

Mike Berman's

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Washington, D.C.

San Lorenzo

Siren

Rose's Luxury

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

State of the Nation

38% of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction, 54% say it is on the wrong track. [*Economist/YouGov*, 10/9/18]

In September, 37% of us were satisfied with the way things were going in the United States. 37% is the average satisfaction level that Gallup has found since it began measuring the public satisfaction level in 1979. The low point in the Gallup survey was 7% in October 2008 and the high point of 71% was reached in February 1999. Currently, satisfaction among Republicans is at 68% while satisfaction among Democrats has fallen to 12%. [Gallup, 9/2018]

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September 2018 is 3.7%, a drop from 3.9% in August. This is the lowest unemployment rate since December 1969, 49 years ago.

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 September 2018 is 7.5%.

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The Demographics of Unemployment

As the overall unemployment situation has improved it has also improved for most of the population segments. One exception is that unemployment for Asians grew from 3% to 3.5% between August and September.

Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women – 2.8%

Men – 3.0%

Unemployment by Race (all races)

White - 3.3%

Black – 6.0%
Hispanic – 4.5%
Asian – 3.5% (increase)

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

Less than high school – 5.5% (increase)
High School – 3.7%
Some college – 3.2%
Bachelor’s Degree or higher – 2.0%

In August, 22 states were above the national average; 2 states had unemployment rates that were exactly at the national number of 3.7%; 26 states and D.C. had unemployment rates that were above the national average.

One state, Alaska at 6.7%, had the highest unemployment rate in the country. Louisiana, West Virginia and D.C. had unemployment rates of 5.0% or more but less than 6.0%. 17 states had unemployment rates that were 4.0% or greater but less than 5.0%.

[Bureau of Labor Statistics]

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The U.S. has less than 5% of the world’s population but still accounts for almost a quarter of its GDP. [WSJ, 10/13/18]

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A survey of Americans found that 22 percent of adults have their dream job... Not shockingly, seniors who remain working are much more content in their employment situation than the younger crowd, with 46 percent of working seniors saying they have their dream job compared to 12 percent of those 18 to 34.

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This and That

60% of Americans say they would definitely not vote for a political candidate who had been accused of sexual harassment by multiple people.

- 68% of women and 53% of men
- 81% of Democrats
 - 84% of women
 - 76% of men

- 34% of Republicans
- 41% of women
- 28% of men

32% would still consider voting for such a candidate

- 38% of men
- 26% of women
- 56% of Republicans
- 48% of women
- 61% of men

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More than 175 million workers contribute to Social Security with every paycheck.

- About 43 million retirees collect monthly benefits.
- For three in five older Americans, those checks account for more than half their income.
- For one in three retirees who receive social security, it accounts for 90% of their income.
- Three in five rely on it for at least half of their income.

[WSJ, 9/29/18]

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The following are things that some Americans are worried about being able to afford.

	Very/Somewhat Worried
Unexpected medical bills	69%
Health Insurance deductible	53%
Gasoline or Transport costs	46%
Prescription Drugs	45%
Monthly utilities	43%
Monthly Health Ins. Premium	42%
Rent or Mortgage	41%
Food	37%

[Kaiser Family Foundation]

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30% of Americans have at least somewhat positive attitudes toward the news media while 45% have at least somewhat negative attitudes toward the news

media.

61% of us believe that immigration helps more than it hurts the US.

69% are very/somewhat satisfied with the state of the U.S. economy.

[NBC/WSJ, 9/19/18]

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20 states have now struck down the death penalty. [AP]

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If you are a ranch dressing aficionado you are enjoying what 40% of Americans do. Ranch is by far and away the most popular salad dressing. The runner up is Italian. [Significant Digits, 10/12/18]

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2/3 of landlords in Philadelphia and 3/4 of those in Los Angeles are no longer accepting Section 8 vouchers because in the current economy they can get higher rents. [NYT]

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The United Nations warned this week that we have 17 years to slow climate change. But for some it's too late. In Florida they're tallying the dead lost to Hurricane Michael which, like Florence, was turbocharged by warming oceans. Meanwhile, the White House filled a key EPA advisory board with critics of pollution regulation. —*David E. Rovella*

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Ban Laptops from Meetings?

Is it okay to be on your computer or phone during work meetings? Politeness aside, research suggests that even the mere presence of a phone in the room compromises our brain power. That has made some companies enforce a no-device policy during meetings in order to boost efficiency and collaboration. [CNN]

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A Morning Consult survey found that 58 percent of Americans are not interested in the political and social views of celebrities they like, while 9 percent are strongly interested in the opinions of entertainers. There are some circumstances where celebs motivate fans: 11 percent said they've made a

donation or volunteered because a star encouraged them to. [*Jeremy Barr, The Hollywood Reporter MacLellan, Quartz*]

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Read the fine print

When you make contributions to various PACs do you read the fine print on the contribution page? Yours truly does not but will in the future. The following is an example of the reason why.

We first heard about Michael Avenatti as the lawyer for Stormy Daniels. Then we heard about “potential” candidate for president Michael Avenatti, then again as the lawyer for a woman connected to the Kavanaugh matter. He next launched his own political action committee called “Fight PAC” designed to support Democratic candidates for Congress.

As one of his early hustles Avenatti appeared to be raising money on behalf of Beto O’Rourke, the Democratic Senate candidate in Texas. What he did not reveal is that half of each contribution received went to his own “Fight PAC”. Happily, the Campaign Legal Center read the fine print and made a fuss.

Avenatti begrudgingly deleted the donation page while noting that there are other PACs that operate the same way. This turns out to be true. Some do it as surreptitiously as he did and other PACs make clear how donations will be used. [WW]

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Quotes

“Hope is the belief that our tomorrows will be better than our todays.

Hope is not magic. Hope is work.”

-DeRay McKesson

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“I’m part of a new generation of people that are coming in. We speak differently. We work differently. We serve differently.”

-Rashida Tlaib, Congressional candidate running unopposed in Michigan who will be the first Muslim woman in Congress

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“To every survivor reading this
We see you
We hear you
We believe you
It’s not your fault
Your story matters
There is no “right” way to experience trauma.”
-TIMESUP, 9/21/18

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“Don’t look for the needle in the haystack. Just buy the haystack”

“The greatest enemies of the of the equity investor are expenses and emotions.”
-Jack Bogle

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“It is fatal to pretend. I prefer to do anything on the quiet rather than boast
about it.”
-Indira Gandhi

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“After crosses and losses, men grow humbler and wiser.”
-Benjamin Franklin

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“I am here today not because I want to be. I am terrified. I am here because I
believe it is my civic duty to tell you what happened to me.”
-Christine Blasey Ford, Senate Testimony
[Broadsheet, 9/28/18]

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“Believe me, I am frustrated too. I am sick of all the chaos and the nastiness of
politics. It’s exhausting and frankly, it’s depressing. I understand wanting to shut it
all out. But here’s the problem...democracy continues with or without you.”
-Michelle Obama, 9/23/18

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“I just remember thinking, ‘I’m not more experienced than these guys are, but I’m going to be bigger than they are someday.’ I know it sounds crazy. I always felt like, ‘I’m going to pass you so quickly.’”

-Kara Swisher on her career premonitions, 10/15/18

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President Trump

On October 7, 2018, CNN found that 41% of Americans approved of Trump’s job performance and 52% disapproved. This represents a 5-point jump in approval since the first week in September.

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Independents</u>
Approve	31%	51%	39%
Disapprove	62%	43%	50%

On October 14, 2018, Gallup found (among all adults) that 44% of Americans approve of President Trump’s job performance and 51% 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>
10/14/18	44%	51%	42.1	52.4
10/7/18	43%	53%	--	--
9/30/18	42%	53%	41.5%	52.7%
9/23/18	--	--	43.8%	52.3%
9/16/18	38%	56%	--	--
9/2/18	41%	53%	--	--
9/1/18	--	--	40.3	54.4
8/26/18	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” or “L” which means likely 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>
OCT’18	xxx	43/53	43/52	xxx	47/52L	xxx
SEP’18	44/52	xxx	36/58	xxx	46/52L	41/53
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	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
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 presidents to have worse numbers than Trump at this point in their tenures are Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton and both were re-elected.

Job Approval – Roughly 21 months into the 1st term

GW Bush	62% (10/02)
Eisenhower	61% (10/54)
Kennedy	61% (10/62)
Nixon	58% (10/70)
GHW Bush	53% (10/90)
Carter	49% (10/78)
Obama	45% (10/10)
Trump	44% (10/18)
Reagan	42% (10/82)
Clinton	41% (10/94)

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

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
10/9/18	51%	42%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
10/2/18	47%	43%	Reuters/Ipsos (A)
9/9/18	51%	53%	CNN(RV)
9/4/18	48%	43%	Reuters/Ipsos (A)
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>	
10/9/18	45%	48%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
10/2/18	39%	49%	Reuters/Ipsos (A)
9/9/18	38%	56%	CNN (RV)
9/4/18	40%	51%	Reuters/Ipsos (A)
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

Brett Kavanaugh’s (impending) arrival on the Supreme Court is like Donald Trump’s attainment of the presidency, in this important way:

By the rules of politics that prevailed until 2016, neither of them would have come close to consideration for their respective offices. For Trump, the reasons are obvious; for Kavanaugh, they’re brilliantly summarized by one of Kavanaugh’s long-term friends here, and discussed below.

“Thus, the ascent of a man like Kavanaugh necessarily changes the public sense of what is within bounds, and not, for the most powerful jurists in the nation—just as the ascent of Trump has changed assessments of what is within bounds for a president, and how much protection long-standing norms can supply.”
[James Fallows, 10/6/18]

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Donald Trump gets low marks for a variety of personal traits but on one important characteristic he does extremely well – 68% say he “stands up for what he believes” and on a couple of others he does okay.

On the balance of the list he is in negative territory with a majority of people saying that a particular phrase does not describe him.

Trump

	<u>Describes</u>	<u>Does not describe</u>
Stands up for what he believes	68%	
Able to get things done	50%	
Keeps his promises	49%	
Strong leader		54%
Well – informed		57%
Cares about people like me		61%
Trustworthy		61%
Even-tempered		70%

Even Democrats give him a 52% rating for standing up for what he believes. The next highest positive rating by Democrats is 22% for keeping his promises.

[Pew 10/1/18]

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Following in his father-in-law’s footsteps, Jared Kushner has apparently paid little or no federal income taxes for a number of years. There is no indication that he has violated any rules or laws. Apparently, it is the result of a tax benefit that lets real estate investors deduct a portion of the cost of their buildings from their taxable income every year.

Interestingly, when the administration pushed through a substantial revision of the tax laws, the changes expanded many of the benefits enjoyed by real estate investors, resulting in even larger potential deductions. [New York Times, 10/13]

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President Trump’s “preferred network”, Fox News, which has regularly covered his rallies from beginning to end, has begun cutting back on coverage of his rallies around the country. During a recent week in which Trump had three rallies, Fox News showed clips and highlights. The issue seems to be that the TV/cable audiences for his rallies have sometimes dipped below the network’s regular programming. Regular viewership of the rallies in 2017 averaged 4 million viewers. An August rally had just over 2.5 million viewers.

CNN and MSNBC have never covered his rallies from beginning to end. Fox does continue to live stream the events. [Politico, 10/12/18]

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“I have covered a lot of Trump rallies, but never seen press pen as locked down as it is here in Council Bluffs. Have now been escorted to the bathrooms and yelled at by advance team for attempting to talk with Trump supporters in the crowd.” [Eli Stokols, LA Times]

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Trump has now appointed as many Supreme Court Justices as any of the last seven Presidents other than Ronald Reagan who appointed three.

Brett Kavanaugh is the 114th justice in American history. 111 of the Justices have been white, 110 have been men and the past 112 justices including all those currently on the bench attended Ivy League law schools. [NYT, 10/19/18]

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

The following are the current members of the Supreme Court, the dates on which they were confirmed and the number of votes on their confirmations.

Clarence Thomas	1991	52-48
Ruth Ginsburg	1993	96-3
Stephen Breyer	1994	87-9
Chief John Roberts	2005	78-22
Samuel Alito Jr.	2006	58-42
Sonia Sotomayor	2009	68-31
Elena Kagan	2010	63-37
Neil Gorsuch	2017	54-45
Brett Kavanaugh	2018	50-48

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Nominated and Confirmed to Date</u>		
		<u>Supreme Ct</u>	<u>Appeals Ct</u>	<u>District Ct</u>
Trump – thru 10/11/18	84	2	29	53
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 11 vacancies on the U.S. Courts of appeals, 108 vacancies on the U.S. District Courts and 2 vacancies on the U.S. Court of International Trade. Nominations pending are 7 for the Courts of Appeals, 48 for the District Courts, 2 for the Courts of International Trade.

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Late last month, as the Kavanaugh conflagration ignited, Justice Elena Kagan noted that “the court’s strength as an institution of American governance depends on people believing it has a certain kind of legitimacy — on people believing it’s not simply just an extension of politics, that its decision-making has a kind of integrity to it. If people don’t believe that, they have no reason to accept what the court does.”

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Disassembling

The Department of Homeland Security has published a proposed rule which states that immigrants could be denied green cards if they've received certain public benefits, including food stamps or Medicaid, or if they're deemed likely to receive them in the future.

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President Trump is moving to allow year-round sale of gasoline containing a higher percentage of ethanol. The move satisfies campaign promises he made to the Farm Belt while likely provoking a battle with the oil industry. Mr. Trump’s action would direct the EPA to allow sales of E15, or gasoline with 15% ethanol, year-round. The directive wouldn’t require refineries to increase their blends, but could spur sales that would give the ethanol industry more of a grip on the market. [WSJ, 10/9/18]

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The Trump administration’s weakening of pollution and fuel-efficiency standards for new cars could lead to as many as 299 premature deaths annually by midcentury. The proposed changes, rolled out in August, would also cost

Americans nearly 17,000 days of work a year because of increased illnesses. This according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. [NBC News, 10/2/18]

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On November 10, the Treasury Department will impose new limits on foreign investment in U.S. technology. Based on legislation passed in 2017, the government has more power to block foreign, non-controlling investments in critical technologies that are considered nonpublic, technical information. [WP, 10/11]

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In 2016 roughly 95,000 refugees were admitted to the United States. In 2017, 29,000 refugees were admitted. The limit that was imposed for 2018 was 45,000 refugees (it remains to be seen how many will be admitted). The limit for 2019 has been set at 30,000 refugees. [Axios, 9/18/18]

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The State Department has stopped giving visas to the same-sex partners of diplomats working at the United Nations. The administration argues that same-sex couples must marry to remain in the country together.

The administration knows that gay marriage is not an option in most countries. [Huff Post, 10/3/18]

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2020

With the next presidential campaign just around the corner, it's worth taking a look at one significant 2020 campaign event that occurred in 2017. The California primary, which in 2016 was held on June 7, has been moved to the first Tuesday in March, which in 2020 is March 3rd. That is a very big prize early in the campaign. It takes a lot of resources to play in California.

The following is a list of people who have been mentioned (by either themselves or others) as potential candidates in 2020. Folks are on the list whether or not they have claimed or disclaimed any interest in running. When an individual suggests publicly that he or she is not interested in running, their name is struck through.

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

Another reason candidates drop out 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.

Democratic Primary

~~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

Michael Avenatti, Attorney, Attorney for Stormy Daniels

Al Sharpton, Civil Rights Activist

Oscar De La Hoya, former professional boxer

~~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. Guterrez (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
Jeff Merkley, (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 of South Bend, Indiana
Julian Castro (D) – former Secretary of HUD

Republican Primary

Don Blakenship, Business Executive
Jeff Flake, U.S. Senator
Larry Hogan, Governor of Maryland
John Kasich, Governor of Ohio
Bill Kristol, Journalist

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Here is how the Democratic field looks 25 months before the 2020 election
in the CNN Poll 10/4-7.

Joe Biden	33%
Bernie Sanders	13%
Kamala Harris	9%
Elizabeth Warren	8%
Cory Booker	5%
John Kerry	5%
Michael Bloomberg	4%
Beto O'Rourke	4%
Eric Holder	3%
Eric Garcetti	2%

No one else on the list receives more than 1%.

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2018

18 days until the election

How interested are folks in this election? Here are three cuts at that question.

On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is very interested:

- 58% of Americans are currently expressing a level of interest at 9 and 10.
- Just prior to the 2014 election 50% expressed interest at a 9-10 level.
- In 2010 the 9-10 level of interest was 61%.

[NBC/WSJ, 9/19/18]

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- 55% of registered voters are “extremely/very” enthusiastic about voting for Congress this year.
- At roughly this time in 2014, 30% of registered voters were “extremely/very” enthusiastic about voting and
- In 2010, 42% were enthusiastic about voting.

[CNN, 10/7/18]

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Registered voters saying they are “absolutely certain to vote”

	<u>October 2014</u>	<u>October 2018</u>
All registered voters	65%	77%
Democrats	63%	81 %

Republicans	75%	79%
Independents	59%	72%
18-39	42%	67%
40-64	72%	81%
65+	78%	82%
White	71%	79%
Nonwhite	48%	72%

[WP, 10/11/18]

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46% of Americans have a favorable opinion of the Democratic party while 45% have an unfavorable opinion. 40% of Americans have a favorable opinion of the Republican party while 52% have an unfavorable opinion. [CNN, 10/7/18]

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Congress

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>		
49%	42%	10/13-16	Fox News
53%	42%	10/8-11	ABC/WP
54%	41%	10/4-7	CNN
49%	42%	9/16-19	Fox News
51%	43%	9/16-19	NBC/WSJ
52%	38%	8/26-29	ABC/WP
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

To date, 185 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 already in office who are the primary recipients.

Congress' approval rating continue at a subterranean level.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol . 10/16	19.6%	71.4%
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%

* * * * *

The “single most/very important issues” in determining who folks vote for in the coming election are:

- The economy - 78%
- Reducing the influence of special interests and corruption in Washington - 77%
- Health care – 75%

[NBC/WSJ, 9/19/18]

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66% of registered voters are “somewhat/very satisfied” with the choice of congressional candidates in their district. This is also true of:

- 68% of white voters
- 64% of black voters
- 56% of Hispanic voters
- 54% of those age 18-29
- 74% of those age 65+

[PEW, 10/15]

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The Battleground

The Washington Post, along with the Schar School at George Mason University, surveyed 2,672 likely voters in 69 battleground congressional districts.

In 2016 these districts favored Republican candidates over Democratic ones 56% to 41%. In this poll these 69 districts favor the Democratic candidates over Republicans 50% to 46%. The following are a series of findings from that survey.

Who are the voters in these districts?

	<u>Battleground</u>	<u>All Districts</u>
White	78%	71%
Black	7%	12%
Hispanic	9%	11%
College graduates	32%	28%
Non-college	68%	72%

63 of these districts are currently held by Republicans. 6 are held by Democrats.

Trump's job approval number in all of these districts is 43%. 91% of those who approve are voting for the GOP candidate.

Trump's job disapproval number in these districts is 47%. 88% of those who disapprove are voting for the Dem candidate.

48 districts were won by Trump

- Trump's job approval rating is 46%
- Likely voters split 48% to 47% for the Democratic candidate

21 districts were won by Clinton

- Trump's job approval rating is 38%
- Likely voters split 53% to 43% for the Democratic candidate

The number of those surveyed saying that each of the following issues is "extremely" important:

Supreme Court and other judicial nominations	64%
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Donald Trump	60%
Healthcare	57%
Economy	55%
Immigration	52%
Gun violence	41%
Mueller Investigation	35%
International trade	33%

However, “when pushed as to the single most important issue influencing their vote” there is a different order of significance.

- #1 - Trump 26%
- #2 - Economy 19%
- #3 – Judicial nominations 16%

For self-identified Democrats and Independents, the order of issues of greatest influence is:

- #1 – Trump 40%
- #2 – Healthcare 20%

Among self-identified Republicans and Independents, the order of issues of greatest influence is:

- #1 – Economy 29%
- #2 – Judicial nominations 24%
- #3 – Immigration 17%
- #4 – Trump 15%

[All of the above is based on an article written by Dan Balz and Scott Clement, WP, 10/9/18]

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

[WW uses David Wasserman and the Cook Political Report for the House chart below. 10/12/18]

	Democrats	195
	Republicans	240
	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Safe in 2018	182	145
Likely	12	27

Lean	14	<u>Tossup</u>	24
	2		29

* * * * *

THE SENATE

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

There have been a few changes, one of them significant, since the last issue of the Watch. Safe Democratic seats dropped from 16 to 15 as Menendez moved from Safe to Likely Democratic at which point Likely Democrat moved from 6 to 7. Democratic Toss-Ups moved from 4 to 3 as Heitkamp moved from Democratic Toss-Up to Lean Republican.

Republicans	51
Democrats	47
Independents	2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Seats not up in 2018	23	42
Safe in 2018	15	5
Likely	7	1
	Casey	Cruz
	Baldwin	
	Tester	
	Smith	
	Brown	
	Manchin	
	Menendez	
Lean		1
		Heitkamp
Toss-ups	3	3
	Donnelly	Heller
	McCaskill	Arizona (open)
	Nelson	Tennessee (open)

* * * * *

At the moment, Ted Cruz is heading for re-election. Whatever the result, this election will always be known as the Senate election in which one of the candidates set a new fundraising record. Through the first week of October 2018, Beto O'Rourke raised \$62 million. He even surpassed the record set by Hillary Clinton in 2006 when she raised \$52 million. Ted Cruz has raised \$28 million. [WP, 10/11/18]

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Women Will Get It Done

Dr. Donna Strickland became the third woman — after Marie Curie in 1903 and Maria Goeppert Mayer in 1963 — to win the Nobel Prize in Physics. Francis H. Arnold won the prize in Chemistry, becoming the fifth woman to do so. [Jacey Fortin, NYT]

* * * * *

The new president of the San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank is Mary Daly, the current research director. With her promotion “three of the 12 regional fed banks will be led by women. One of three Fed governors is female. The Atlanta Fed’s president is the first African-American regional bank president in the central bank’s century of existence.”

Daly’s path to this position was a bit unusual. She lived on her own as a teenager and dropped out of high school. She then earned a GED and went to college.

Daly got her bachelor’s degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1985. She then got a master’s degree in 1987 at the University of Illinois Urbana- Champaign. She earned a PhD in economics from Syracuse University in 1994 and began working at the San Francisco Fed in 1996. [WSJ, 9/15-16/18]

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Women are more likely than men to see civility, compassion as essential qualities for political leaders

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>All Adults</u>
Be honest and ethical	90	91	91
Work well under pressure	79	79	79

Be able to work out compromises	77	79	78
Stand up for what they believe in	74	75	75
Maintain tone of civility and respect	75	61	68
Be compassionate and empathetic	72	60	66
Serve as a role model for children	71	59	65
Be willing to take risks	50	40	45
Be persuasive	44	45	45

[PEW, 9/20/18]

* * * * *

A law passed by the California Assembly and signed by Governor Brown requires that corporations incorporated in California or headquartered in California and listed on major U.S. stock exchanges must by the end of 2019:

- have at least one female director and by the end of 2021
- have at least 3 female members if the board has six or more members
- have 2 female directors if the board is 5 members
- and have at least 1 female director if the board size is 4 or fewer members.

[Forbes, 10/1/18]

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For every \$1 in company equity held by men in startups, women hold 47 cents. Despite accounting for 35% of the equity holding population in the study, women held only a share of 20%. When it comes to the stock compensation for female start-up founders the situation is even more bleak. Male founders each hold nearly \$2.2 million worth of company equity, compared with about \$858,000 for woman. [WP, 9/20/18]

* * * * *

In 2014, 41% of women said they believed that many Americans were not ready to elect a woman to higher office and that was a major reason why there are fewer women than men in those sorts of positions. When the question was asked again in 2018 the number of women who held that belief had grown to 57%.

In 2014, 31% of men shared that view and by 2018 that number had grown to 32%. [PEW]

* * * * *

“This is what GenderAvengers dream of! When our Avenger of the Week, Lawrence Black, Professor of Modern History and Head of Department, and the other organizers of University of York’s Brexit and History Conference were made aware that the speaker list was all male, he postponed the conference! You heard

that right: he made no excuses and no promises to do better next time, simply admitted that #manels are wrong and don't reflect the values of his department.”
[GA, 10/12/18]

* * * * *

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.)

SAN LORENZO
1316 9th Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-588-8954

We went to San Lorenzo with Virginia and Tom at Tom's suggestion.

San Lorenzo opened at the end of June. It is the creation of Chef Massimo Fabbri, most recently of Tosca and before that, Posto. Massimo stopped by our table to chat.

Chrissy Yee is the front of house manager.

The restaurant is narrow and there is a greeter's station at the front door. The restaurant seats around 70 people of which 14 are at the bar and 16 are seated in a raised partially enclosed section just past the bar. The balance of 40 seats are placed between the front window and up the left side of the restaurant in tables ranging from 2 tops to 6 tops.

The following dishes were shared by all.

Fiori Di Zucca – Deep fried squash blossoms, truffled goat cheese, tomato sauce, organic greens

Prosciutto (2 orders) – imported prosciutto, black mission figs, buffalo mozzarella, castello di ama olive oil (The prosciutto ham is sliced by a chef who comes from the kitchen at the back of the restaurant to a large slicer that is planted at the end of the bar nearest the front of the restaurant. I forgot to ask why the slicer is located at that particular location.)

Burrata – heirloom tomatoes, basil, crispy artichokes, balsamic

Calamari – roasted calamari, shaved Brussel sprouts, bell pepper sauce

Caccioicco – sautéed scallops, shrimp, mussels, cockles, potatoes, lobster, gremolata

Rosticciana – roasted Tuscan style pork ribs, sage, rosemary, broccolini, organic greens

Pappardelle – toska style rabbit ragu, white wine, herbs, olive oil

Tortelli –crown-shaped ravioli filled with robbiola, black truffle, porcini mushroom, sauce (2 orders)

Ciocolato – chocolate mascarpone truffle torte, orange liqueur sauce, raspberries, candied pistachios

Robbiolina – thyme, honey & robbiolina cheesecake, black raspberry compote, graham cracker streusel

Crostata – summer fruit crostata (peach and blueberry), house made vanilla gelato

The service was more than attentive from our server and the folks who clear the dishes from each course before the next is delivered.

There are two gender neutral restrooms just past the kitchen at the back of the restaurant. They are small. There is a white ceramic commode with a metal shelf that holds the appropriate necessary tools. There is a square white ceramic-like counter with a sunken square wash basin. It is headed by a large mirror, above which are three very large light bulbs.

The walls are covered to waist height with white rectangular tiles and above by orange and off-white designed wall paper. The floor is covered with large white tiles.

There is something enjoyable about this restaurant and Debbie and I are looking forward to our next visit.

* * * * *

Siren
Located in the Darcy Hotel
1515 Rhode Island Ave, NW
Washington DC 20005
202-521-7171
Sirenbyrw.com

Debbie and I went to Siren with Rita and Bob two days after the announcement was made that the restaurant had been awarded a Michelin Star.

Siren is one of nine restaurants in the D.C. area with a Michelin Star. Two restaurants have two Michelin Stars and The Inn at Little Washington was just awarded its third Michelin Star.

Rita made the reservation.

Siren has been open for about a year and a half. It was started by two prominent DC chefs, Robert Wiedmaier and Brian McBride.

There are four stairs required to access the restaurant proper. (When I asked I was assured that there is an accessibility path to the restaurant.)

Immediately to the right as you enter the restaurant is very long bar with 16 high, well padded, chairs. The first part of the bar is a regular beverage bar. After an angular move to the left, the bar fronts on a seafood prep area with cooks preparing a variety of raw dishes. One can also select from the regular menu while sitting at the bar.

At the end of the bar is a table for eight. The balance of the restaurant is primarily a series of 2 and 4-person booths and tables. One thing I did notice is that all of the seating, whether booths or individual chairs, is quite comfortable.

According to one of the hosts, the restaurant seats 100 people. There are also six areas for private parties of many sizes including one that will seat up to 80 people. An outdoor seating area is available weather permitting.

Live music is provided by a piano player, a bass player and on some evenings, a drummer.

Prior to the meal we were served tiny cones filled with lobster mousse.

A plate of house made flat breads with coriander and fennel along with soft butter were provided for the table and refreshed several times during the evening.

Rita ordered Grilled Little Gem Lettuce – baby vegetables, papalo mousse, cumin vinaigrette.

Debbie selected Roasted Path Valley Asparagus – garlic, cured egg, ash.

Rita and Debbie both ordered Fisherman’s Stew – lobster + shrimp dumpling, bass, scallops, clams, sea urchin, squid ink brittle.

Bob went with Path Valley Cherry Tomatoes – seaweed, elderflower, lemon balm and Halibut – smoked lamb cream, bok choy, lima beans, roe, “things served in their shells”.

I started with Wala Wala Onion Brulee – kale, country ham, pecans, shishito, nori followed by Duck – wild rice, rhubarb, plum, mustard see, Szechuan.

For desserts Rita and Bob shared Spice & Figs – five spice cake, mascarpone, fig jam salted oatmeal crunch, vanilla ice cream.

Debbie and I shared the Chocolate Tart – cocoa petit beurre, dark chocolate ganache, toasted walnuts, brown butter whipped cremeux.

Toward the end of dinner chef owner Brian McBride stopped by the table to ask how we enjoyed dinner. Rita said the salad that she had received “was the best salad she had ever eaten.” He chatted for a while, talking about some of the other restaurants in Washington in which he and Wiedmaier were involved. We told him that we looked forward to our next visit.

The restrooms are part of the hotel not the restaurant. They are on a lower floor.

The following restroom review was done by Rita. This is only the second time in WW history that the restroom written about was the woman’s restroom. The previous time was in London many years ago. That review was also designed by a Rita.

“A very nice waiter (not ours) insisted on taking me to the elevator that leads to the restroom, on a lower level. He pointed out that it is not actually part of the

restaurant, but belongs to the Darcy Hotel, which houses Siren by RW. So the restroom has a different design sensibility than the restaurant, but was comfortable, clean and looked like care had gone into designing it.

“The walls are covered in a deep, purple-mauve, textured wallpaper. Floors are planked oak (or maybe faux), and the sink area is a deep grey/black marble with modern chrome faucets. There are 5 stalls, encased in wood enclosures. As one enters there is a half-circle, marble table with ample supply of tampons and sanitary napkins, which will make many women grateful.”

There is valet parking at the main entrance of the hotel.

The restaurant is open for dinner every night starting at 4:00 p.m. It is also open for Sunday brunch beginning at 11:00 a.m. It is not open for lunch. When we asked why the restaurant did not serve lunch the answer given is that its location does not allow for a natural lunch crowd.

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Rose's Luxury
717 8th St SE
Capitol Hill
Washington, DC
202-580-8889

I had not previously attempted to dine at Rose's Luxury because I was not up to standing in line to make a reservation and I never got around to hiring a line stander. Debbie and I had eaten at Pineapple and Pearls (WW #159-12/2017) which is located next door which we thoroughly enjoyed. Both restaurants are owned by Aaron Silverman.

The restaurant does not take reservations in the usual way with a couple of exceptions; for parties of 6 and 8 in the main dining room there are a couple of tables. Also there is an option on the second floor for one seating a night for 8-12 people at a higher price than the regular menu. Reservations can only be made for those tables through the restaurant's website.

Our friend Justin had been to Rose's Luxury before and invited us to join him for dinner saying he would take care of getting a reservation for the night in question at 7:30 p.m.

To get that reservation, Justin called a messenger service. For \$50 he was able to get a messenger to stand in line starting at 3:00 p.m. of the day on which we were going to have dinner. At 5:00 p.m. when the restaurant opens for reservations each person in line is able to ask for a reservation at a particular time. Assuming there are still tables available at the hour for the number of people in the person's party. The reservation is then made and the line stander can leave. As the appointed hour comes...the person with the reservation receives a text message that their table is ready. The table is held for 15 minutes after that message is sent.

We got to the restaurant around 7 p.m. and went two doors down to another bar/restaurant having nothing to do with Rose's luxury and had a drink while we waited for the appointed time. On this evening Justin received the alert at 7:50 p.m. We arrived at the restaurant about five minutes later.

As you enter the restaurant there is a reception desk.

About a third and then mid-way back through the restaurant, there is a server's station on the right, followed by the kitchen on the same side. There is an aisle in front of the kitchen running to the back. Across that aisle there is a "chef's table" that seats eight facing the kitchen. Behind the chefs table there is a second aisle leading to the back of the restaurant. No surprise, there are additional tables at the back of the restaurant. There is a combination of 2, 4, 6 and 8 tops on the main floor.

Immediately behind the reception desk there is a "long" flight of stairs that leads to the second floor of the restaurant.

I did not attempt the stairs but on the second floor, there is an L shaped bar, that seats at least a dozen people where one can imbibe or have dinner or both. There is also seating for at least one party of up to 12 people. At the top of the stairs there is a couch and comfy chairs for those waiting for a seat at the bar.

There are also two 2 tops and a single 4 top outside the restaurant on the sidewalk, weather permitting.

We were immediately seated at a table at the front of the restaurant.

The servers and some of the cooks wear ordinary clothes. There is nothing approaching a uniform.

Our server was Valarie who has worked at the restaurant for about a year and a half. She was very attentive and helpful in explaining the various dishes on the menu. When it came to delivering food as it was ready, at least three other servers delivered one dish or another. Each of them described the dish they were delivering. According to Valarie, the restaurant overall can seat up to 114 people at a single sitting.

To get a full flavor of the menu I suggest you look at the restaurant's website which has great pictures of a variety of dishes.

Except for Whole-grilled Dorade and grilled Prime T-bone steaks the items on this menu are sui-generis. As their descriptions suggest these dishes are prepared in ways that we have not experienced at any other restaurant.

Dinner is designed to be shared but undoubtedly one could arrange with your table mates not to share although that would mean some folks would be eating while others are gazing wistfully.

We shared all of the dishes.

At the outset, potato meal dinner rolls were delivered with appropriate butters. We ordered the following:

Under "new stuff":

Smash Potato/bagna cauda, cotija, hard-boiled egg

Romanesco Wedge/fried with cashew dressing, mint & dill

BBQ Spare Ribs/ fish sauce caramel, tarragon

Under "classics":

Lychee Salad/pork sausage, habanero & peanuts

Under "pastas":

Sun gold Tomatoes/bucatini, grana Padano & basil

Not on the menu:

Pasta with Cacio e Pepe

Under “specials”:

Squash Blossom Rangoon/jumbo lump crab, chili crunch, sweet & sour sauce

One of the things we learned was that the restaurant does have dishes available which are not on the menu. For example, we saw fried chicken being taken to the second-floor area and Justin was able to order “Pasta with Cacio e Pepe” that he had enjoyed on a previous occasion.

Then there were the Desserts. On this night there were four choices. At my suggestion the three of us ordered all four of them:

Mini Chocolate Cake /with blue cheese, cherries & almonds

Coconut Milk Ice Cream/with burnt, coconut, lime & kiwi

Eggplant “Tarte Tatin”/with milk ice cream & pine nuts

Popcorn Crème Brulee.

My favorite of the above was the Eggplant “Tarte Tatin”

The restaurant is as comfortably informal as a restaurant can be although there were guests in coat and tie and various forms of finer wear.

There is a single restroom at the back of the 1st floor dining room and 2 restrooms on the 2nd floor. I did not attempt either.

Dinner is the only meal served.

Monday-Saturday

5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Mike

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