

Mike Berman's

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Portland, Maine

EMILITSA

Bite into Maine

Washington, D.C.

Arroz

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

State of the Nation

39% of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction, 54% say it is on the wrong track. [*Economist/YouGov*; 9/4/18]

In August, 36% of us were satisfied with the way things were going in the United States. This is up from 35% in July, down from 38% in June. Satisfaction among Republicans has risen steadily to 67% while satisfaction among Democrats has fallen to 12%.

In 2010, Democrats/leaners were equally positive about capitalism and socialism with 53% having a positive view of each. Attitudes toward the two economic forms ran roughly equal through 2016. In 2018, a shift occurred with only 47% having a positive view of capitalism and 57% having a positive view of socialism.

Republicans/leaners feel the same way today as they did in 2010 with 72% having a positive view of capitalism and only 16% having a positive view of socialism. [Gallup]

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August 2018 is 3.9%, unchanged from last month.

If one considers 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 August 2018 is 7.4%, also unchanged from last month.

The unemployment rate in Canada in August was 6% and in Mexico in July the unemployment rate was 3.5%. [Trading Economics.com]

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The Demographics of Unemployment

We have seen improvement since July in many of the categories below with the exception of the unemployment rate for Hispanics, those with less than a high school education and those with some college.

Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women – 3.2%

Men – 3.1%

Unemployment by Race (all races)

White - 3.4%

Black – 6.3%

Hispanic - 4.7% (increase)

Asian – 3.0%

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

Less than high school – 5.7% (increase)

High School – 3.9%

Some college – 3.5% (increase)

Bachelor's Degree or higher – 2.1%

In July, 28 states had unemployment rates that were below the national number of 3.9% in July. 22 states and D.C. had unemployment rates that exceeded the national average for that month.

One state, Alaska at 6.9%, had the highest unemployment rate in the country. West Virginia and D.C. had unemployment rates of 5.0% or more but less than 6.0%. 20 states had unemployment rates that were 4.0% or greater but less than 5.0%.

[Bureau of Labor Statistics]

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In the last six-plus months, Americans' trust of the Facebooks, Twitters and Googles of the world to prevent foreign interference in the 2018 mid-term elections has declined. U.S. adults' trust in the tech companies on this issue has dropped from 48% to 41%.

The most dramatic drop in confidence is among Democrats whose faith in these companies has fallen from 54% to 42%. Among Republicans the fall off was less steep, from 46% to 40%.

Interestingly, the only group whose confidence has not dropped over this period are the Independents who were the least confident in the first place. Initially confidence among this group was at 40% and there has been a slight tick upward to 43%.

In addition, two-thirds of Republicans believe that search engine results are skewed to the left which drives their general distrust of these devices. It's no surprise that, only 13% of Democrats share this position. Nearly a third of Independents are also distrustful. [Axios/SurveyMonkey; 8/30-9/3 – online poll]

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This and That

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Not with standing all of the information that most of us get via the internet or some form of electronic delivery service, the United States Postal Service continues to deliver a huge amount of plain old snail mail. I decided to investigate how much of the mail we receive during an average week is unsolicited or some form of advertising.

During the six-day week of Monday, August 27, 2018 thru Saturday September 1, 2018, we collected all of the mail we received at home. We then removed the personal letters and cards, bills, receipts, various official notices and magazines for which we had purchased subscriptions.

The remaining mail weighed in at 10.5 pounds. [WW]

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The Trump Administration has significantly reduced the number of people attempting to legally move to the United States. The number of people receiving visas to move to the U.S. permanently will drop 12 percent through Trump's first two years in office. Setting aside dramatic drops from countries targeted by the administration's ban on travel from a set of Muslim-majority countries, the number

of visas approved for Africans is on pace to fall 15 percent and applications for the H-1B visa fell for the first time in five years. [WP]

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The latest numbers from Nielsen show that on average American adults spend 11.1 hours every day consuming media, up 19 minutes over the previous quarter. The breakdown is interesting, and more low-tech than you might expect: 92 percent of adults listen to radio in an average week, 88 percent watch television, 79 percent mess around on a smartphone, 60 percent on a computer and 15 percent on a game console. [Numlock, 8/2/18]

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America has too many places to buy a bed. From 2009 to 2017, the number of U.S. stores that sold mattresses rose to 15,255, a 32% increase. There are literally only 14,079 McDonald's restaurants in the U.S. This cutthroat competition — plus e-commerce competition that compelled brick and mortar researchers to, well, “go to the mattresses” — has forced the top mattress retailer in America, Mattress Firm, to close hundreds of stores in a tactical retreat. [Numlock, 8/26]

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Harley Davidson has a problem — well, several problems — but the main one is that the motorcycle brand is struggling to reach a new generation of consumers. An industry analysis found that only a quarter of motorcycle riders are between the ages of 25 and 40, and only 14 percent are women. This is one reason the company is looking abroad for sales. In 2006, 273,210 Harleys were sold domestically, and 75,980 internationally. In 2017, 144,890 were sold domestically and 96,610 internationally which is a combined total of less than were sold *domestically* a decade ago. [*Bloomberg Businessweek*]

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A new Reuters/Ipsos poll found that 84.5 percent of Democrats and 51.9 percent of Republicans would support a policy of “Medicare for All” in the U.S. healthcare system. The precise implementation of that policy credo is a bit fluid, but the gist is about 70 percent of Americans look favorably on offering some sort of baseline medical care in the U.S. [Reuters]

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India's Supreme Court has struck down a 150-year-old British colonial law outlawing consensual gay sex. The law had existed unchanged since the 1860s and in 2016 there were more than 2,100 cases registered under the law. Of the 48 former British colonies that criminalize homosexuality, 30 do so under laws based on Colonial-era anti-LGBT legislation.

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This year there have been 4,480 retail store closures across the United States, a catastrophe that is still somehow not as bad as the 5,700 store closures that had occurred at this point last year. Still, that's enough devastation for scavenging beasts — such as the Spirit Halloween stores roaming the American strip mall — to feed on to survive the winter. Plus, hiring is up in retail with about 50,000 jobs added monthly.

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In last week's hearings for Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh, on one question Kavanaugh came up short in my opinion.

Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA), was pushing the Judge about his view on Roe v Wade, without making much progress until she asked, "Can you think of any laws that give the government power to make decisions about the male body?"

Kavanaugh finally responded awkwardly, "I'm not thinking of any right now Senator."

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80% of Americans have confidence in the U.S. Military to act in the best interest of the public. 45% have that same confidence in business leaders and 40% have confidence in the news media.

Only 25% of Americans have confidence in elected officials to act in the public's best interest. 36% of Republicans/Lean Republican have confidence in elected officials to act in their best interest but only 17% of Democrats/Lean Democrats share that view. [PEW, 2/15/18]

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78% of Americans say "that when it comes to important issues facing the country, most Republican and Democratic voters disagree not only on plans and policies but also on basic facts". This includes 81% of Rep/leaners and 76% of Dem/Lean. [PEW, 8/23]

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40% of Americans “struggled last year to meet a basic need” such as food, health care, housing or utilities.

23% of households struggled to feed their family at some point during the year.

18% didn’t seek care for a medical need because of the cost.

13% missed a utility payment.

10% didn’t pay the full amount of their rent or mortgage, or paid it late.

[Urban Institute “Well-Being and Basic Needs” survey]

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Quotes

“I am a border ruffian from the state of Missouri. I am a Connecticut Yankee by adoption. In me, you have Missouri morals, Connecticut culture; this, gentlemen, is the combination which makes the perfect man.”

– Mark Twain

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“Dwell on the beauty of life. Watch the stars, and see yourself running with them.”

– Marcus Aurelius

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“I already know I’m a good player. And no, I won’t play you to prove it.”
– Devereaux Peters of the WNBA in an op-ed about the men who constantly challenge her to games of one-on-one.

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“It was a way of life. If you had a bike, it was a way to kind of let go and be free.”

– NBA star LeBron James on his passion for cycling

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“I dream of painting and then I paint my dream.”

– Vincent van Gogh

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“Power means happiness, power means hard work and sacrifice.”

– Beyoncé

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“Judge, I was born at night but not last night.”

– Senator Patrick Leahy, to Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh

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“If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same...”

– Rudyard Kipling

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“He didn’t believe that America’s fate rested on heroes... Heroes didn’t run this country, ordinary people given half a chance are capable to doing extraordinary things.”

“John was a hero. His character, courage, honor, and integrity. His optimism. That’s what made John special. It made John a giant among all of us.”

“His belief – and it was deep – that Americans can do anything, withstand anything, achieve anything, was both unflinching and utterly reassuring.”

– Vice President Joe Biden in a tribute to Senator John McCain

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“We were reminded by his funeral that we have been, and could again be, a nation based on values like honor, truth-telling, service, humility, respect and kindness.”

– Walter Isaacson, about John McCain

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President Trump

On September 6-9, 2018, CNN found that 36% of Americans approved of Trump’s job performance and 58% disapproved. This represents an 8-point drop in approval since the second week of August.

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Independents</u>
Approve	29%	42%	31%
Disapprove	65%	51%	59%

On September 9, 2018, Gallup found (among all adults) that 40% of Americans approve of President Trump’s job performance and 54% disapprove.

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

I now include a periodic 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>
9/11/18	--	--	39.9%	53.7%
9/9/18	40%	54%	--	--
9/2/18	41%	53%	--	--
9/1/18	--	--	40.3	54.4
8/26/18	41%	54%	--	--
8/5/18	41%	54%	--	--
8/1/18	--	--	41.4	52.9
7/29/18	40%	55%	--	--
7/1/18	42%	53%	41.8%	52.3
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%

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>
SEP'18	xxx	xxx	36/58	xxx	xxx	38/54
AUG'18	44/52	36/60	44/53	xxx	45/53	41/54
JULY'18	45/52	xxx	xxx	xxx	46/51	40/55
JUNE'18	44/53	xxx	41/54	42/52cbsA	45/51	43/52
MAY'18	xxxx	xxxx	44/51	40/55cbsA	xxxx	xxxx
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
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, the only president to have worse numbers than Trump at this point in their tenure is Bill Clinton and he was re-elected in 1996.

Job Approval – Roughly 20 months into the 1st term

GHW Bush	76% (9/90)
GW Bush	66% (9/02)
Eisenhower	66% (9/54)
Kennedy	63% (9/62)
Nixon	57% (9/70)
Obama	46% (9/10)
Carter	42% (9/78)
Reagan	42% (9/82)
Trump	41% (9/18)
Clinton	39% (9/94)

On economic policy, Trump's approval ratings have remained consistently positive since April.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
9/9/18	51%	53%	CNN
9/4/18	48%	43%	Reuters/Ipsos (adults)

8/21/18	49%	44%	Fox News
7/18/18	50%	34%	NBC/WSJ
6/5/18	49%	46%	Quinnipiac
5/6/18	50.3%	44/8%	RCP average 4/6-5/6
4/11/18	49%	46%	ABC/WP
3/11/18	46%	48%	CBS News
2/27/18	49%	44%	“
1/16/18	46%	49%	“

On foreign policy, Trump’s approval ratings remain in negative territory.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
9/9/18	38%	56%	CNN
9/4/18	40%	51%	Reuters/Ipsos (adults)
8/21/18	37%	55%	Fox News
7/23/18	38%	58%	Quinnipiac
7/18/18	38%	45%	NBC/WSJ
6/5/18	40%	52%	Quinnipiac
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

Trump has allowed, if not encouraged, latent hate to blossom. [WW]

The President is in a war with the truth. [Bob Woodward]

Trump has managed to insult or otherwise put a finger in the eye of just about every ally of the United States. [WW]

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According to official government estimates, 64 people died in Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Maria, which devastated the island in September 2017.

A new study by the George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health, commissioned by the Governor of Puerto Rico, found the actual number of deaths attributable to the hurricane was 2,975. In the 9/11 attacks, 2,997 people died, excluding the hijackers.

In October 2017, Trump visited Puerto Rico and said that residents of the island are lucky that the hurricane was not “a real catastrophe, like Katrina.” The death toll of Hurricane Katrina was 1,833.

Back in DC a few days later Trump graded himself a 10 out of 10 for the administration's response to Puerto Rico. “I give ourselves a 10... We have provided so much, so fast. We were actually there before the storm hit,” Trump said in an event with Puerto Rico’s Governor at the White House.

Hurricane Harvey struck Texas about a month earlier. An exhaustive report on the response to Hurricane Maria by Politico found “the Trump administration — and the president himself — responded far more aggressively to Texas than to Puerto Rico.”

Trump “spent the first weekend after the Puerto Rico crisis tweeting repeatedly about NFL players kneeling for the national anthem.”

Helicopters were slow to arrive, fewer federal personnel were sent, and much of the island remained without power for months. More resources were sent to Texas even though the damage to Puerto Rico was far greater.

Even today, the federal government is funding permanent fixes to Texas’ infrastructure but has yet to begin such investments in Puerto Rico.

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63% of Americans support the investigation of the president and his associates by Robert Mueller. 64% think that Trump should not fire Attorney General Sessions. [WP/ABC, 8/29/18]

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52% of Americans feel very warm toward Canada but only 23% of Americans feel very warm toward Mexico. 63% of Democrats/Leaners feel warm toward Canada as do 39% of Republicans/Leaners. Only 9% of Republicans/Leaners feel warm toward Mexico while 34% of Democrats/Leaners feel that way. [PEW, 8/28/18]

President Trump describes Mexico as “a very large trading partner” and refers to Canada as a “smaller segment”. The reality is that trade with Canada in 2017 was \$57 billion larger than trade with Mexico. [Factcheck.org, 9/1/18]

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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 9/6/18	68	1	26	41
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]

(There are currently 73 nominations pending: 1 Supreme Court, 10 for the Courts of Appeals, 60 for the District Courts, 2 for the Courts of International Trade)

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Disassembling

Candidate Trump promised to dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency in terms of its rules and its staff. He is well on his way to pulling that off.

In the first 18 months of the administration, 1600 workers have left the EPA while fewer than 400 have been hired. At least 260 scientists, 185 “environmental protection specialists” and 106 engineers, are gone. Some of the offices most affected by this decrease in personnel are the Office and Enforcement and

Compliance (down 15.7%) and the Office of Research and Development (down 10%). [WP, 9/9/18]

A government proposal this year could stop the use of human health studies in rule making at EPA. Study of disease trends in specific groups of people, e.g. farm workers, is a branch of medicine known as epidemiology. [NYT, 8/26/18]

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The Trump administration proposed a major environmental rollback, announcing that, starting in 2020, it will no longer require cars and trucks to become more fuel efficient every year.

Under the new proposal, automakers would only have to produce cars that achieve a real-world average of about 29 miles per gallon from 2021 to 2025. This is a major change. The Obama administration had once required that new cars average approximately 43 miles a gallon by 2025.

The administration moved to end California's power to enforce its own rules, setting off a legal fight that could create a schism among red and blue states over the pollution regulations for new cars and pickups. [Politico, 8/2/18]

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Nationally, the EPA says that 350 to 1,500 more people will die each year under the Trump administration's proposed rollback on regulation of harmful emissions from the nation's coal power plants. The northern two-thirds of West Virginia and part of Pennsylvania will be the hardest hit, according to the EPA.

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The EPA has also released dozens of oil refineries from their legal obligations to blend increasing volumes of renewable fuels with gasoline and diesel fuel. [Real Clear Energy, 8/23/18]

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The EPA also plans to make public a proposal to weaken Obama-era requirements that companies monitor and repair methane leaks. In a related effort the Interior Department is proposing a rule that repeals a restriction on the intentional venting and "flaring" or burning, of methane from drilling operations. [NYT, 9/1/18]

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US Department of Agriculture announced that it is opening up to mining some 234,000 acres of land in the Superior National Forest. The area happens to be next to the Boundary Waters Canoe area. Previously, Agriculture Secretary Purdue had committed to a two-year environmental review prior to taking any action. The USDA says it completed a 15-month review. The U.S. Forest Service had requested that mining be restricted in the area. Opening up more land to resource extraction has been a priority of the Trump administration. [Bloomberg]

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The Trump Administration issued new insurance rules to encourage more Americans to buy inexpensive skimpy health plans designed for short term use. The plans do not have to cover pre-existing conditions and certain kinds of health care that the ACA requires. [WP, 8/2]

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The administration is canceling all funding for a UN aid program for Palestinian refugees. The administration is planning to cut the number of Palestinians classified as refugees from 5 million to less than 500,000. Experts have told the Washington Post that this will worsen an already disastrous humanitarian situation. [FiveThirtyEight-Significant Digits, 8/31/18]

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The consumer protection official at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is resigning his position in protest over what he claims is the CFPB's siding with predatory lenders over consumers. 44,000,000 Americans are saddled with more than \$1.5 trillion in student debt. [WP & Popular Information, 8/28/18]

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2020

The following is a list of people who have been mentioned (by either themselves or others) as potential candidates in 2020. Folks are on the list whether or not they have claimed or disclaimed any interest in running. 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 added significance as a result of the standards of the time. Another reason is the inability to raise enough money to be relevant.

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~~

Michael Bloomberg, Businessman and former Mayor of New York

~~Andrew Cuomo (D) — Governor of New York~~

(Said during a gubernatorial debate related to his re-election campaign in New York that he intends if elected to serve the full 4-year term)

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)

Congressperson Maxine Waters (D)

Congressperson Tulsi Gabbard (D)

Congressman Eric Swalwell (D)

Congressman Joe Kennedy (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 mayor, Rhode Island 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) – former Secretary of HUD

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For your prurient interest, the following is a July 2018 nationwide survey of
folks who say they will vote in the 2020 Democratic primary:

Joe Biden	30%
Bernie Sanders	28%
Elizabeth Warren	13%
Cory Booker	8%
Kamala Harris	5%
A governor	2%
Howard Schultz	2%
Tom Steyer	1%
Mitch Landrieu	1%

[Democracy Corps & Greenberg Research 7/26/18]

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Democratic Party officials voted at their recent summer meeting to strip superdelegates of much of their power in the presidential nominating process, infuriating many traditionalists while handing a victory to the party's left flank.

The measure's overwhelming approval – met by cheers in the room in Chicago – concluded a tense summer meeting of the Democratic National Committee which had labored over the issue since 2016. Superdelegates that year largely sided with Hillary Clinton over Bernie Sanders, enraging Sanders' supporters. There were 716 superdelegates in 2016. (Superdelegates were added to the Democratic Party nominating process in 1982.)

Under the new rule, superdelegates – the members of Congress, DNC members and other top officials who made up about 15 percent of delegates that year – will not be allowed to vote on the first ballot at a contested national convention. The change could dramatically re-shape the calculus of future presidential campaigns, rendering candidates' connections to superdelegates less significant. [Politico]

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2018

53 days until the election

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As the election grows closer, attitudes toward both the Republican and Democratic political parties are identical. 43% of registered voters have negative views of both political parties. 32% have positive views toward the two parties.

45% of Americans are concerned that if Democrats get control of the Congress they will go too far in obstructing Donald Trump and nothing will get done. 46% believe that if Republicans continue to control the Congress it will not be independent enough from the President to provide a “check and balance” on him.

45% of Americans will be more bothered by a Republican candidate for Congress who supports Trump's policies while 47% will be more bothered by a Democratic candidate for Congress who supports Nancy Pelosi's policies.

1% of folks say they don't know Donald Trump's name, while 10% say they don't know Nancy Pelosi's name.

As an aside on name recognition, 10% say they do not know the name LeBron James while 22% say they do not know Mitch McConnell, 25% do not know Elizabeth Warren, 23% don't know Robert Mueller and only 14% don't know Rudy Giuliani. [NBC/WSJ, 8/22/18]

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Congress

In 2015 the median net worth of a U.S. Senator was \$3.2 million, and for members of the House of Representatives it was \$900,000. (Quartz, 2/12/18)

There are 12 foreign born members of the 115th Congress [PEW, 8/21/]

61% of Americans say that more women running for Congress is a good thing. This includes 54% of men and 68% of women; 39% of Rep/Lean Rep and 80% of Dem/Lean Dem. [PEW, 8/22]

To date, 116 Democratic candidates have taken the "no corporate PAC money" pledge. Beyond the value of the pledge in their campaigns, first time candidates have not traditionally been big recipients of corporate PAC money. It is those who are in office who are the primary recipients.

Congress' approval rating continues at a subterranean level.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Politics 9/5	18.4%	71.6%
Real Clear Politics 8/4	14.8%	73.5%
Real Clear Politics 7/5	15.7%	72%
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%

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National polls find Democrats leading on the question of whether folks want Democrats or Republicans to control the Congress after the 2018 elections.

<u>Dem</u>	<u>GOP</u>		
52%	38%	8/26-29	ABC/WP (Women favor the Democrats by 58% to 33%. Men are split between the parties.)
50%	42%	8/18-22	NBC/WSJ
49%	38%	8/19-21	Fox News
52%	41%	8/9-12	CNN
49%	37%	7/17-23	Kaiser Family Foundation
51%	39%	7/18-23	Quinnipiac
49%	43%	7/15-18	NBC/WSJ

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41% of registered voters believe that the Democratic candidates for Congress are “in the main stream” while 37% believe that the Republican candidates fit that description.

Registered voters believe that the Democratic party would do a better job of protecting the environment, dealing with health care, dealing with ethics in government, looking out for the middle class and dealing with immigration.

They see the Republican party doing a better job of dealing with the economy, protecting America’s interest on trade issues, dealing with taxes, gun issues, changing how things work in Washington and dealing with illegal immigration. [NBC/WSJ, 8/22/18]

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Potential voters were asked, “Which is more important in determining how you may vote? State of the economy and your personal finances or your views on President Trump?”

	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Undecided Voters</u>
State of the economy/personal finances	47%	36%	64%
Views on President Trump	34%	59%	17%

[Winston Group, 9/5/18]

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A second 20-year veteran Democrat member of the House has lost a primary in a safe Democratic district, this time in Massachusetts. Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley defeated Congressman Michael E. Capuano. Capuano was considered to be in the most liberal wing of the party. The district is now majority non-white. There is no Republican running in the district.

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The following are a series of statements from a September 7th article by David Wasserman of the Cook Political Report. As you can see below, WW relies on Wasserman's analysis of the House for this section of the Watch.

“In November, Americans could elect more than 100 women to the House for the first time in history – and elect more new women to the House than any prior election...”

“Between 30 and 40 new women are poised to enter the House next January, shattering the previous record of 24 set in 1992's “Year of the Woman”.

“Of the 254 non-incumbent Democratic nominees for the House, an unheard-of 50% are women, compared to 18% of Republicans.”

“Right now, there are 61 female Democrats and 23 female Republicans serving in the House.”

“The House's burgeoning gender gap isn't the only demographic chasm on display in 2018; the parties are diverging along racial lines as well...At the moment, 86% of House Republicans are white men, compared to 41% of House Democrats. Our race-by-race analysis suggests that could widen to 87% of Republicans and 37% of Democrats – a massive 50-point divide – come 2019.”

* * * * *

[WW uses David Wasserman and the Cook Political Report for the House chart below. 9/6/18]

Democrats	195
Republicans	240

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Safe in 2018	182	150
Likely	12	25
Lean	9	27
	<u>Tossup</u>	
	2	28

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THE SENATE

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

Governor Ducey of Arizona has appointed former U.S. Senator Jon Kyl to fill the seat vacated by Senator John McCain. Kyl will serve at least through the end of the current session of Congress and apparently would consider serving until 2020 when a special election will be held to fill the McCain seat. Kyl will not stand for election to the seat.

There have been a few other changes since the last issue of the Watch. Likely Democrat seats grew from 5 to 6, as Manchin moved from Toss-up to Likely. Heitkamp's position has not improved and *Inside Elections* has the race as Tilting Republican. On the Republican side there have been no changes.

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	6	1
	Casey	Cruz
	Baldwin	
	Tester	
	Smith	
	Brown	
	Manchin	

Toss-ups	4	3
	Donnelly	Heller
	McCaskill	Arizona (open)
	Heitkamp	Tennessee (open)
	Nelson	

* * * * *

Women Will Get It Done

Nearly 100 million adult women in the US (67% of the adult woman population) wear plus-sized clothing — a distinction the industry gives to garments above a size 14. The average American woman today is wearing between a size 16 and 18.

However, the spending on plus-size apparel represents only 17% of apparel sales in the United States.

Out of the \$121 billion spent on the women’s apparel market only \$21 billion is being spent on plus-sizes.

If plus-size women were to spend at the same rate as women in smaller sizes, the size of the overall apparel market would more than double and the plus-size market would expand by a factor of 10. [Dia & Co/Nadia Boujarwah]

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Around 2006, executives at the Tokyo Medical University decided there were too many women applying for medical school so they programmed the computer that scored the entrance exam to subtract points from the test results of female applicants, year after year.

Then for whatever the reason, an independent committee was hired to review the school’s admission policies. News of the exam rigging triggered other allegations about admission policies.

Only 21% of doctors in Japan were women in 2016, the lowest among 36 countries surveyed by the OECD. But this is only part of the story; very few women are in elite professions and managerial positions in Japan. Japan ranked 114 out of 144 countries in terms of gender equality last year, according to a survey by the World Economic Forum. [WSJ, 8/8/18]

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In the last decade, there has been little change in the number of women who have speaking roles in movies. The following are the numbers of women who had speaking roles by year: 2017 - 31.8%; 2016 - 31.5%; 2015 - 31.4%; 2014 - 28.1%; 2013- 29.2%; 2012 - 28.4%; 2011 – 31.2%; 2010 – 30.3%; 2009 – 32.8%; 2008 – 32.8%; 2007 – 29.9%.

78.7% of movie reviews of the top 300 films from 2015-2017 were written by men. 66% of film critics are white. [Annenberg Inclusion Initiative]

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Boys are paid more than girls for household chores. Many parents are inadvertently perpetuating the wage gap for children when they set rates for these seemingly trivial household jobs. Boys aged 5 to 7 years make 50% more in weekly allowance than girls in that age group, according to a study of 10,000 users from *BusyKid*, a mobile app and web platform that allows kids to earn and track their allowance. The average boy makes \$13.80 per week while the average girl makes \$6.71. [MarketWatch, 8/2/18]

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The Girl Scouts of the USA kicked off its summer recruiting season on Tuesday by announcing 30 new badges that aim to get girls aged five to 18 building robots, designing balloon-powered cars and mastering the college application process. The new badge programs are strong in STEM (science, technology, engineering or math) skills — key to closing the STEM gender gap, as women only make up 29 percent of the science and engineering workforce. And many address some of society’s most pressing issues at the moment, such as cybersecurity and environmental advocacy. [New York Post]

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“Don’t underestimate the power of women connecting and supporting each other at work. As my experiences from being a rookie accountant to a managing director at an investment bank have taught me, conversations between women have massive benefits for the individual and the organization. When I graduated college in the 1970s, I believed that women would quickly achieve parity at all levels of professional life now that we had ‘arrived’ — I viewed the lack of women at the top as more of a ‘pipeline’ problem, not a cultural one. But the support I expected to find from female colleagues — the feeling of sisterhood in this mission — rarely

survived first contact within the workplace.” [Ann McNulty, Harvard Business Review]

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A U.N. Study says 99.3% of women in Egypt reported being sexually harassed.
[WSJ, 9/6/18]

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Restaurants

A reminder: I only write about restaurants I believe are worth trying and would patronize again. If I don't like the restaurant, I don't write about it.

Portland, Maine

Bon Appetite is a food and entertainment magazine published by Condé Nast. The magazine's August 2018 edition named Portland, Maine as its "2018 Restaurant City of the Year". The three cities that have previously been awarded this title are San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and Chicago. This issue of Washington Watch features two very different eateries in Portland, Maine

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(At the end of the following review there is an addendum relative to the connection between Emilitsa and my hometown of Duluth, Minnesota)

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Emilitsa
547 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101
207-221-0245

We went to Emilitsa with Melanie and Eliot.

Emilitsa, a traditional Greek restaurant, was opened in 2008 by two brothers named Demos and John Regas. Demos was the chef and John ran the front of the House. In 2015, Demos' son Niko took over for his father as Executive Chef.

The restaurant is long and narrow. As you enter, to the left is a bar with seven high chairs. To the right there are five 2-tops and then a waist to ceiling wine

rack separating the front of the restaurant from the rest. Our table was the first 4-top after the wine rack.

Behind the wine rack, most of the tables are on the right side. There is a banquette that runs from the wine rack to the back wall. The first banquette is of red upholstery which then changes to yellow further back. The tables fronting the banquette are 2-tops which can be combined for larger parties. At the back of the restaurant there is one table to the left that can seat up to 8 people.

Overall the restaurant can seat 47 people including the seven seats at the bar.

The kitchen is at the back of the restaurant.

To begin our meal, we shared taramosalata – red caviar pureed with lemon; melitzanosalata – fire-roasted smoked organic eggplant, unfiltered evoo, red onion, capers; skorthalia – potato-garlic puree.

Melanie, Debbie and Eliot chose as their starter “domata salata” – sweet local tomatoes, red onion, cucumber, garlic and feta cheese tossed with unfiltered extra-virgin olive oil, and greek white balsamic vinegar. I started with “patzaria psita meh skorthalia” – local organic roasted red and golden beets tossed with unfiltered extra-virgin olive oil and muscato vinegar, served with skorthalia, a potato and garlic puree.

I also selected a second appetizer, “octopothi tis skaras” – classic grilled Mediterranean octopus drizzled with unfiltered extra virgin olive oil lemon juice, served with tossed organic micro-greens and garlic toast.

Melanie then selected the octopus as her main course.

For their main course, Debbie and Eliot chose “paithakia galaktos tis skaras” – Australian grass-fed lamb loin chops, marinated and grilled, served with sautéed baby spinach, feta-parsnip potato mash.

For my main course I chose “tsipoura tis skaras” – whole Mediterranean gilt head bream grilled and brushed with extra virgin olive oil, garlic and fresh lemon juice. I chose to add spinach and rice pilaf.

Rachel was our server who was quite attentive and did a first-rate job of deboning my fish with two spoons and sliding it on to an empty plate. I had never before seen anyone filet a fish using only spoons.

We chose to skip dessert at the restaurant and instead drove over to “Red’s” in South Portland. Eliot describes Red’s as having the “best soft-serve ice cream in America”. It is pretty good, especially with chocolate sauce.

To the right at the end of the dining room are two gender neutral restrooms.

In the restroom I used there is a black ceramic-like counter into which is sunk an oval white ceramic wash basin. Then there is a single wall hanging water conserving urinal. The room is completed with a single white ceramic commode in a separate room within the room. The walls are alternatively brick and smooth painted green. The floor is covered with large slightly off-white tiles. I assume both of the restrooms are the same.

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Here is the twist to the above. I left Duluth, Minnesota in 1961. I discovered in a conversation during our visit to Emilitsa that John and Demos left Duluth in 1981 but the Regas family still owns the Coney Island Deluxe restaurant there. It is located at 112 West 1st Street and was opened in 1928. My family had a branch of the family business, Independent Cleaners and Launderers, two blocks away to the west on 1st Street.

Now here is where it gets a little complicated. There was another Coney Island restaurant in Duluth when I was growing up located at 107 East Superior Street. It was owned by a different family and is now closed.

I am quite certain that I bought hotdogs from the Coney Island Deluxe. But I think more often I bought them from the Coney Island on Superior Street. It was not unusual for me to buy a half dozen at a time.

I remember one particular day when I went to the Superior Street Coney Island with my friend Bob Zimmerman. He ordered a single hot dog. I ordered six and we snuck them into the Norshor Movie Theater which was a block to the east on Superior Street. To this day he is skinny and more talented than I am.

I plan to visit Coney Island Deluxe the next time I am in Duluth.

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Bite into Maine
Fort Williams Park
Cape Elizabeth, Maine
207-289-6142
info@biteintomaine.com

The motto of the Lobster Roll truck that is located in Fort Williams Park, within sight of the Portland Head Light is, “Not All Lobster Rolls are Created Equal”.

It is hard to miss the colorfully painted truck as it sits on a hill beside the road that runs through the park. Eliot claims this is the best of the many lobster roll trucks and other purveyors of lobster rolls in Maine.

Eliot took Debbie I there for lunch. Debbie had been talking about going back to this particular lobster roll truck since we started talking about our recent trip.

The three of us had what is called the “Picnic Roll” which has so much lobster it is hard to find the roll. We also had potato chips and soft drinks. (And took home to Melanie one of the Picnic Rolls.)

By happenstance, Debbie and I had lobster rolls at a different location in the previous week and they were not even poor cousins.

The lobster rolls cost \$17.95. If you are in the general area it is well worth going out of your way to find this lobster truck.

The Bite into Maine truck was started by Karl and Sarah Sutton about 8 years ago. Karl and Sarah have been heard to say about “our little food truck”, “it’s what’s on the inside that counts.” They also claim to use only fresh and locally sourced lobster, bread and butter, vegetables, drinks and desserts.

There are six kinds of lobster rolls and a rotating selection of sides: creamy red potato salad, Cape Cod potato chips and coleslaw. And Whoopie Pies for dessert.

The truck is open from May – October. The Suttons have a couple of other locations: The Commissary in Scarborough, Maine--which is open year-round--and the Allagash Brewing Company in Portland which is also open only from May – October.

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Washington, D.C.

Arroz
901 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
202-869-330
(inside the Marriott Marquis)

Debbie and I went to Arroz with Decker and Sherry. It has been open since March in the Marriot Marquis Convention Hotel lobby.

The restaurant, a Mike Isabella restaurant, is entered through the lobby of the hotel.

The lobby inside the door from the hotel is decorated with a variety of photographs, urns, plates and teapots shipped from Morocco.

One then enters a lengthy arched path leading to the greeters stand.

The restaurant seats about 138 people. 110 of them are seated in the main dining room and 28 are seated in the bar and lounge area which is at the opposite end of the restaurant from the main entrance. There is a 12-seat private dining room and are 60-some seats outside on a terrace that faces Massachusetts Avenue at the bar end of the restaurant.

There are a variety of kinds of seating. There are a number of 4-person booths on the street side of the restaurant. There is also a banquette on the street side that fronts a number of 2 and 4 tops.

On the other side of the restaurant are a series of 2 tops which are set into banquettes for two with a Moroccan framing.

In between there are a variety of other options, a couple of small banquettes in the middle of the room and various 2 and 4 tops.

The Spanish dishes on the menu add new foods to the Isabella restaurant group which historically featured Greece and Italy.

Our server was Ryan. He was attentive and very good at describing the various dishes.

We shared the following dishes:

Moroccan flat bread – olive oil, za'atar

Burnt Eggplant – Moroccan flat bread, tomato, za'atar, pine nut

Summer Tomato – country bread, burnt cucumber, tomato vinaigrette, goat feta espuma

Fried Cauliflower – grilled greens, mitmita lebne

Octopus A La Plancha - black garlic bbq, confit potato, tzatziki

Gambas Al Ajillo – citrus prawn, kohlrabi salad, black garlic emulsion

Chermoula Lamb Ribs – kohlrabi & pea shoot salad, spiced yogurt, coriander honey

Aged – Duck – confit leg, tiny radish, fermented allium, lebne

Almond Cake – lemon syrup, grilled peach compote, whipped, yogurt cream

Ice cream & Sorbet – vanilla ice cream, ras el hanout ice cream

There are a variety of interesting tastes and textures.

As you enter the restroom there is a tan figured ceramic-like counter into which are sunk two square ceramic wash basins. There are containers for towels at each of the counter. The walls of this area of the restroom are covered with an intricately designed star like design.

There are two wall hanging urinals at different heights with partial metal walls on one side and in between them.

In a separate room there is a wall hanging white ceramic commode with appropriate assistance bars at the back and side of the commode. There is a wooden two shelf table with additional supplies.

The walls of the commode room are large, rectangular off-white tiles as is the floor of this room and the balance of the restroom, with an occasional smaller almost black tile.

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Mike Isabella has had some problems lately. Four of his restaurants have closed over the last few months; Graffiato in Chinatown, a second Graffito in Richmond, Requin Brasserie and most recently the food hall in Tyson's Galleria. And in the last few weeks he has filed for bankruptcy including several but not all of his restaurants. Arroz does not seem to be included.

Mike

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