

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 171

March 9, 2019

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*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 2/26/19]

In February, 29% of us were satisfied with the way things were going in the United States while 69% were dissatisfied. [Gallup 2/10/19]

35% of Americans describe themselves as conservative, 35% as moderate and 26% as liberal. The spread between conservatives and liberals has narrowed by 10% points since the baseline measurements were taken in 1992. Since then the percentage of conservatives has remained stable while those describing themselves as liberal has grown. [Gallup – FiveThirtyEight 1/9/19]

A record 7 million Americans are 90 days or more behind on their auto loan payments. [Federal Reserve Bank of New York, WP 2/13/19]

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Employers posted 7,300,000 open jobs in December 2018. In the same month the number of unemployed Americans was 6,300,000. [CNBC]

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If faced with unexpected expenses of \$400, 4 in 10 adults said they wouldn't have the money to cover it, according to a report by the Federal reserve last year. [WP 2/23/19]

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\$160 billion worth of produce in the U.S. gets tossed every year – largely because of how it looks. [Morning Consult]

Worldwide, 1.4 billion tons of food – a third of global production – ends up in landfills every year. This is estimated to add up to \$1 trillion in annual squander. An industry is emerging to deal productively with this waste. [WP 2/24/19]

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Only 1 in 6 of the 1.87 million civilian full-time federal employees live in the Washington D.C. area. [WP 2/17/19]

Americans spent \$3.65 trillion on health care in 2018. Health care spending grew by 4.4% between 2017 and 2018. \$3.65 trillion amounts to \$11,121 per person. [Axios Vitals 2/21/19]

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53% think there will not be an economic recession in the next 12 months. 33% think there will be a recession. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

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As part of a funding deal back in 2015, Congress allocated \$750,000 to develop a nonpartisan report on halving child poverty in the U.S.; that report has finally arrived. The report estimated that child poverty costs \$800 billion to \$1.1 trillion every year due to increased crime, worsened health and lower earnings. It made four possible policy recommendations, the most ambitious of which would cost \$111.6 billion per year and would lift 4.8 million kids out of poverty, cutting the child poverty rate by 12.6 percent to 6.1 percent. Also, fewer kids would go to sleep hungry in the richest country on earth, which would be nice. [Dylan Matthews, Vox 3/1/19]

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47% of Americans would “prefer the U.S. be a nation primarily made up of people from all over the world” while 9% would “prefer the U.S. be a nation primarily made up of people from Western European heritage.” 77% of Democrats say that the country’s diverse population makes it stronger, this is also the view of 55% of independents and 51% of Republicans. [PRRI survey]

Ronald Reagan said at one point, “America represents something universal in the human spirit. I received a letter not long ago from a man who said, ‘You can go to Japan to live, but you cannot become Japanese. You can go to France to live and not become a Frenchman. You can go to live in Germany or Turkey, and you won’t become a German or a Turk.’ Then he added that, ‘Anybody from any corner of the world can come to America to live and become an American.’” [WP 2/21/19]

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In 2018, 22 U.S. states were Democratic in party orientation, based on party preferences or leanings of the folks who live there. 18 states were Republican in orientation and 10 states were competitive.

In 2008, 35 states were Democratic in orientation while 5 states were Republican in orientation.

In 2012, 19 states were Democratic in orientation while 12 states were Republican in orientation.

In 2016, 14 states were Democratic in orientation while 21 states were Republican in orientation. [Gallup 2/22/19]

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When it comes to our two-party system, only 11% of Americans believe that the two-party system works fairly well.

38% think the system is seriously broken and the country needs a third party. That is the highest number holding that view going back to at least 1995.

47% think the two-party system has real problems but with improvements can still work well. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

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Employment

The February BLS data is not available until March 8th, the date that this issue comes out. The numbers below are for January.

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for January 2019 is 4.0%.

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 is 8.1%.

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This and That

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross on Thursday, January 24, 2019 said he doesn't understand why federal workers are visiting food banks during the partial government shutdown, saying they should instead seek low-interest loans from banks and credit unions to supplement their lost wages.

"I know they are, and I don't really quite understand why," Ross said on CNBC when asked about federal workers going to food banks. Ross is a billionaire and a longtime friend of President Trump.

His comment drew immediate criticism from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). “Is this the ‘let them eat cake’ kind of attitude?” she said. “Or call your father for money?”

In his television interview, Ross repeatedly stressed that federal workers should simply take out loans to cover their expenses while the government was shut down. He acknowledged they would have to likely pay some interest, but he said it should help them cover costs. [CNBC 1/24/19]

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“Nearly 2 percent of high school students in the United States identify as transgender. 27% of them feel unsafe at school or traveling to or from campus; 35% are bullied at school; 35% attempt suicide.” [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (WP 1/26/19)]

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About Facebook
(As of January 30, 2019)

- 2.32 billion monthly active users (9% increase in the last year)
- 1.15 billion mobile active users
- 1.52 billion people on average log into Facebook daily
- 307 million people are on Facebook in Europe
- 50% of 18-24-year-olds go on Facebook when they wake up
- 29.7% of users are age 25-34 years of age
- 76% of females and 66% of males are Facebook users
- The average time spent on each Facebook visit is 20 minutes
- Every 60 seconds on Facebook, 510,000 comments are posted, 293,000 statuses are updated and 136,000 photos are uploaded.
- Facebook estimates that 2.7 million people use Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, or Messenger each month and more than 2 billion people use at least one of the Facebook family of services every day on average.

[Zephoria Digital Marketing 2/20/19]

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A few years ago, it looked like traditional methods of paying for things like credit cards or even cash were on their way out to be replaced by things like smart phones.

Lo and behold something happened on the way to the “cash” register. The use of debit and credit cards grew and continues to grow. The chart below represents the share of consumer payments by dollars spent.

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2017</u>
Cards	53%	62.3%
Cash	19%	15.5%
Electronic	13.3%	14.2%
Checks	13.6%	7.5%
Other	1.1%	.5%

[WSJ 1/13/2019]

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In 2011, 35% of adults in the United States had a smartphone. In 2018 that number grew to 77%. [PEW/WSJ 1/13/19]

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From 1979 to 1989 the Antarctic lost 40 billion metric tons of melting ice every year.

From 1989 to 1999 it lost 50 billion metric tons per year.

From 1999 to 2009 - 166 billion metric tons of were lost per year.

Since 2009, 252 billion metric tons of Antarctic ice becomes ocean every year.

Every 360 billion tons equals a millimeter of sea level rise – global sea levels have risen about 7-8 inches since 1900. The whole of Antarctica contains 187 feet of potential sea level rise. [WP]

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In 2002, 182 new TV shows premiered. Last year 495 new shows premiered. 71% of U.S. Households subscribe to more than one streaming service. [WSJ 2/23/19]

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The New York City subway system has become notorious in recent years for its delays. Last year, 268 trains were delayed by 29 incidents involving animals. These incidents involved dogs, a goose, two goats and a kitten. [The Brooklyn Daily Eagle]

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In 2008 there were 852 surface coal mines and 583 underground mines for a total of 1,435 mines. Today there are only 671 coal mines total – 434 surface mines and 237 underground mines. [Numlock News 2/20/19]

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There are 2,208 billionaires in the world. Cumulatively they control \$9.1 trillion. [Axios Visuals 1/28/19]

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2018 was the fourth hottest on record according to NASA and NOAA. The rest of the “top four” happened in the last five years. [Vox/ FiveThirtyEight 2/7/19]

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China has closed the Mount Everest base camp to tourists. During the last climbing season, the Tibet Autonomous Region Sports Bureau said it collected 8.4 metric tons of waste, including garbage and human waste. [ABC News]

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The national debt of the United States is now over \$22,000,000,000,000. At the end of 2000 it was \$5.6 trillion. By 2008 it was just over \$10 trillion.

The current national debt stands at 78% of GDP. The CBO says it will rise to 93% by 2029. By that year the debt is estimated to reach \$28.7 trillion. [Chris Cillizza and NPR 2/13/19]

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55% of Americans think that government should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people. 41% believe that government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

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66% believe that the full Mueller report should be released to the public while 21% believe the only thing that should be released is a summary prepared by the Attorney General. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

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Every year a bunch of saps get conned into schlepping to Times Square so they can serve as a living background for Anderson Cooper and his friends. But the reality is that the numbers that have been touted lately are essentially bunk: No, 1 to 2 million people are not in Times’ Square on New Year’s Eve. There are likely fewer than 100,000. Crowd size estimates can be boosted for political or funding reasons and that compounds over time. Times Square can only hold 51,000 people

if you pack ‘em in at three per square meter, and could only reach 120,000 if you really crammed them in 7-train style into 7 people per square meter. [Michael R. Sisak, Associated Press]

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Quotes

“You can always debate about what you should have done.
The question is what are you going to do?”
-Hubert H. Humphrey

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“Public sentiment is everything.
With it you can accomplish almost anything.”
-Abraham Lincoln

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“Be careful when you follow the masses.
Sometimes the “M” is silent.”
-sign in El Arroyo Restaurant, Austin, Texas

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“The brave have many admirers,
And the kind, a life filled with family and friends,
The wise understand the frailty of human nature and
The breadth of the company they keep,
Only the bully must live, alone, with his cowardice.”
-Rep. Adam Schiff

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“Well behaved women rarely make history; express yourself.”
-Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez,
Lockwood shop in Jackson Heights

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“Seek the truth and speak the truth.”
-Dan Coats, Director of National Intelligence, 1/29/19

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“In my country, the people can do as they like, although it often happens that they don’t like what they have done.”

-Winston Churchill, 1946

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“It changes your perception on reality...It would make us feel part of planet Earth as a civilization rather than individual countries.”

-Avi Loeb, Harvard Astronomer

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“This job is absolutely maddening. We are spending all of our time simply trying to avert disaster and maintain the status quo. I don’t know why anybody would want to run for Congress if all you do is try to convince the President to not hurt the country.”

-Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT)

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“Modern politics isn’t built for a let’s-wait-and-see-what-all-the-facts-reveal approach to events. It’s built to incentivize whoever has the first and toughest (and most memorable) quote, even if the facts ultimately undermine it.”

-Chris Cillizza, 2/18/19

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“Your occasional reminder that our current president lies as easy as you and I breathe air. Every day all day, reflexively.”

-Lin-Manuel Miranda

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President Trump

On February 27th the NBC/WSJ survey found that 46% approve of the job that Trump is doing as president. Among those expressing approval are 88% of Republicans, 60% of rural residents, 54% of men and 54% of whites overall.

52% disapprove of the job that he is doing including 88% of African Americans, 64% of Latinos, 61% of women, 57% of those age 18-34 and 51% of independents. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

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On February 26, 2019, Economist/YouGov found that 40% of Americans approved of Trump’s job performance and 51% disapproved. Among those approving of the president’s performance are 9% of liberals, 34% of moderates and

80% of conservatives; 44% of men and 36% of women. 49% of men and 53% of women disapprove.

On February 10, 2019, Gallup found (among all adults) that 44% of Americans approve of President Trump’s job performance and 52% disapprove.

(Gallup no longer provides a daily or weekly approval rating of the president. Gallup now assess presidential job approval on a monthly basis.)

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>
2/10/19	44%	52%	40.2%	55.1%
1/27/19	37%	59%	40.4%	55.6%
1/10/19	37%	59%	41.8%	53.9%
12/22/18	39%	55%	42.2%	52.8%
12/2/18	40%	56%	42.5%	52.7%
11/4/18	40%	54%	42.2%	52.6%
10/14/18	44%	51%	42.1%	52.4%
9/30/18	42%	53%	41.5%	52.7%
9/2/18	41%	53%	40.3%	54.5%
7/29/18	40%	55%	41.2%	53.2%
7/1/18	42%	53%	41.8%	52.3%
1/14/18	38%	57%	--	--

The following are some additional looks at the President’s job performance. The numbers below are of registered voters unless followed by an “A” which means “all voters” or “L” which means “likely voters”.

<u>Date</u>	<u>NBC/WSJ</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN</u>	<u>CBS</u>	<u>FOX</u>
FEB '19	46/52A	xxx	42/54	xxx	46/52
JAN '19	43/54A	38/58	37/57A	36/59A	43/54
DEC '18	43/54A	xxx	39/52	xxx	46/52
JAN '18	39/57A	38/58	43/53	37/58A	45/53

DEC '17	41/56	xxx	36/59	36/57A	xxx
JAN '17	xxx	xxx	44/53	40/48A	xxx

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The following are job approval numbers from Gallup for ten of the last twelve presidents, roughly 26 months into their first term.

GHW Bush	87% (3/91)
Eisenhower	71% (3/53)
Kennedy	67% (3/63)
GW Bush	57% (3/03)
Nixon	50% (3/71)
Obama	47% (3/11)
Clinton	46% (3/95)
Trump	44% (3/19)
Reagan	41% (3/83)
Carter	39% (3/79)

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

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
2/19/19	51%	44%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
2/2/19	49%	45%	CNN (RV)
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
1/16/18	46%	49%	“

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

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
2/19/19	44%	50%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
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
1/16/18	36%	60%	“

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During 2018, 17 states gave Trump job approval ratings of 50% or higher while 16 states gave him approval ratings below 40%.

The 17 states which gave Trump approval ratings of 50% or higher account for a combined total of 102 electoral votes while the states in which Trump had approval ratings below 40% account for 201 electoral votes. [Gallup 2/22/19]

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52% have positive feelings toward the president while 50% have negative feelings toward him. Positive feelings toward him are just a point short of the highest they have been. While the low point in feelings toward him was 35% in April of last year. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/10]

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As of March 4th, the Washington Post fact checker team has documented 9,014 false or misleading claims by the president since he took office.

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When faced with the statement “Donald Trump has been honest and truthful when it comes to the investigation into Russian interference with the 2016 presidential election”, 58% of respondents disagree while 37% agree. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

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President Trump is intent on withdrawing the United States from a variety of places around the world. 52% of Americans seem to agree that this country should be less actively involved while 45% believe the country should be more actively involved. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

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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.

Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supreme Ct</u>	<u>Appeals Ct</u>	<u>District Ct</u>
Trump – thru 3/3/19	86	2	31	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 a number of nominations awaiting Senate action: 11 seats on the Courts of Appeals, 47 seats on the District Courts and 2 seats on the Courts of International Trade.

There are currently 11 vacancies on the U.S. Courts of Appeals, 125 vacancies on the U.S. District Courts and 3 vacancies on the U.S. Court of International Trade. [USCourts/Wikipedia]

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Disassembling

The Trump administration is cutting off \$286 million in federal funding for Planned Parenthood. The cutting of the funds is based on a new ruling that prevents groups that give abortion referrals from receiving federal family planning funds. [Axios 2/22/19]

Title IX guidelines proposed by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos will make it more difficult for victims of sexual abuse or rape to avail themselves of Title IX protections to reclaim their safety. [ThinkProgress 2/14/19]

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In the closing days of the Obama administration, a regulation was put in place that bars discrimination on the basis of religion by groups receiving money from the Department of Health and Human Services. The Trump administration has granted a South Carolina Christian ministry permission to participate in the federally funded foster-care program even though the group will work only with Christian families. [WP 1/24/19]

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Semi-automatic weapons, flamethrowers and even some grenades will become easier for U.S. weapons manufacturers to export overseas under new rules being put in place by the Trump administration. [NBC News 2/7/19]

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The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau proposed pulling back on rules for payday loans, car-title loans and small-dollar forms of credit. Under the Obama administration the CFPB issued a rule that would require lenders to make sure borrowers have the means to repay their loans. The rule that would have come into force in August of this year, has been delayed at least until November 19, 2020. [CFPB 2/6/19]

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For the past 20 years, the Environmental Protection Agency civil penalties for polluters averaged more than \$500 million a year. The number fell to \$72 million last year. [WP 1/24/19]

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Over the last 35 years, as the Republican party has grown more conservative and the Democratic party has grown more liberal.

	Republican		Democrat	
	<u>1984</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>2018</u>
Conservative	54%	71% (+17)	21%	11% (-11)
Moderate	39%	25% (-14)	51%	38% (-13)
Liberal	6%	4% (-2)	28%	51% (+23)

[Winston Group 2/7/19]

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2020

[604 days to the 2020 general election]

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

As there is increasing attention to the 2020 election it will be useful to keep in mind the following recent note circulated by Peter Hart with the NBC/WSJ poll.

“The political intelligentsia will spend much of their efforts dissecting the machinations of the candidates--this election, like all elections, comes back to the view of the voters. Start with the voters, stay there, and you will be in very good shape.”

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Hispanics are projected to become the largest minority group in the 2020 electorate. They will represent 13.3% of the electorate. 23% of the electorate will be 65 years of age or older.

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2020</u>
Hispanics	7.4%	13.3%
Black	11.5%	12.5%
Asian	2.5%	4.7%
White	76.4%	66.7%

[Pew 2/20/19]

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 it will be erased.

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This list started with 57 people who had been at least mentioned. Now there are 26 people on the list. 31 people are no longer involved in the hunt.

Announced/Running/Formed Committee

Cory Booker (D) – U.S. Senator - Age 49
Pete Buttigieg (D) – Mayor of South Bend, Indiana – Age 37
Julian Castro (D) – Former HUD Secretary – Age 44
John Delaney (D) – former U.S. Representative – Age 55
Tulsi Gabbard (D) – U.S. Representative – Age 37
Kirsten Gillibrand (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 52
Kamala Harris (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 54
John Hickenlooper (D) – Governor of Colorado – Age 67
Jay Inslee (D) – Governor of Washington – Age 68
Amy Klobuchar (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 58
Bernie Sanders (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 77
Elizabeth Warren (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 69
Marianne Williamson – Spiritualist, teacher – Age 66
Andrew Yang – Entrepreneur – Age 44

Testing the Waters

Joe Biden (D) – former Vice President, former U.S. Senator – Age 76
Beto O'Rourke – former U.S. Representative – Age 46
Tim Ryan (D) – U.S. Representative – Age 45
Howard Schultz – Founder & Exec. Chairman, Starbucks - Age 65
(May run as an Independent)
Eric Swalwell (D) – U.S. Representative - 39

Mentioned

~~Michael Bloomberg – Businessman and former Mayor of New York – Age 77~~
Steve Bullock (D) – Governor of Montana - Age 52
Terry McAuliffe (D) – former Governor of Virginia – Age 62
~~Sherrod Brown (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 66~~
Mark Warner (D) – U.S. Senator - Age 64
~~Jeff Merkley (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 62~~
Michael Bennet (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 54
~~Eric Holder (D) – former Attorney General – Age 68~~
John Kerry (D) – former U.S. Senator, former Secretary of State, former
presidential candidate - Age 75
Bill de Blasio (D) – Mayor of New York City – Age 57
Governor Andrew Cuomo – Governor of New York – Age 61

The Democratic nominating convention is scheduled for July 13-16, 2020

at a site to be determined (Miami, Houston or Milwaukee).

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Republican Primary

Announced/Running

Donald Trump – President – Age 72

41% of voters say they will definitely vote for Donald Trump for president in 2020 while 48% say they will vote for the Democratic candidate. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

Testing the Waters

Larry Hogan (R)– Governor of Maryland – Age 62

John Kasich I (R)– former Governor of Ohio – Age 66

William Weld (R)– former Governor of Massachusetts – Age 73

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

37% of Republican primary voters would like to see another Republican challenge Trump for the nomination in 2020. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

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An Early Look at the 2020 Presidential electoral vote –
Jennifer Duffy/Cook Political Report

Solid D	188	Solid R	125
Likely D	22	Likely R	56
Lean D	22	Lean R	39
	ME (2)		GA (16)
	MN (10)		IA (6)
	NH (4)		ME (1)
	NV (6)		NE (1)
			NC (15)
Total	<u>232</u>		<u>220</u>

Toss Up - 86

AZ 11
FL 29
MI 16
PA 20
WI 10

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62% of Americans are very uncomfortable or have some reservations about someone over the age of 75 running for president. They have even more reservations or are uncomfortable with someone who purports to be a socialist. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

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In 2016, Donald Trump won the electoral vote while Hillary Clinton won the popular vote. Donald Trump is the president.

If the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact had been in place, Clinton would be the president.

For those, like WW, who are or were not aware of the Compact here is what it is.

“Under the Constitution, states have the power to determine how they award their electoral votes in national elections.” Currently, most state laws award all of its electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the most votes within the state. The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC) is an agreement among a group of U.S. states and the District of Columbia to award all their electoral votes to whichever presidential candidate wins the overall popular vote in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The Compact does not take effect until states controlling 270 electoral votes adopt it legislatively. When that number is reached, all of the legislation that has been enacted takes effect immediately but not until then.

Five U.S. presidents have been elected despite losing the popular vote; John Quincy Adams in 1824, Rutherford Hayes in 1876, Benjamin Harrison in 1888, George W. Bush in 2000 and Donald Trump in 2016.

There are a number of states, that in presidential elections are reliably Democratic or Republican. As a result, those states tend to be ignored in

presidential election campaigns. According to Reed Hundt, who is one of the founders of Making Every Vote Count, in the 2012 and 2016 elections and likely the 2020 election as well, “nearly 40 states, with about 80 percent of the country’s population were and likely will be ignored by both candidates.”

So far, 12 states with a total of 172 electoral votes among them have enacted the legislation. The Colorado legislature has enacted the requisite legislation and it will join the compact when the governor signs it, bringing the total to 181 electoral votes. New Mexico appears to be on the cusp. The states including Colorado are Rhode Island, Vermont, Hawaii, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Washington, New Jersey, New York, Illinois, California and the District of Columbia. Maine and Nebraska allocate their electoral votes differently and as you can see, neither has joined the Compact.

So, if New Mexico (5 votes) takes the plunge, states with at least 84 electoral votes between them must act before the Compact is effective. Accumulating the last 84 votes will be a very high hill, not soon conquered.

* * * * *

Congress

About John D. Dingell, Jr.

July 8, 1926 – February 7, 2019

The longest serving member of Congress in American History

My friend Howard Paster introduced me to his friend John Dingell at lunch at “Joe and Moe’s” restaurant (the restaurant has since closed) in Washington, DC and over time John Dingell and I became friends.

He was preceded in Congress by his father John Dingell, Sr who served from March 4, 1933 to September 19, 1955. John Dingell, Jr served in Congress from December 13, 1955 to January 3, 2015. He was succeeded by Debbie Dingell, his spouse, who took office on January 3, 2015 and is currently serving her 3rd term.

While the outlines of the District they represent has changed, a Dingell has represented the District for 86 years. John Dingell, Jr. was the Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee from 1981 to 1995 and from 2007 to 2009. He was the longest serving Dean of the U.S. House of Representatives and Dean of the Michigan congressional delegation.

He was one of the final two World War II veterans to have served in Congress. The other is Ralph Hall of Texas who also retired on January 3, 2015. At the time of his retirement he had served with 2,453 different U.S. Representatives.

Dingell served during the tenure of 11 Presidents of the United States: Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George HW Bush, Bill Clinton, George W Bush and Barack Obama.

The day he died, Dingell dictated some reflections to his wife, Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) at their home in Dearborn, Michigan. The following are the concluding paragraphs of what he dictated.

I'm immensely proud, and eternally grateful, for having had the opportunity to play a part in all of these efforts during my service in Congress. And it's simply not possible for me to adequately repay the love that my friends, neighbors and family have given me and shown me during my public service and retirement.

But I would be remiss in not acknowledging the forgiveness and sweetness of the woman who has essentially supported me for almost 40 years: my wife, Deborah. And it is a source of great satisfaction to know that she is among the largest group of women to have ever served in the Congress (as she busily recruits more).

In my life and career, I have often heard it said that so-and-so has real power — as in, “the powerful Wile E. Coyote, chairman of the Capture the Road Runner Committee.”

It's an expression that has always grated on me. In democratic government, elected officials do not *have* power. They *hold* power — in trust for the people who elected them. If they misuse or abuse that public trust, it is quite properly revoked (the quicker the better).

I never forgot the people who gave me the privilege of representing them. It was a lesson learned at home from my father and mother, and one I have tried to impart to the people I've served with and employed over the years.

As I prepare to leave this all behind, I now leave you in control of the greatest nation of mankind and pray God gives you the wisdom to understand the responsibility you hold in your hands.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

* * * * *

Even with the number of women in the lower house of Congress increasing dramatically after the 2018 election, the U.S., with 23.5% of the Congress being women, still ranks 75th on the list of percentage of women in the lower house of parliament. [Statista]

- 1. Rwanda 61.3%
- 4. Mexico 48.2%
- 7. Sweden 46.1%
- 10. South Africa 42.7%
- 11. Finland 42.0%
- 59. Canada 26.9%
- 75. United States 23.5%

A note: When is the last time that a new member of the House of Representatives, 29 years of age, became widely known by his or her initials, in less than a month after the 2019 House convened? That is the story of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez who is known by the press and others as A.O.C.

* * * * *

Approval of the Congress generally remains in the tank.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 2/26/19	19.4%	70.0%
Real Clear Pol. 1/1/19	19.6%	69.3%
Real Clear Pol. 1/4/18	15.8%	72.6%

* * * * *

There has been discussion among some members of the House of Representatives that socialism (by one name or another) is a positive goal for this country. When asked about their feelings toward capitalism and socialism, 50% of Americans are positive about capitalism while only 18% are positive about socialism. Conversely, 52% are negative about socialism while only 19% are negative about capitalism. [NBC/WSJ 2/27/19]

* * * * *

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

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2020

Democrats 235
Republicans 200

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Safe in 2020	184	165
Likely	19	19
Lean	18	14
		<u>Toss Up</u>
	16	4

* * * * *

THE SENATE

[WW uses Jennifer E. Duffy of the Cook Political Report and Inside Elections for the Senate chart below. 2/28/19]

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

The hill the Democrats must climb to take control of the Senate looks pretty steep at this point.

Republicans	53
Democrats	45
Independents	2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independent</u>
Seats not up in 2020	33	31	2
Safe in 2020	10	13	
	Coons	Sullivan	
	Durbin	Cotton	

	Markey Peters Shaheen Booker Udall Merkley Reed Warner	Risch Ernst Cassidy Daines Sasse Inhofe Graham Rounds Cornyn Moore Capito Enzi
Likely	1 Smith	6 Perdue McConnell Tillis Tenn Kansas Hyde-Smith
Lean	0	3 McSally Gardner Collins
Toss Up	1 Jones	0

* * * * *

Women Will Get It Done

For the first time in its 109-year history, a woman has become part of the Yale Whiffenpoofs, the oldest college a cappella group in the country. The first female Whiffenpoof is Sofia Campoamor. [WP 2/10/19]

* * * * *

Every year, the Space Telescope Science Institute in Maryland fields over 1,000 requests from scientists all over the world to use the Hubble telescope to advance their research, and it's ultra-competitive: only 200 proposals are accepted.

In 2014, the Institute observed that men disproportionately succeeded in getting that time.

Over the course of the four most recent cycles, they found 21.9 percent of proposals from men were accepted while 16.9 percent of proposals from women leads were accepted. After the introduction of a double-blind evaluation method — where the reviewers can't see the name of the person who proposed the project — the acceptance rate leveled out, and this year the success rate was 8.7 percent for female researchers compared to 8 percent for male researchers. [Marina Koren, The Atlantic]

* * * * *

Sexual assaults at U.S. Military academies continue to rise. There were 117 formal complaints last year at Army, Navy and Air Force Academies, up from 112 the year before. An anonymous Pentagon survey found that 747 students said they received unwanted sexual contact, up from 507 a year earlier. [NPR]

* * * * *

Women now make up 16% of the active-duty military according to the Veterans Administration. In the 1990-91 period, they represented 11% of the active-duty military. [WSJ 3/2-3/19]

* * * * *

The Great Smokey Mountain National Park, the most visited national park in the United States, will be run by a woman for the first time in its 85-year history. Lisa Handy will become the Chief Ranger in April. She is currently the Chief Ranger at Big Bend National Park. Handy is not only a park ranger but a certified paramedic, firefighter, aviation manager and swift water rescuer. [CNBC 3/1/19]

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In recent elections, white women have been a mainstay of the Republican party among female voters. In exit polls in the 2010 election Republicans outdrew Democrats by 19 points among white women, 58% to 39%. In 2012, Republicans outdrew Democrats by 12 points, 55% to 43%. In 2014 the Republicans outdrew the Democrats by 14 points 56% to 42%.

In 2016 Republicans outdrew the Democrats among white women by 12 points 55% to 43%. Then in 2018 Republicans and Democrats split the white female vote with 49% to each party. The last election at which that happened was in 2006. [Winston Group 3/1/19]

* * * * *

Restaurants

Note: The review of DeCarlo's from the last issue of the Watch, erroneously failed to mention that I was introduced to DeCarlo's by Bob and Rita and I have undoubtedly been there with them more than any other persons.

TRIA
The Henry Hotel
300 Town Center Drive
Dearborn, Michigan 48126
Tria@behenry.com
313-253-1475

Debbie and I had dinner at the Tria on a recent trip to Dearborn.

As you enter the restaurant from the lobby of the hotel there is a bar at the right that seats 12. Above the bar are two very large TVs that can be easily seen throughout the restaurant.

Next are four high tops that seat up to four people on tall chairs that span the width of the restaurant. Then there is a table that seats 10, four on each side and one at each end.

The balance of the restaurant is filled with 2 and 4 tops and one table that can seat 6-8. There is an open grill at the far end of the restaurant. The restaurant seats up to 100.

The menus brought to the table are on iPads. The menu is outlined by course and when you find an item in which you are interested you touch it and a picture of the dish with details pops up.

Debbie started with Roast Duck & Roast Pear Halloumiche salad followed by Spiced Apple Crusted Whitefish with Brussel sprouts, Yukon potato and maple vinaigrette.

I started with Onion Soup with Rye croutons and Raclette cheese. For my main course I selected a Deer & Duck Burger, ground Venison, Onion, Roast Bell Pepper, Mushrooms, Seared Foie Gras with a Brioche Bun.

We finished our meal sharing a Classic Chocolate Souffle.

The server was excellent and helpful and because the restaurant was not crowded, had time to visit with us.

The restrooms were elsewhere in the lobby.

* * * * *

Buck's Fishing & Camping
5031 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-364-0777
www.bucksfishingandcamping.com

Peter and Florence and Debbie and I went to Buck's. Peter told us that Buck's serves the best steak in the city, too large to finish in a single sitting or by one person alone.

The greeter station is straight ahead as you enter the restaurant. To the right there is a long bar with stools that will accommodate up to 18 people.

Behind the greeter station, and a few steps from the bar, there is a specially constructed narrow table that runs most of the length of the restaurant. It seats 20-24 people. Some nights there is a second, but shorter long table to the left of the special long table, composed of a combination of regular tables.

There are a number of alcoves and other sections of the restaurant that contain tables that will seat 4-6 people.

I started by ordering Buck's Famous Onion Rings & Smokey Dip. Florence and Debbie shared a Roasted Beet & Goat Cheese Salad with Butter Lettuce and Toasted Almonds. Peter and I ordered the Crisp Iceberg Wedge Salad with Point Reyes Blue Cheese, Applewood-Smoked Bacon & Horseradish Dressing.

Peter ordered the Local Prime New York Strip steak, wood grilled, 'World-Famous' Big Steak (16-18 oz) with French Fries.

Florence and Debbie ordered the same steak which they shared.

I ordered Wild Sea Scallops on Fennel & Potato Gratin with Preserved Lemon Oil.

I was the only one to indulge in dessert... a Sundae of Vanilla Ice Cream and Chocolate Sauce.

If you want to take something home, the server brings a Styrofoam container to the table and cleans your plate into the container.

Our server, Nordeen, was talkative and made the evening even more pleasant.

The restroom is unisex and there may be another but there is nothing on the doors to identify it. It is quite small, about 5' x 5'.

There is a white ceramic wall hanging washbasin. With a mirror above. Sitting next to the wash basin is a white ceramic floor sitting commode. The two ceramics are all but on top of each other.

The door to this room is green inside and out and there are green ceramic tiles to just above waist height. The walls are painted green above where the tiles stop. There are decorated plates on the walls above the tile level. The bottom line: even though it is small it was clean.

Addendum: Recently there was a wedding ceremony in Buck's with the post wedding reception held next door at Comet Pizza.

Mike

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