies dropped from 32 in 2017 to 24 this year so far. [Fortune]

\* \* \* \* \*

Female Entrepreneurs received 2.2% of all venture capital funding in 2017. A study released by the Boston Consulting Group and MassChallenge, found that of the 350 companies examined, the average woman-founded startup received \$935,000 in funding. The average male-founded startups received \$2.1 million in funding.

The female-founded startups outperformed their male counterparts in terms of revenue, bringing in \$730,000 over a five year period versus \$662,000 for the men. Women-run companies are returning 78 cents per dollar invested compared to 31 cents for the men. [The Broadsheet, 6/7/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

Voters in Ireland flocked to the polls and delivered a rebuke to the country's history of conservative Catholicism. Turnout was 64 percent, and two-thirds voted "Yes" on the referendum on the Thirty-sixth Amendment of the Constitution 2018, which repealed the country's extremely restrictive abortion ban. [CNN, 5/29/18]

Will Northern Ireland be next? It doesn't appear that way.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Bias against mothers is one of the strongest forms of bias against women," said Liz Morris, the deputy director of the Center for Work life Law, a research and advocacy group that focuses on gender and racial equality in the workplace. "I think that there's a lot of people who would agree that sexual harassment or discrimination in general are wrong who may discriminate against mothers or may accept discrimination against themselves in a way that's really harmful."

While mothers themselves are not a protected class of workers, discriminating against someone because of their pregnancy is considered a form of gender discrimination, and bias against mothers because of their caregiving needs can also be classified as a form of family-responsibilities discrimination. [New York Times, 5/16/18]

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Eighty-five percent of the graduating class of fashion majors at the Parsons School of Design is female, just as it is at the other major New York fashion schools: the Fashion Institute of Technology, where 86 percent of the graduating



class is female, and Pratt, where 54 of the 58 graduating fashion majors are women.

They are all poised to head off into entry-level positions at companies big and small. They will begin with grand ambitions and dreams of the C-suite. And then, somewhere between their climb from middle management to the top, the gender balance will shift and their male colleagues, few and far between though they are in the beginning, will take over. Because fashion, an industry dominated by women's wear and buoyed by female dollars, with an image sold by women to women, is still largely run by men. [NYT/ Gender Avenger Blog, 5/27/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

Last month, former NASA scientist Ellen Stofan walked into the National Air and Space Museum in Washington and unlocked the door to the director's office — which, for the first time, was her own. It was a breakthrough moment as the museum has always had a male director since it first opened in 1976, until now. It seems a flurry of new hires are putting women in the power seat. Carrie Rebora Barratt is the New York Botanical Garden's new president and CEO, just as Saharah Moon Chapotin has been appointed the new director of the United States Botanic Garden in Washington. Saisha Grayson is also the new time-based media curator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. [GenderAvenger, 5/10/18]

\* \* \* \* \*

Student debt in the United States has reached a staggering \$1.5 trillion for the first time, and women hold a disproportionately large percentage of it. Writes Fortune Magazine's Polina Marinova:

“There are approximately 44 million borrowers in the United States, and the majority of them are women, according to a new report from the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Women represented 56% of those enrolled in American colleges and universities in fall 2016, but the report reveals that women also take on more (and larger) student loans than men.

“In total, women hold nearly two-thirds of the outstanding student debt in America, nearly \$900 billion as of mid-2018, the report says.

“The problem is only exacerbated by the fact that men out-earn women in their careers, stretching the time it takes to pay down loans.

“The higher education bubble, which is one-sixth of the U.S. economy, “will likely burst with the force of all previous catastrophes combined,” veteran investor Jim Rogers and former academic dean Robert Craig Baum wrote in a commentary piece for Fortune.

“And when it does, it’s women who will be holding the largest chunk of the tab.”

\* \* \* \* \*

A judge in Santa Clara County, California sentenced a former Stanford swimmer to six months in jail after he was convicted of three felony counts for sexually assaulting an unconscious 22 year old woman on the Stanford campus. He could have been sentenced to 14 years. He was released after three months.

A recall campaign was started and in the California primary on June 5<sup>th</sup>, he was removed from office. [The Cut, 6/6/18]

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### **Restaurants**

A reminder: When I write about a restaurant it means that I think it is worth trying and that I would go there again. If I don’t like it, I don’t write about it.

There have been a few exceptions when I was so bugged by a restaurant that I decided to write an uncomplimentary piece. When that happens, it will be clear.

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When the Open Table restaurant reservation system tells you that a particular restaurant has no reservations on the day or time you want to dine there, call the restaurant directly. Restaurants often hold out tables from the Open Table system.

[WW]

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### **Convivial**

801 O Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-525-2870  
[Hello@convivialdc.com](mailto>Hello@convivialdc.com)

Debbie and I went to Convivial at the suggestion of Decker and Sherry. Convivial means “fond of feasting, eating and good company, cheerful, friendly and jovial.” This restaurant is all of those things.

(On a subsequent night Debbie and I joined Bob and Rita for dinner at Convivial as suggested by Rita. She and Bob had been there on a previous evening. More on that evening later.)

You enter the restaurant through a patio which can seat up to 30 people at tables of 2 and 4. The weather being a bit unpleasant the night we were there, no one was seated on the patio. As you enter there is a reception desk to the left. Veering to the left there is a small dining area and a square bar and beverage serving area. The bar has 6 stools on each of three sides. Further along on the left there is a second dining area.

To the right is a third dining area which is where we were seated at a table for two right next a floor to ceiling window that looks out on the patio and the weather. Exclusive of the bar, the restaurant can serve up to 110 people at a time

When we arrived for our 6:15 p.m. reservation there were a number of empty tables. Over the evening they all filled up. Directly to the right of where we were seated there was a table of 10 people, including a baby. The baby was not particularly noisy but the group as a whole made the area pretty noisy. In fact, at a 2 top right behind ours the couple seated there asked to be moved to avoid the noise.

As the evening wore on we struck up a conversation with the couple seated at our end of that long table. They were an interesting fun couple from Maine who were visiting friends in D.C.

As we first looked over the menu we thought it was a bit unusual but found it was easy to find a number of interesting things to eat.

The menu is broken down into Nibbles, First, Second, and Cheese and then a separate menu for Dessert. Debbie and I decided to share each dish we ordered.

From the Nibbles we ordered “escargots in a blanket, with garlic butter”. It comes in the form of an egg roll open at both ends, and “panisse, chickpea fries, and Harissa aioli”.

From the Firsts we picked “pickled rockfish, green papaya, avocado, passion fruit, watermelon radish” and “green asparagus, broiled, hollandaise sauce, sunflower seeds & shoots.”

We asked our server to recommend his preferred choice among the Seconds, which was “Poulet Rouge for two, crispy skin butterfly chicken, tarragon vinegar sauce.”

The chicken was first shown to us after cooking and then taken back for cutting into pieces. The chicken when cut up and arrayed on the plate looks like Peking Duck. The chicken is served with smashed potatoes, cooked carrots, onions and mushrooms.

For dessert we chose “Celebration Profiterole, vanilla ice cream, warm chocolate sauce” with a large sparkler in the middle which is lit as the dessert is placed on the table.

Debbie and I agreed that had we shared one Nibble, one First a couple of seconds and dessert it would have been enough. As it was, by the time we got to the main course of chicken, mashed potatoes, cooked carrots, onions and mushrooms, we took a large part of it home.

On the night we ate with Rita and Bob they ordered the Potato Chips with mushroom and vinegar and onion dip which we all shared. Then they ordered the Mixed Green Salad, and the Poulet rouge. Debbie and I ordered escargot again; leeks dijonnaise; Moulard duck breast, blood orange, hakurei turnips and mustard greens; Daurade, sautéed squid, fennel and Sofrito. Rita and Bob ordered the Floating Island--poached merinque, crème anglaise, caramelized almond and we ordered the Key Lime Pie.

I was particularly happy to see a couple of non-alcoholic refreshers on the wine list. I tried them both. One was a Cranberry Cooler, cranberry syrup, ginger, citrus and soda. The other was called Bambi, lime ginger and soda. There are also a number of juices on the menu.

The kitchen is on the second floor of the restaurant. There is a long window at the ceiling level of the room we were in that provides a limited glimpse into the kitchen.

Debbie noticed that the actual dishes are limited in size. And all of them are white. There is a rectangular dish which is the primary dish used for each patron. There are a few other dishes and bowls of a similar style that are used for everything else.

The service personnel were attentive, excellent and active.

Weather permitting you can have dinner on the patio or, if there is space and if you want to have your dessert on the patio, you can do so for an additional \$4 charge per dessert.

You can bring your own wine if it is a wine that the restaurant does not have, but there is a \$25 corkage fee per bottle. (It is unclear to me how one knows at the outset whether the wine is something the restaurant has in its supply.)

There are four gender neutral restrooms. Two of the restrooms have signs embedded in the door that they are simply gender neutral. These individual restrooms are relatively small. There is a square white ceramic washbasin and a white ceramic commode. There is a device used for various sanitation purposes that is ensconced in the wall. The walls are covered with white rectangular tiles and the floor with tiny six sided white tiles.

One of the other two restrooms has a sign embedded that it is gender neutral but designed to handle wheelchairs and the fourth restroom is like the third but has an additional sign that indicates it has special facilities for handling babies.

There is a garage located in the O Street Market complex. There are entrances on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> streets. The restaurant validates for the first two hours.

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**Lupo Verde Osteria**  
4814 MacArthur Blvd. NW  
Washington DC  
202-506-6687  
Reserve.com

Hilary, Debbie and I went to the new Lupo Verde Osteria on May 14<sup>th</sup> just a month after it opened. This is the second restaurant opened by the folks who opened the original Lupo Verde on 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Lupo restaurants have been described by others as “soulful Italian cooking.”

As you approach the former three story house that has been converted into a restaurant, to the right is a set of stairs that lead up to the main floor of the restaurant. To the left is a set of stairs that lead to the basement. More about that later.

As you enter the restaurant there is a greeters’ station straight ahead. To the right is a circular stairway leading to the second floor.

To the left is a small area in which there are two 4 tops and a 2 top. One of the 4 tops really only accommodates 3 people. That is where we were seated. We were first offered a table on the second floor but chose to avoid the stairs especially since the restroom is on the main floor.

Straight behind the greeters is a bar with a short L at the close end which has 12 high leather padded seats. There are several tables to the left of the bar.

On the second floor there is a private room which can seat up to 25 people in addition to a regular dining area.

Overall the restaurant can “officially” seat 86 but I was told that it can handle up to 100 people for a single event.

Hilary and Debbie started with Rucola salad – Arugula, Radicchio, English Peas, Goat Cheese, Mint Lemon Mustard Dressing. I started with Polipo & Anguria – Fried Octopus, Compressed Watermelon, Fennel Salad, Fermented Ramps, Potato Chips.

For her main course Debbie chose – Vongole - Spaghetti, Clams, Thyme, Preserved Meyer Lemon. Hilary and I opted for Branzino & Radicchio – Seared Mediterranean Seabass, Radicchio Tardivo, Aged Balsamic, Oven Dried Tomato.

I was the only one wanting dessert and I ordered Lemon Sorbet.

At the far end of the main room, past the bar, is a single restroom.

The walls are covered with dark rectangular tiles to waist height. From waist height to the ceiling there are gray/tan panels. The floor is covered with a series of creative six sided multi-colored greyish tiles.

In the far corner of the room is a white ceramic commode with two silver metal bars at right angles on the wall. Further to the left is a wire, multi tray stand with tissues and extra rolls of toilet paper. There is a long white ceramic washbasin in front of rectangular mirror. There is a painting on the wall of a baby sitting in a basket filled with spaghetti.

On our way out I recognized and chatted with one of the servers who had worked for many years at the Palm restaurant.

Now back to the basement. As you look down the steps to the basement you can see through a large window a set of shelves with various products. When we were there on May 14<sup>th</sup>, the store was not yet open. When open during the day, folks will be able to buy various pastas, sauces and oils. In the evening, the market area will be used for small group (up to six people) multi-course tasting dinners.

The space will also be used to sell coffee and pastries and what they call quick-grab salads, paninis and Roman Style pizzas.

*Mike*

Suite 825  
325 7<sup>th</sup> St, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
202- 728-1100  
[mberman@dubersteingroup.com](mailto:mberman@dubersteingroup.com)