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

State of the Nation

36% of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction. 55% say it is on the wrong track. [Economist/YouGov 1/1/19]

In December, 31% of us were satisfied with the way things were going in the United States while 56% were dissatisfied. Satisfaction has dropped from 38% in October. [Gallup 12/12/18]

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2018 is 39%.

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 December 2018 is 7.6%.

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The Demographics of Unemployment
for December 2018

Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)
Women – 3.2% (same)
Men – 3.1% (increase)

Unemployment by Race
White - 3.4% (increase)
Black – 6.6% (increase)
Hispanic – 4.4% (decrease)
Asian – 3.3% (increase)

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)
Less than high school – 5.8% (increase)
High School – 3.8% (increase)

Some college – 3.3% (increase)
Bachelor's Degree or higher – 2.1% (decrease)

In November 2018, 29 states had unemployment rates below the national average; 3 states had an unemployment rate that was exactly at the national rate of 3.7%; 20 states and D.C. and Puerto Rico had unemployment rates that were above the national average.

Alaska, at 6.5% and Puerto Rico at 7.7%, had the highest unemployment rates in the country. Louisiana, West Virginia and D.C. had unemployment rates of 5.0% or more but less than 6.0%. 16 states had unemployment rates that were 4.0% or greater but less than 5.0%. [Bureau of Labor Statistics]

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Twenty years ago, manufacturing jobs represented 14% of all jobs. Today these jobs represent 8.5% of all employment. In 2000 we had more than 17 million jobs in factories. Today there are 13 million such jobs. [Steve Rattner 12/10/18]

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Roughly half of all U.S. zip codes still have lower total employment than they did in 2007. The top 20% of zip codes have added 3.6 million jobs. [John Littieri, Economic Innovation Group. Axios 12/10/18]

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The number of unauthorized immigrants in the United States hit a peak of 12.2 million in 2007. In 2016 that number had dropped by 1.5 million to 10.7 million.

The drop over this 9-year period is accounted for primarily by a drop in the number of unauthorized immigrants from Mexico by 1.5 million, a drop of 240,000 from South America, a drop of 130,000 from Europe and Canada and an *increase* of 375,000 from Central America.

66% of the unauthorized have lived her for more than 10 years and another 18% have been here for 5 years or less. [PEW 12/1/18]

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60% of Americans say that the candidates who were elected in 2018 were elected to make compromises on legislation. 29% say they should stick to their campaign positions. [NBC/WSJ 12/12/18]

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9% of respondents think that 2018 was one of the best years for the United States while 19% say it was one of the worst years. Another 21% say it was an above average year while 26% say it was a below average year.

When asked how they would rate the year on a personal basis, 35% said it was one of the best or above average year. 25% said that on a personal basis it was a below average year or one of the worst years. [NBC/12/12/18]

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During the next 12 months, 28% of us think the economy will get better. That is a drop from January 2018 when 35% thought the economy was going to be getting better and January 2017 when 41% thought the economy would be getting better. [NBC/WSJ 12/12/18]

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This and That

Leon Panetta served as the budget director and White House Chief of Staff under President Clinton and as defense secretary and CIA director under President Obama. He also served for 8 terms in the Congress representing California. Panetta recently penned a piece in the Washington Post titled, "Five lessons that never seem to be learned from shutting down the government."

These are the five lessons.
- Harming people never works.
- The more you blame others, the more the public blames you.
- Negotiations are impossible without trust.
- Never negotiate in public.
- If the president fails, Congress must lead.

The full text is worth reading. [WP 12/28/18]

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Chicago recorded nearly 1900 homicides between 2015 and 2017.

Baltimore, the next closest city, registered around 1000 homicides. Because of these numbers, Chicago has been called the "murder capital".

The facts are that in 2017, Chicago ranked 14th among cities with at least 100,000 people. Since 2014 the "murder capital" of the United States has been St. Louis, Missouri.   The murder rate in St. Louis in 2017 was 66 homicides per 100,000 people. Other cities with murder rates greater than Chicago were Baltimore, Detroit and New Orleans. [PEW 11/13/18]

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"Justice" is the 2018 word of the year as chosen by Merriam-Webster. Oxford Dictionaries chose the word "toxic" and Dictionary.com chose "misinformation."

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In the United States 57% of men and 60% women say abortion should be legal in all or most cases. In England, 80% of men and 81% of women say that abortion should be legal in all or most cases. [PEW 12/14/18]

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29% of U.S. adults say they make no purchases using cash during a typical week. This is up from 24% in 2015. [Pew 12/15/18]

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256,000 people were deported in 2018. The record over the last two administrations was in 2012 when 409,849 people were deported.

2018 – 256,000; 2017 – 226,000;
2016 – 240,255; 2015 – 235,413; 2014 – 315,943; 2013 – 368,644;
2012 – 409,849; 2011 – 396,906; 2010 – 392,862; 2009 – 389,834
[Dept of Homeland Security—ICE]

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An increasing number of registered voters say that people cause climate change.

	December 4, 2018	November 23, 2015
Caused by human activity	58%	45%
A natural phenomenon	30%	37%

Not happening	4%	6%
No opinion	8%	12%

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For the first time in 75 years, the United States has become a net oil exporter. This is the result of an unprecedented boom in productions from Texas, New Mexico, North Dakota and Pennsylvania. The U.S. is the world's largest petroleum producer having surpassed Russia and Saudi Arabia. [Bloomberg 12/7]

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Nebraska has taken a huge hit as a result of Trump's trade fight with China. So far in 2018, it is estimated that retaliatory tariffs have caused Nebraska's farmers to lose between $695 million and $1.026 billion. Factor in labor income losses and the total economic hit to the state is $859 million to $1.26 billion. [Omaha World Herald 12/6/18]

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Last year the number of U.S. children without health insurance jumped to 3.9 million children, up from 3.6 million in 2016. [Georgetown University 12/1/8]

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47% of U.S. adults prefer to get their news by watching it,
34% prefer to read it and
18% prefer to listen to it.

Of those who prefer watching the news, 75% chose TV, 20% chose the internet, 2% chose the radio and 2% chose print.

Of those who prefer watching the news, 61% of those 18-49 years of age choose TV while 34% choose online. Of those 50 years of age and older, 86% chose TV and 10% chose the internet. [PEW 12/3/18]

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A new law took effect in California, on January 1st, that gives new "rights" to pets in court cases. In the past, in divorce cases pets have been treated as physical property, now judges may consider the best interests of animals in divorce cases. [NBC News 12/29/18]

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Quotes

"I have always tried to remember that I am not important, and no one elected me to anything. But I was doing a necessary job."
-- Rob Cristensen, retiring after 45 years covering North Carolina politics for the News & Observer

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"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so."
-- Mark Twain

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"An imperfect man, he left us with a more perfect union."
--John Meacham about
President George Herbert Walker Bush at Bush's funeral

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"George H.W. Bush was a wonderful human being who possessed a strong faith in God and believed there is greatness in each of us. The Occasion of his passing should serve as a reminder that we can – by living life to the fullest, keeping our eyes on the common good and working together – build a more perfect union here at home and a more peaceful world abroad."
--Jeb Bush and James Baker [WP 12/4/18]

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"I don't want to be president...My path has never been politics. I just happened to marry someone whose passion was politics. Just because he likes it doesn't mean that I like it."
--Michelle Obama

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"Hatred corrodes the container it is carried in."
--Chinese proverb

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"Pour yourself a drink, put on some lipstick and pull yourself together."
--Elizabeth Taylor

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"I've been ambitious my whole life. It's not a dirty word. I want to be rich!"
--Aminatou Sow, New York Times

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"There is something about the American spirit – about the bedrock decency and common sense of the American – that seems to help us find our way, something about American history that redeems itself in a way that inspires us all. I would summarize it by quoting my favorite pundit, Otto von Bismarck. He was not known for his punditry, but he is famously said to have said: 'God looks after children, drunkards, idiots and the United States of America.' I think He still does. I hope he still does."
--Charles Krauthammer, The Enduring Miracle of the American Constitution

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"It's the old cliché where geniuses built the system so an idiot could run it. We are completely testing that theory at this very moment."
--Bruce Springsteen

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"Women belong in all places where decisions are made."
--Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg

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President Trump

On January 1, 2019 Economist/YouGov found that 45% of Americans approved of Trump's job performance and 53% disapproved. Among those approving the president's performance are 11% of liberals, 33% of moderates and 79% of conservatives.

On December 22, 2018, Gallup found (among all adults) that 39% of Americans approve of President Trump's job performance and 55% disapprove.

Effective with the survey noted above, Gallup will no longer provide a daily or weekly approval rating of the president. Beginning on January 15, 2019 Gallup will report presidential job approval on a monthly basis.

I now include a periodic polling summary--Registered and Likely Voters--by FiveThirtyEight.

	Gallup (All Adults)		FiveThirtyEight (Reg/Likely voters)	
Date	Approval	Disapproval	Approval	Disapproval
12/30/18	--	--	41.4%	53.3%
12/22/18	39%	55%	--	--
12/2/18	40%	56%	42.5%	52.7%
11/4/18	40%	54%	--	--
11/1/18	--	--	42%	53.2%
10/14/18	44%	51%	42.1	52.4%
9/30/18	42%	53%	41.5%	52.7%
9/2/18	41%	53%	--	--
9/1/18	--	--	40.3	54.4
8/1/18	--	--	41.4	52.9
7/1/18	42%	53%	41.8%	52.3
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)

Date	NBC/WSJ	WP/ABC	CNN	NYT/CBS	FOX
DEC'18	43/54A	xxx	39/52	xxx	46/52
NOV'18	xxx	xxx	xxx	36/58cbsA	xxx
ELECTION 11/6					
NOV'18	46/52L	44/52	41/57L	XXX	XXX
JAN '18	39/57A	38/58	43/53	37/58cbsA	45/53
DEC '17	41/56	xxx	36/59	36/57 cbsA	xxx
JAN '17	xxx	xxx	44/53	40/48cbs	xxx

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The following are job approval numbers from Gallup for the last nine presidents and Trump.

Job Approval – Roughly 23 months into the 1st term

Kennedy	76% (12/64)
Eisenhower	69% (12/54)
GW Bush	61% (12/90)

GHW Bush	63% (12/02)		
Nixon	52% (12/70)		
Carter	51% (12/78)		
Obama	47% (12/10)		
Trump	39% (12/18)		
Clinton	40% (12/94)		
Reagan	41% (12/82)		

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

	Approve	Disapprove	
1/1/19	47%	46%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
12/6/18	48%	42%	CNBC (A)
11/18/18	52%	41%	CBS News (A)
10/9/18	51%	42%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
9/9/18	51%	53%	CNN(RV)
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.

	Approve	Disapprove	
1/1/19	42%	51%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
12/11/18	42%	51%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
11/19/18	42%	53%	Quinnipiac (RV)
10/9/18	45%	48%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
9/9/18	38%	56%	CNN (RV)
8/21/18	37%	55%	Fox News
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

35% of Americans say that Trump has brought the right kind of change but 43% say he has brought the wrong kind of change. 20% say there has been no change.

When asked who they want to see taking a lead role in setting policy, 48% choose the Democrats in Congress, 21% choose the Republicans in Congress. Only 19% choose the President. [NBC/WSJ 12/12/18]

The turnover in Trump's cabinet is unprecedented in recent history. As of early January, there have been 12 staffing changes in his Cabinet. Second place in this category was Bill Clinton who had 6 cabinet changes by this point in his first term. [FiveThirtyEight 1/9/19]

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34% of U.S. adults believe that Donald Trump has been honest and truthful when it comes to the investigation into Russian interference with the 2016 presidential election and related members. 64% do not think he has been honest and truthful. [NBC/WSJ 12/12/18]

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Because the U.S. Senate remains in Republican hands and the filibuster is no more, the President can continue unchecked his goal of remaking the federal judiciary.

Nominated and Confirmed to Date

	Total	Supreme Ct	Appeals Ct	District Ct
Trump – thru 1/4/19	85	2	30	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

There are currently nominations pending for 12 seats on the Courts of Appeals, 56 seats on the District Courts and 2 seats on the Courts of International Trade.

There are currently 12 vacancies on the U.S. Courts of Appeals, 118 vacancies on the U.S. District Courts and 2 vacancies on the U.S. Court of International Trade.

[uscourts/Wikipedia]

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Donald Trump gained a national reputation by saying "you're fired" in his role as the head of the "Apprentice" TV show. But when it comes to actually firing someone in the government he rarely if ever does the deed himself.

Most recently, after Secretary of Defense Mattis delivered a stinging resignation letter to be effective February 29, 2019, Trump tasked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo with the task of telling Secretary of Defense Mattis that he was fired and to leave his post by the end of 2018. Subsequently, during a cabinet meeting, Trump trashed Mattis.

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On his trip to Iraq, President Trump told soldiers that they had not received a raise in pay for ten years and he told them that he had raised their pay by 10% for 2019. The truth is that the military has received some form of raise every year for the last 30 years. The raise for 2019 is 2.6% and is the largest raise the military has received in the past nine years. The raise in 2018 was 2.4%. Trump had requested a raise of 2.1%.

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As of the first of the year, the Department of Defense is being run by a former senior airline manufacturing company executive, the Environmental Protection Agency is being run by a former coal lobbyist, the Department of Health and Human Services is being run by a former pharmaceutical lobbyist and Interior is being run by a former oil-industry lobbyist [NYT]

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Because of President Trump's "casual" use of facts, i.e. repeating again and again things as facts which are not true, the Washington Post's Fact Checker has had

to change his Four Pinocchio Test (which has been the test of something which is just not true).

The new test, the Bottomless Pinocchio Test, will be awarded to politicians who repeat a false claim so many times that "they are engaging in campaigns of disinformation."

To qualify for a Bottomless Pinocchio, a "claims must have received three or four Pinocchios and they must have been repeated at least 20 times. Bottomless Pinocchios will be listed separately from regular Pinocchios.

As of December 10th, the only politician who meets the new standard is President Trump. [WP 12/10/18]

As of December 31, 2018, Trump has hit 7,600 untruths since he took office, an average of 300 untruths a month. [WP 12/31/18]

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Disassembling

The Trump administration unveiled a plan to force hundreds of thousands of Americans to hold jobs if they want to continue receiving food stamps. The administration is planning to do so by executive action as this is not something they could accomplish by going through Congress. [WP 12/20/18]

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A "deploy or get out" policy, unveiled by the Trump administration in February 2018, directs the Pentagon to identify service members who cannot be deployed to military posts outside of the United States for more than 12 consecutive months and to separate them from military service. Since current U.S. military policy identifies servicemembers living with HIV as non-deployable they face immediate discharge under this policy. [Good 12/20/18]

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Under new advice issued by Trump administration health officials, states would be free to redefine the use of ACA subsidies. Under the new guidelines, states could allow the subsidies to be used for health plans the administration has been promoting that are less expensive and would provide skimpier benefits and fewer consumer protections. [WP 11/29/18]

Just a month before this year's open enrollment period began for the Affordable Care Act plans, the Trump administration removed an online resource intended to help members of the Latino community enroll for health care. [WP 12/11/18]

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The Trump administration announced a plan that would weaken restrictions on coal-fired power plants, allowing them to release mercury and other pollutants linked to respiratory illnesses into the atmosphere. [NYT/Axios 12/28/18]

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HUD Secretary Ben Carson, a former neurosurgeon, has been a longtime skeptic of using government power to eliminate discriminatory housing practices. He proved that once again by suspending an Obama-era rule, mandating that communities fix long-standing patterns of discrimination. [WP 1/2/18]

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2016 Election

In the 2016 election:
  55.7% of the voting-age population voted
  61% of voting-age citizens voted
  85.8% of registered voters voted.

[PEW 5/21/18]

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2018 Election

The following data is from the 2018 election National Exit Polls

	% of electorate	Republican	Democrat
Men	48%	51%	47%
Women	52%	40%	59%
White men	35%	60%	39%
White women	37%	49%	49%
Ages 18-44	35%	36%	61%
Ages 45+	65%	50%	49%
Whites	72%	54%	44%
African Americans	11%	9%	90%
Latinos	11%	29%	69%

High school or less	23%	51%	48%
Some college	36%	49%	50%
College +	41%	39%	60%
Northeast	20%	37%	61%
Midwest	25%	50%	48%
South	31%	52%	47%
West	24%	38%	60%
Urban	32%	32%	65%
Suburban	51%	49%	49%
Rural	17%	56%	42%
Republicans	33%	94%	6%
Independents/Others	30%	42%	54%
Democrats	37%	4%	95%

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2020

The 59th presidential election will take place on November 3, 2020.

The list of potential candidates from both parties will be sorted into three categories: "Announced/Running", "Testing the Waters" and "Mentioned".

The reason folks end up in the "Announced/Running/Formed Committee" category is obvious.

The "Testing the Waters" category is for those folks who make some statement or take some action that suggests they are considering a candidacy, such as traveling to various early primary states or announcing in some fashion that they are testing the waters.

At this time, potential candidates are not required to file a campaign committee with the Federal Election Commission. The rules relating to limits on contributions from individuals, etc. do apply and internal records must be maintained. If and when a person decides to be a candidate for president, financial activity for this period must be reported.

The "Mentioned" category is for everyone else who gets mentioned, on their own behalf or by someone else.

When a person is no longer part of a category, a line will be drawn through his or her name in the next issue of the Watch and in the subsequent issue (starting with this issue) it will be erased.

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WW's chutzpah award goes to Michael Avenatti (attorney for Stormy Daniels). The following appeared in a December 4, 2018 edition of Politico.

Michael Avenatti announced on Tuesday that he will not run for president in 2020, saying his family has requested he not mount a campaign and warning the Democratic party must put up an aggressive candidate against Donald Trump.

"I do not make this decision lightly – I make it out of respect for my family. But for their concerns, I would run."

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Democratic Primary

Announced/Running/Formed Committee
Congressman John Delaney (D) – announced 7/22/17
Julian Castro (D) – Former HUD Secretary
Richard Ojeda, West Virginia – failed congressional candidate – announced
Elizabeth Warren (D) – U.S. Senator
Andrew Yang – Entrepreneur – announced
Kamala Harris (D) – U.S. Senator

Testing the Waters
Joe Biden (D) – former Vice President, former U.S. Senator
Cory Booker (D) – U.S. Senator
Kirsten Gillibrand (D) – U.S. Senator
Tim Ryan (D) – U.S. Representative
Bernie Sanders (D) – U.S. Senator
~~Tom Steyer – Billionaire philanthropist~~
Eric Swalwell (D) – U.S. Representative
Marianne Williamson – Spiritualist, teacher
Jay Inslee (D) – Governor of Washington

Mentioned
Howard Schultz – Founder & Exec. Chairman, Starbucks
~~Mark Cuban – Businessman and Owner, Dallas Mavericks~~

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
~~Sheryl Sandberg – Executive~~
~~Oprah Winfrey – Entertainer~~
~~Mark Zuckerberg – Executive~~

~~Andrew Cuomo (D) – Governor of New York~~
John Hickenlooper (D) – Governor of Colorado
Steve Bullock (D) – Governor of Montana
~~Jerry Brown (D) – Governor of California~~
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~~

~~Seth Moulton (D – U.S. Representative~~
~~Maxine Waters (D) – U.S. Representative~~
Tulsi Gabbard (D) – U.S. Representative
~~Joe Kennedy (D) – U.S. Representative~~
Beto O'Rourke – U.S. Representative
Amy Klobuchar (D) – U.S. Senator

~~Tim Kaine (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
Bob Casey (D) – U.S. Senator
Michael Bennet (D) – U.S. Senator

Lincoln Chafee (D) – former mayor, Rhode Island governor and U.S. Senator
Eric Holder (D) – former Attorney General
John Kerry (D) – former U.S. Senator, former Secretary of State, former
        presidential candidate
~~Hillary Clinton (D) – former Secretary of State, former Senator, former
        presidential candidate~~
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
~~George Clooney (D)~~
~~Al Gore (D) – former vice president~~

The Democratic nominating convention is scheduled for July 13-16, 2020 at a site to be determined (Miami or Houston).

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In a survey of registered Democrats and Independents, taken December 11-16, respondents were asked if they are "excited" about a possible run of the following potential Democratic presidential candidates: Clinton, Sanders, Biden, Warren, Bloomberg, Booker, Harris, O'Rourke, Klobuchar and "Someone else".

The winner is "Someone else." The rough rank order of the other candidates is Biden (the only one to break 50%), Sanders, O'Rourke, Harris, Booker, Warren, Bloomberg, Klobuchar and Clinton.

Respondents were asked if they believed there were any of these candidates that should not run. Clinton leads that list with 65-70% saying they believe she should not run. The others in rough rank order are Sanders (roughly 40%), Warren, Bloomberg, Biden, Booker & Harris (about the same), O'Rourke & Klobuchar. [WP 12/27/18]

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Only the leading five candidates in each poll will be listed below.

CNN Poll 12/6-9	Morning Consult 12/14-16
Biden 30%	Biden 25%
Sanders 14%	Sanders 15%
O'Rourke 9%	Clinton 13%
Booker 5%	O'Rourke 8%
Harris 4%	Harris 3%
Kerry 4%	Warren 3%
	Booker 3%

In a column on December 18, 2018 in the NYT, Frank Bruni pointed out that in December 2014 CNN published a poll on the potential Republican nominees. They were, in rank order, Jeb Bush, Chris Christie, Ben Carson, Rand Paul and Mike Huckabee.

* * * * *
Early State Democratic Primaries
Select polls, December 2018

Iowa
Biden 32%, Sanders 19%, O'Rourke 11%, Warren 8%, Harris 5%, Booker 4%,
Bloomberg 3%, Klobuchar 3%

[Selzer & Company 12/10-13/18]

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Republican Primary

Announced/Running
Donald Trump (R) – President

Testing the Waters
John Kasich (R) - Governor of Ohio (about to retire)

Mentioned
Don Blakenship (R) - Business Executive
Jeff Flake (R) – former U.S. Senator
Larry Hogan (R) - Governor of Maryland
Bill Kristol (R) - Journalist

The Republican nominating convention is scheduled for August 24-27, 2020 in Charlotte, NC.

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Each presidential primary/caucus season will always be different than those that have preceded it; primary/caucus dates will change, states that held caucuses in the past will adopt primaries and there will be other changes.
Consider the following:

2/3/19	Iowa Caucus	Millions of ballots will be mailed out to Californians for its March 3, 2019 primary And voters could start mailing them back before the…
2/11/19	New Hampshire Primary	
		Texans will have an opportunity

<div style="text-align: right">to mail in their primary ballots before the…</div>

2/22/19	Nevada Primary
2/29/19	South Carolina Primary
3/3/19	Super Tuesday primaries in California, Texas, Alabama, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vermont and Virginia (In 2018, nearly 7 in 10 votes cast in the California primary were mail-in absentee)

<div style="text-align: center">* * * * *</div>

At least 5 states have decided to forego their traditional caucuses in favor of primaries to select the Democratic candidate in 2020: Nebraska, Colorado, Idaho, Maine and Minnesota. As of now, 9 states will still use caucuses to select the democratic nominee.

When registered voters are asked who they will vote for in 2020, 23% say they will definitely vote for Trump. Another 15% say they will probably vote for him. 39% will definitely vote for the Democratic candidate and another 13% say they will probably vote for the democratic candidate. [NBC/WSJ 12/12/18]

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Congress

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Approval of the Congress generally remains in the tank although it is still better than it was at the first of the year.

	Approve	Disapprove
Real Clear Pol. 1/1/19	19.6%	69.3%
Real Clear Pol. 12/11	19.9%	69.3%
Real Clear Pol. 11/13	19.9%	69.3%
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 Pol. 1/4/18	15.8%	72.6%

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There will be 102 women in the House this year (23+%) and 25 women in the Senate (25%).

<center>* * * * *</center>

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

<center>

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2020

Democrats 235
Republicans 200

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	Democrats	Republicans
Safe in 2020	182	163
Likely	19	19
Lean	18	14
Toss Up		
	16	4

<center>* * * * *</center>

15 Democrats did not vote for Nancy Pelosi as she was elected Speaker of the House for the second time. She was first elected to the post in 2007.

These 15 Democrats represent districts that are 20% more white, 60% less black, 67% less Asian and 78% less Hispanic/Latino then the average Democratic district.

Here are some additional statistics.

	The 15 Democrats	Average House Democrat
Average Age	47	56
Percent vote in last election	55%	69%
Cook PVI of District	R+2	D+12

<div align="right">[Quorum]</div>

<center>* * * * *</center>

Here are a few factoids about the new House. It includes:
- The first Muslim women – 2 of them
- The first Native American Women – 2 of them

<center>21</center>

- The youngest woman ever elected to the House

* * * * *

THE SENATE

[WW is using Jennifer E. Duffy and the Cook Political Report for the Senate chart below. 11/15/18]

In 2020 the Republicans will be defending 22 seats while the Democrats will be defending 12 seats.

Republicans	53	
Democrats	45	
Independents	2	

	Democrats	Republicans
Seats not up in 2020	23	31
Safe in 2020	10	16
	Coons	Sullivan
	Durbin	Cotton
	Markey	Risch
	Peters	Ernst
	Shaheen	Roberts
	Booker	Cassidy
	Udall	Hyde-Smith
	Merkley	Daines
	Reed	Sasse
	Warner	Inhofe
		Graham
		Rounds
		Tennessee
		Cornyn
		Moore Capito
		Enzi
Likely	1	3
	Smith	Perdue
		McConnell
		Tillis
Lean	1	3

Jones	McSally
	Gardner
	Collins

* * * * *

Women Will Get It Done

Here are 5 Quotes from the New York Times

"We can't knock on anybody's doors, we have to build our own house."
--Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, the youngest women every elected to Congress

"I am an independent person, and I am no one's pawn."
--Christine Blasey Ford, Testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee

"It was like they assumed my brain and totally changed overnight. I was seen as having no more potential."
--Erin Murphy, Corporate executive passed over for promotions because of her pregnancies

"Are you a dog? No? then why are you urinating in the street?"
--Protest stickers placed on street urinals in Paris, installed to solve the problem of men peeing in the street

A special edition of Women Will Get It Done will follow in the next month or so.

* * * * *

Restaurants

Espita Mezcaleria
1250 9th Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
202-621-9695
Espitadc.com

    I have not written about restaurants serving Mexican food because many years ago I decided that Mexican cuisine was not among my favorite cuisines. After dinner at Espita Mezcaleria I am rethinking that judgement.

Debbie and I went to Espita with Diane, John and Carol. It was a celebration of Carol's birthday.

When you enter the restaurant the greeter's station is straight ahead, a step down. Directly to the left on the main floor begins a strip of 2 and 4 tops in two rows that could be pulled together in various combinations. On the wall side of each table the seating is on wooden benches with individual chairs on the other side. This area can seat up to 55 people.

Behind the greeters is a bar area. There are a series of high stools along the bar. On the other side of this raised area across from the bar is a shelf about the height of the bar with another series of high stools. Folks sitting at the shelf sometimes face the open restaurant and sometimes face the bar. This area seats 26 people.

There is an outdoor area with 2 tops and a clear plastic curtain that can be lowered when the weather necessitates it. This area can seat up to 55 people and has heaters.

Our table seats the five of us with one person at the end of the table.

The walls are covered with a variety of painted murals by an artist from Mexico.

I case you are wondering, Mezcal is a distilled alcoholic beverage made from agave nectar.

"The restaurant specializes in Oaxacan cuisine seen through the lens of the Mid-Atlantic." The restaurant does not serve traditional Oaxacan dishes. The restaurant uses authentic Oaxacan flavors and techniques applied to the seasonal bounty of this region.

Josh, the founder and owner, is also the sommelier and came by our table to talk about the "whiskey." In many ways this restaurant is a family affair.

Gabriel also came by to talk about the food.

Debbie and I met Gabriel when he and Maricris catered a dinner at our home for some of our friends.

Our server was Autumn Rose. The service was as good as it gets.

We started our dinner by sharing Guacamole and corn chips that are made in house. They are much better than the commercial chips that most restaurants offer and the guacamole was superb. We also order Nueces, arbol smoked almonds & cashews. I found them to spicy but everyone else enjoyed them. We also ordered Brussel tacos, roasted brussels, brussels slaw, crispy artichoke, hazelnut crema.

For dinner Carol ordered two smaller plates. Avocado Tostada, cashew butter, pickled bulb onion, cacao nibs, sunflower sprouts and Ensalada De Endivias, endive, fennel, pine nut hummus, avocado, pickled persimmon, spiced walnut dressing

Diane ordered Mole Negro Con Res – smoked beef short rib, celery roots, trumpet mushrooms, pasilla & beet salsa, tortillas.

Debbie ordered COLIFLOR – roasted cauliflower, chipotle cauliflower puree, delicate squash, smoked hazelnut & arbol salsa.

John and I ordered PULPO – charred octopus with cold smoked mussels, salsa macha, pickled papaya, charred avocado.

The restaurant does offer some non-alcoholic drinks other than various soda pops and I ordered Agua Fresca – passionfruit & pomelo.

For dessert we ordered a variety of ice creams to be shared by all; Pistachio, Dulce de Leche, Dark Chocolate Sorbet, Coconut Sorbet, Peanut butter, Caramel, Baked Coconut with Charred Churros. The Churros are baked in coconut ash which results in the churros being very black.

The men's room has a square white ceramic wall hanging wash basin headed by a mirror. To the left is a white ceramic wall-hanging commode with three rolls of toilet paper to the left and a waste basket in the corner. The floor is roughhewn. There are a couple of waist high safety bars behind and to the left of the commode. Josh's mother, also an artist, painted a striking mural in the men's room.

Mike

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