

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 180

February 28, 2020

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Washington, DC

Annabelle

Bresca

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

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State of the Nation

53% of Americans say the country is on the wrong track, that includes 51% of men and 54% of women.

36% of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction. This includes 41% of men and 31% of women. [Econ/YouGov 2/18/20]

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Employment

[WW note - For the first time, in January 2020, the Bureau of Labor Statistics included same-sex couples in its count of married workers in the U.S. economy. Also, the 2020 census will change its questionnaire to include “same-sex husband/wife/spouse” and “same-sex unmarried partner.” See BLS Economic News Release 2/7/20 – Tables A-9 & A-10.]

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for January 2020 is 3.6%, a touch higher than it has been since October 2019. The unemployment rate is lower than the 4.0% unemployment rate of a year 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 in January is 6.9%, up from 6.7% in December 2019 but down from 8.0% a year ago.

225,000 jobs were created in January. A year ago, 304,000 jobs were created in January.

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for January is 63.4%, up from 63.2% in December 2019. [BLS 2/7/2020]

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The Demographics of Unemployment for January 2020

Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women – 3.2% (same as last month)

Men – 3.3% (up from last month)

Unemployment by Race

White – 3.1% (down from last month)

Black – 6.0% (up from last month)

Hispanic – 4.3% (up from last month)

Asian – 3.0% (up from last month)

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

Less than high school – 5.5% (up from last month)

High School – 3.8% (up from as last month)

Some college – 2.8% (same as last month)

Bachelor's Degree or higher – 2.0% (up from last month)

In December 2019, three states had the same unemployment rate as the national average for that month, 3.5%; 25 states had unemployment rates below the national average; 24 states, plus D.C. and Puerto Rico, had unemployment rates that were above the national average.

Alaska, at 6.1%, had the highest unemployment rate in the country. (Puerto Rico at 8.4% was higher.) Mississippi, Virginia and D.C. had unemployment rates of 5% or greater but less than 6%. 8 states had unemployment rates that were 4.0% or greater but less than 5.0%. [Bureau of Labor Statistics]

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By 2040, two-thirds of Americans will be represented by 30% of the Senate. The 15 most populous states will be home to 67% of the U.S. population. Nine states will be home to half of the country's population. [WP 11/28/17]

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As of now, student debt totals about \$1.5 trillion, up from \$250 billion in 2004. Student loans are now the second largest slice of household debt after mortgages and bigger than credit card debt. About 42 million Americans (about one in every eight) have student loans.

Is it worth it?

The typical worker with a bachelor's degree earns nearly \$1 million more than an otherwise similar worker with just a high school diploma, if both work fulltime, year-round, from age 25.

About 30% of undergrads graduate with no debt and 25% with less than \$20,000. Only 6% of borrowers owe more than \$100,000. [Nation 1/28/2020]

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In 2019, the average U.S. household has 2.52 people. This is the lowest household size in the history of the country.

In the 1880s the average was 5.5 people per household and in the 1950s the average size of a household was 3.37 people. [Justin Fox, Bloomberg]

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47% of Americans say that we need to keep shaking things up and make major changes in the way government operates while 45% of us say we need more competence and a steady approach in the way government operates. [NBC/WSJ survey 1/29/2020].

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Over the past 50 years, the highest earning 20% of U.S. households have steadily brought in a larger share of the country's total income.

In 2018 the top 20% of households (incomes of \$130,000 or more) brought in 52% of all U.S. income. In 1968 the top 20% brought in 43% of all U.S. income.

The United States has the highest level of income inequality among G7 countries. [Facttank 2/7/20]

One in three Americans run out of money between paychecks. This includes people making six figure incomes. For many folks, it is the rising cost of living – including food, housing, education and medical expenses that create the squeeze. During 2019 the cost of medical care rose 4.6%, housing 3.2%, education 2.1% and food 1.8%. [PRRI 2/14/20]

There are wide racial, age and partisan differences on the role of government.

	<u>Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals</u>	<u>Government should do more to solve problems</u>
Total	43%	55%
Men	48%	52%
Women	40%	59%
White	51%	48%
Black	25%	74%
Hispanic	29%	70%
Age 18-29	34%	65%
Age 65+	54%	44%
GOP/Lean	71%	28%
DEM/Lean	21%	78%

[PEW 3/15/19]

Is legalization of same-sex marriage a good thing for society?

	<u>Good thing</u>	<u>Bad thing</u>
Total	61%	37%
Men	59	40
Women	63	35
Age 18-29	75%	24%
Age 50-64	52	46
Age 65+	50	48
White	61%	38%
Black	50	46
Hispanic	65	32
Postgrad	70%	48%
HS or less	52	45
GOP/Lean	41%	57%
DEM/Lean	79	20

[PEW 3/15/19]

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The U.S. deficit will top \$1 trillion in 2020. Medicare spending will double from \$835 billion in 2020 to \$1.7 trillion in 2020. Total spending on federal health programs will come close to doubling from \$1.3 trillion in 2020 to \$2.5 trillion in 2030. [AXIOS 1/29/20]

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This and That

Nearly half of U.S. adults (45%) have stopped talking with someone about political news. This includes 41% of Rep/Lean Rep and 50% of Dem/Lean Dem. It includes 34% of Hispanics, 37% of African Americans and 50% of whites. [Pew 2/5/2020]

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Caesar salad was first served at Caesar’s Restaurant and Bar in Tijuana in 1924. The salad has endured on menus for close to 100 years thanks to the wonders of its creamy dressing. [Quartz Daily Obsession]

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54% of Americans are very/somewhat positive about capitalism, while 18% are somewhat/very negative about capitalism.

19% of Americans are very/somewhat positive toward socialism, while 53% are very/somewhat negative about socialism. [NBC/WSJ poll 1/29/2020]

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“To what extent does each term describe how you feel about the current state of politics and issues in the country?”

	<u>Overall</u>	<u>GOP</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>DEM</u>
Frustrated	43%	37%	43%	48%
Looking for reliable sources of accurate information about what is happening in politics	40	44	40	38
Angry	33	32	28	39
Interested	33	36	24	36
Wanting to tune it all out	24	21	25	25

[WG Discussion Points 2/14/20]

Americans spent \$264.6 billion on physical activity in 2018.

\$37 billion on fitness classes
\$58 billion on sports and other recreation
\$117 billion in footwear and apparel
\$37.5 billion on supplies
\$10 billion on mindfulness
\$8.1 billion on technology [Outside Online]

When voting, Americans trust paper more than they trust technology.

Voting machines that provide paper receipts	71%
Paper ballots scanned in a machine	68%
Paper ballots hand counted	57%
Paper ballots mailed in	47%
Voting machines that do not provide receipts	33%
Votes cast online	30%
Votes cast thru mobile apps	22%

[Morning Consult 2/15/20]

The following are the things that Americans say cause significant stress.

Mass shootings	71%
Health care	69%
Work	64%
Current political climate	62%
Money	60%
Terrorism	60%
Climate change	56%
2020 presidential election	56%

[WSJ 2/1-2/20]

Do corporations in the United States have too much power?

	<u>Too much power</u>	<u>Right amount of power</u>	<u>Too little power</u>
Total	73%	22%	4%
GOP/Lean	62%	33%	4%
DEM/Lean	83%	13%	4%

Do corporations in the United States make too much profit?

	<u>Make too much profit</u>	<u>Make fair and reasonable amount of profit</u>
Total	65%	33%
GOP/Lean	48	50
DEM/Lean	80	18

[PEW 3/15/19]

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Quotes

“Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.”
--Robert Brault

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“We are uneasy with the president as ‘she’ because encountering it forces us to have in mind a new conception of ‘president’.”
--Robin Lakoff, linguistics professor emerita at U.C. Berkeley

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“It has been shocking to experience the storm of criticism, lies and malicious conspiracies that have preceded and followed my public testimony, but I have no regrets. I did – we did – what our conscience called us to do. We did what the gift of U.S. citizenship requires us to do.”
--Marie Yovanovitch, Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine

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“Heterosexuality is not normal, it’s just common.”
--Dorothy Parker, writer

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“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn’t be that women are the exception.”
--Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Supreme Court Justice

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“New ideas are not only the enemy of old ones; they also appear often in an extremely unacceptable form.”

--Carl Gustav Jung

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“The difference between a broken community and a thriving one is the presence of women who are valued.”

--Michelle Obama, Former First Lady of the United States

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“I’m so sick of running as fast as I can wondering if I’d get there quicker if I was a man.”

--Taylor Swift, performer

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“How can we effect change in the world when only half of it is invited or feels welcome to participate in the conversation.”

--Emma Watson, actress and activist

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“People are very open-minded about new things – as long as they’re exactly like the old ones.”

--Charles Kettering

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“What the people want is very simple – they want an America as good as its promise.”

“If you’re going to play the game properly, you’d better know every rule.”

“I believe that women have a capacity for understanding and compassion which man structurally does not have, does not have it because he cannot have it. He’s just incapable of it.”

--Barbara Jordan

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President Trump

As of February 18, an Economist/YouGov poll found that 40% of registered voters approved of the job that President Trump is doing as president while 52%

disapprove. 37% of women approve of the job he is doing along with 44% of men, while 54% of women disapprove along with 50% of men.

The split between folks who see themselves as supporters of one party or the other could not be clearer. 86% of Republicans approve of the job he is doing while 11% disapprove. And no surprise, 91% of Democrats disapprove of his performance while only 7% approve.

Among Independents, 39% approve of his performance and 48% disapprove.

An interesting dichotomy that this survey demonstrates is the role that age seems to play in levels of support for the president’s performance. Among those between the ages of 18-29, 26% support the president’s performance while 51% disapprove. Among those 65 and older, 49% approve of his performance and 48% disapprove. This split based on age can be found on a variety of issues from immigration to healthcare to the environment and abortion.

In a February 17 ABC/WP survey, 43% of registered voters approve of the job that the president is doing while 53% disapprove.

An NPR/PBS/Marist survey of registered voters completed on February 16th found 42% approving of how Trump is doing his job (57% of men and 33% of women) and 51% disapproving (42% of men and 60% of women).

Gallup now does monthly or semi-monthly surveys. WW will 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>
2/16/20	49%	48%	43.4%	52.2%
1/29/20	49%	50%	43%	52.6%
1/15/20	44%	53%	42.2%	53/0%
12/15/19	45%	51%	44.1%	52.8%
11/14/19	43%	54%	41%	54.7%
10/31/19	41%	57%	42%	53.9%
9/30/19	40%	56%	42.1%	53.8%
8/30/19	39%	57%	41.3%	54.2%
6/16/19	43%	55%	42.6%	53.0%
1/27/19	37%	59%	40.4%	55.6%

9/30/18	42%	53%	41.5%	52.7%
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>FOX</u>	<u>QUINNIPIAC</u>
FEB '20	47/50	46/42			43/53
JAN '20	46/51	47/50	45/51	45/54	43/52
DEC '19	44/54A	47/50	44/52	45/53	43/52
NOV '19	xxx	xxx	43/53	xxx	40/54
OCT '19	45/53A	39/59	xxx	42/57	38/58
OCT '19	43/53A	38/58A	42/57	43/55	41/54
JUL '19	45/52	47/50	xxx	46/51	40/54
				<u>CBS</u>	<u>FOX</u>
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

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The following are presidential job approval numbers from Gallup roughly 35 months into their first term (Johnson is an exception). Since Gallup is no longer providing a steady stream of approval ratings, WW will use various other surveys to provide approval numbers on the current president when timely Gallup numbers are not available.

Eisenhower	75% (2/56)
Johnson	73% (2/64)
GW Bush	51% (2/04)
Reagan	55% (2/84)
Carter	55% (2/80)
GHW Bush	39% (2/92)
Clinton	53% (2/96)
Nixon	52% (2/72)
Trump	46% (2/20) – RCP Average
Obama	47% (2/12)

On economic policy, Trump’s approval ratings continue to be on a positive track.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
2/17/20	53%	38%	NBC/WSJ (RV)
1/12/20	57%	38%	Quinnipiac
12/3/19	52%	42%	Econ/YouGov(RV)
10/22/19	49%	45%	Econ/YouGov(RV)
9/9/19	48%	48%	CNN (RV)
7/23/19	52%	41%	Fox News (RV)
1/1/19	47%	46%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
1/16/18	46%	49%	NBC/WSJ

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

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
2/18/20	46%	49%	Econ/YouGov(RV)
1/12/20	43%	53%	Quinnipiac
12/3/19	45%	49%	Econ/YouGov(RV)
10/22/19	42%	51%	Econ/YouGov(RV)
9/9/19	40%	55%	CNN (RV)
7/30/19	41%	51%	Economist (RV)
1/1/19	42%	51%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
7/18/18	38%	45%	NBC/WSJ
1/16/18	36%	60%	NBC/WSJ

51% of Americans favor the decision by the United States Senate not to remove President Trump from office. 47% believe he should have been removed from office. [NBC/WSJ 2/17/20]

The following shows the annualized Gross Domestic Product during the presidencies since Ronald Reagan.

Reagan (1 st term)	3.1%
Reagan (2 nd term)	3.9%
G.H.W. Bush	2.0%
Clinton (1 st term)	3.5%
Clinton (2 nd term)	4.0%
G.W. Bush (1 st term)	2.8%
G.W. Bush (2 nd term)	0.5%
Obama (1 st term)	2.0%

Obama (2 nd term)	2.3%	
Trump (3/4 th of 1 st term)	2.5%	[AXIOS]

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WW Note

Of the number of untoward things that President Trump has done, two have jumped out at me.

First, is the pejorative way in which he referred to Congressman John Dingell who had passed away.

Second, is his recent State of The Union speech, during which Trump awarded the highest civilian award, The Presidential Medal of Freedom, to Rush Limbaugh, a radio show host who on any given day is racist, sexist, misogynist or homophobic.

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Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date

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. The chart below reflects the number of Article III court judges appointed by all U.S. presidents since Jimmy Carter. The data below does not include the U.S. Court of International Trade.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supreme Ct</u>	<u>Appeals Ct</u>	<u>District Ct</u>
Trump – thru 2/12/20	190	2	51	137
Obama – 8 years	325	2	55	268
GW Bush – 8 years	325	2	62	261
Clinton – 8 years	373	2	66	305
GHW Bush – 4 years	192	2	42	148
Reagan – 8 years	376	3	83	290
Carter -- 4 years	259	0	56	203

There are currently several nominations awaiting Senate action, 32 seats in the District Courts.

There is currently one vacancy on the U.S. Court of Appeals and 70 vacancies on the U.S. District Courts. [USCourts/Wikipedia/List of federal judges appointed by Donald Trump]

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As of early 2020, the Washington Post Fact Checker has recorded 16,241 false or misleading claims by Trump.

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Disassembling

President Trump has proposed massive domestic spending cuts in his proposed \$4.8 trillion election year budget. Twelve departments or agencies are cut while five receive increases.

Commerce	- 37%	Defense	+ 0.1%
EPA	- 27%	Treasury	+ 2.0%
State and USAID	- 22%	Homeland Security	+ 3.0%
HUD	- 15%	NASA	+ 12.0%
Interior	- 13%	Veterans Affairs	+ 13.0%
Transportation	- 13%		
Labor	- 11%		
HHS	- 9%		
Agriculture	- 8%		
Energy	- 8%		
Education	- 8%		
Justice	- 2%		

[WP 2/11/2020]

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A proposed change by the Department of Agriculture to the federal food stamp program would leave more than 3 million people without access to food through SNAP and cause nearly a million children to lose their automatic enrollment in the national school breakfast and lunch programs. [NBC News 2/6/20]

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The Trump administration has finalized plans to permit drilling, grazing and other forms of development across a broad section of southern Utah that used to be protected as part of two national monuments, Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante. This comes after the president cut the size of both monuments. [WP 2/6/2020]

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Under a new rule, consular officers abroad may reject visa applications from women they believe are planning to enter the United States specifically to gain citizenship for their children by giving birth. Visas covered by these new rules are issued to those seeking to visit for pleasure, medical treatment or to see friends and family. [NYT 1/23/2020]

The EPA plans to declare that it is not “appropriate and necessary” for the government to limit harmful pollutants from power plants, even though every utility in America has complied with standards put in place in 2013. [WP 2/19/20]

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2020

Super Tuesday is March 3, 2020,
4 days from today.

The 59th presidential election will take place on November 3, 2020,
248 days from today.

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Running in the Democratic Primary

28 individuals announced their desire to seek the Democratic nomination for president. As of February 12, 2020, twenty have decided to end their candidacies.

The current or most recent public office or other professional activity of the 28 individuals who announced for president include: 1 Vice President, 8 U.S. Senators, 7 U.S. Representatives, 1 former Cabinet Officer, 4 governors, 4 mayors, 3 businesspeople and 1 spiritualist.

The ages of those who remain in the race range from 38 to 78. The average age of those still in the race is 62 years.

Joe Biden (D) – former Vice President, former U.S. Senator – Age 77
Mike Bloomberg (D) – former Mayor of New York – Age 77
Pete Buttigieg (D) – former Mayor of South Bend, Indiana – Age 38
Tulsi Gabbard (D) – U.S. Representative – Age 38
Amy Klobuchar (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 59
Bernie Sanders (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 78
Tom Steyer (D) – Entrepreneur – Age 62

Elizabeth Warren (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 70

Twenty Have Left the Field

~~Mike Gravel (D) – former U.S. Senator – Age 88~~
~~Eric Swalwell (D) – U.S. Representative – Age 39~~
~~John Hickenlooper (D) – Governor of Colorado – Age 67~~
~~Jay Inslee (D) – Governor of Washington – Age 68~~
~~Seth Moulton (D) – U.S. Representative – 40~~
~~Kirsten Gillibrand (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 52~~
~~Bill DeBlasio (D) – Mayor of New York, New York – Age 58~~
~~Wayne Messam (D) – Mayor of Miramar, Florida – Age 44~~
~~Tim Ryan (D) – U.S. Representative – Age 45~~
~~Beto O'Rourke (D) – former U.S. Representative – Age 46~~
~~Steve Bullock (D) – Governor of Montana – Age 53~~
~~Joe Sestak (D) – former U.S. Representative – 67~~
~~Kamala Harris (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 54~~
~~Julian Castro (D) – former HUD Secretary – Age 44~~
~~Marianne Williamson – Spiritualist, teacher – Age 66~~
~~Cory Booker (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 49~~
~~John Delaney (D) – former U.S. Representative – Age 56~~
~~_____ The first person to announce for president in 2017~~
~~Andrew Yang – Entrepreneur – Age 44~~
~~Michael Bennet (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 54~~
~~Patrick Duval (D) – former Governor – Age 63~~

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If “past is prologue” than the Democratic nominee will be Bernie Sanders, Pete Buttigieg or Elizabeth Warren. The others still in the field, Amy Klobuchar, Joe Biden, Mike Bloomberg, Tom Steyer and Tulsi Gabbard may as well leave the race now.

Since 1972, every Democratic presidential nominee has won first, second or third place in Iowa or first or second place in New Hampshire. (Charlie Cook)

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Bernie Sanders built the most loyal donor base throughout 2019. Here is a list of the number of “unique donors” each of the candidates had in that year.

	<u>Unique Donors</u>	
Bernie Sanders	1, 380,000	
Elizabeth Warren	884,000	
Pete Buttigieg	728,000	
Joe Biden	448,000	
Andrew Yang	367,000	
Amy Klobuchar	226,000	
Tulsi Gabbard	215,000	
Tom Steyer	214,000	
Michael Bennet	63,000	
Duval Patrick	52,000	[Washington Post]

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Below are the fundraising totals through January 31, 2020 of those still running in the Democratic primary as announced by the candidates. Spending totals and cash on hand were not yet available as of February 28, 2020. The candidates are ranked by amounts raised in January 2020.

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Raised in 1st month Of 2020</u>	<u>Total raised thru 1/31/2020</u>
Sanders	\$25.1M	\$121M
Warren	10.4M	81.5M
Biden	8.9M	69.7.5M
Buttigieg	6.2M	82.4M
Klobuchar	5.5M	30.8M
Gabbard	1.1M	11.1M
*Bloomberg		
*Steyer		

*Bloomberg and Steyer are self-funding.

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What are the odds?

January 21, 2020

Joe Biden +225 (9/4)
Bernie Sanders +225 (9/4)

February 24,2020

Bernie Sanders -150 (2/3)
Mike Bloomberg +450 (9/2)

March 10	352	1864
March 14	6	1870
March 17	577	2447
March 24	105	2552
March 29	51	2603
April 4	107	2710
April 7	84	2794
April 28	663	3457
May 2	46	3503
May 5	82	3585
May 12	57	3642
May 19	115	3757
June 2	215	3972
June 6	7	3979

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(The following section is repeated from previous issues of the Watch.)

In order to win any delegates, at a caucus or primary, a candidate must get 15% of the vote, statewide or at the congressional district level.

In the case of pledged delegates (not super or automatic delegates), once the delegate selection process is finished in a state, the state party will send his, her or their names to the DNC's Secretary Office and that name will be entered into the Secretary's computer. On the first ballot, each delegate will be "automatically" voting for the candidate they are pledged to and will not have the opportunity to change how they vote.

On the second ballot, that same pledged delegate may vote for whomever he/she/they wish.

The outcome of the first ballot of the 3,768 pledged delegates will be known prior to the first session of the convention. [Thanks to Harold for the above.]

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1,991 delegate votes are required to win the nomination on the first ballot of the 2020 Democratic convention.

If no one receives the necessary number of votes on the first ballot, 771 super or automatic delegates are then able to vote on subsequent ballots. 2,375 delegate votes are required to win the nomination thereafter.

The 1952 Democratic Convention was the last time either convention went beyond the first ballot.

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The Democratic nominating convention is scheduled for July 13-16, 2020 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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Republican Primary

Announced/Running

Donald Trump – President – Age 72

William Weld I – former Governor of Massachusetts – Age 73

The average age of these candidates is 72.5 years

Have left the field

~~Mark Sanford – former Governor of South Carolina, former member of Congress – Age 59~~

~~Joe Walsh – former one-term GOP member of Congress from Illinois – Age 57~~

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As of February 11th, seven states have announced that they are canceling their Republican primaries or caucuses in 2020 to “save money”: Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Kansas, Nevada, South Carolina and Virginia. Other states which do not have significant statewide primaries in other offices will likely follow.

There will be no debates.

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

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The General Election

The upcoming presidential election is not, in fact, a national election. The election will be decided in roughly 8 states: Wisconsin, Michigan, Florida, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, and North Carolina. In 2016, Donald Trump won all these states except Nevada and Colorado.

The following are the Real Clear Politics summaries of general election surveys taken eight months before the election.

	<u>12/9/19 - 1/11/20</u>	
	Trump	Dem
Trump vs Biden	44.2%	48.2%
Trump vs Sanders	45%	48.0%
Trump vs Warren	45.8%	46.2%
Trump vs Buttigieg	45%	44.3%
Trump vs Bloomberg	42.5%	43.5%

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What are the odds?

Here are the odds for who is likely to win the 2020 presidential election as of January 21, 2020.

Donald Trump	-160 (5/8)
Bernie Sanders	+250 (5/2)
Michael Bloomberg	+ 800 (8/1)
Joe Biden	+ 1600 (16/1)
Pete Buttigieg	+ 2000 (20/1)
Elizabeth Warren	+ 5000 (50/1)
Amy Klobuchar	+10000 (100/1)
Mike Pence	+10000 (100/1)
Tom Steyer	+ 15000 (150/1)
Tulsi Gabbard	+15000 (150/1)

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Congress

49% prefer that in the 2020 elections, the election deliver a Congress that is controlled by Democrats while 45% prefer a Congress controlled by Republicans. [NBC/WSJ 1/29/2020]

Approval of the Congress generally remains quite bleak.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 2/11/20	22.4%	65.6%
Real Clear Pol. 1/14/29	22.4%	65.2%
Real Clear Pol. 12/3/19	22.4%	65.6%
Real Clear Pol. 10/29/19	23.0%	64.8%
Real Clear Pol. 9/10/19	16.6%	71.4%
Real Clear Pol. 8/6/19	17.2%	71.4%
Real Clear Pol. 6/11/19	20.0%	69.8%
Real Clear Pol. 1/1/19	19.6%	69.3%
Real Clear Pol. 1/4/18	15.8%	72.6%

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

As of January 31, 2020, 35 incumbent members of the House are not seeking re-election – 9 are Democrats and 26 are Republicans.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2020

Democrats 234
 Republicans 200
 Independents 1
 Vacancies 5

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Safe in 2020	181	162
Likely	18	19
Lean	17	11
		<u>Toss Up</u>
	18	8

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THE SENATE

[WW uses Jessica Taylor of the Cook Political Report and Inside Elections for the Senate chart below. When those two organizations do not agree, WW uses Sabato as a tie breaker.]

In 2020, Republicans will be defending 23 seats while Democrats will be defending 12 seats. It is unlikely that Republicans will lose control of the Senate in this election.

The number of people in the “Lean Republican” category have grown from three to five. Other than that, there have been few if any changes since the last issue of the Watch.

Republicans	53
Democrats	45
Independents	2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independent</u>
Seats not up in 2020	33	30	2
Safe in 2020	7	13	
	Coons	Sullivan	
	Durbin	Cotton	
	Markey	Risch	
	Warner	Cassidy	
	Booker	Daines	
	Merkley	Sasse	
	Reed	Inhofe	
		Graham	
		Rounds	
		Moore Capito	
		Wyoming (Enzi)	
		Tennessee (Alexander)	
		Hyde-Smith	
Likely	3	3	
	Smith	McConnell	
	Shaheen	Cornyn	
	New Mexico (Udall)	Perdue	
Lean	1	5	

	Peters	Ernst Jones (AL) Collins Kansas (Roberts) Loeffler
Toss Up	0	3 McSally Gardner Tillis

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Women Will Get It Done

For the first time in history, women run the law journals at the top sixteen schools in the U.S. [WP]

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NASA astronaut Christina Koch set a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, as she returned to earth after 328 days in space. [WP 2/6/2020]

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“The fact that women around the world are doing so much work that is uncompensated, unrecognized and unsupported is part of the problem.” –Gawain Kripke, policy director at Oxfam America.

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“After all, Ginger Rogers did everything that Fred Astaire did. She just did it backwards and in high heels.” --Ann Richards, Former Governor of Texas

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Restaurants

ANNABELLE
2132 Florida Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-916-5675

If this address sounds familiar it’s because it used to house Nora Pouillon’s restaurant for some 38 years. Over the years I dined there many times.

The physical building is the same and the entryway is the same but that is where similarity ends.

Debbie and I went to Annabelle with Susan and David on the sixth day that the restaurant was open.

As you enter, there is a small bar that seats maybe 10 people on high-backed stools as well as a single regular table with 2 chairs. This is the same as when it was Nora's.

To the left are the original stairs up to the main dining area.

Once you reach the main dining area there is no resemblance to what it was as Nora's.

The main dining room is divided down the middle in two longitudinal sections. The open divider is where the sommelier is stationed.

If you would like a more detailed idea of the changes before visiting, I suggest you take a look at *Eater Washington DC* for an article entitled "Two D.C. Dining Giants Open a Restaurant..." from January 16, 2020.

We were seated at a 4-top at the front of the dining room nearest the staircase.

The service was exceptional. The servers were all older and many had clearly worked at other Bajaj restaurants as well as at other restaurants in D.C. For a restaurant that had only been open for 6 days the servers were intimately familiar with each of the dishes.

David enjoys wine and knows a great deal about it. He had an interesting discussion with the sommelier which resulted in the selection of a wine that Debbie, Susan and David enjoyed.

When I asked the sommelier whether there were any non-alcoholic drinks beyond the usual sodas, he described two drink options. I selected one and it hit the spot.

Susan and David shared a Lettuce Wedge “Monte Cristo”- Peckytoe Crab, Adirondack Potatoes, Artichoke, Lardon as an opening dish.

Susan then ordered Roasted Free-Range Half Chicken – Tarragon Jus, Potato Boulangere, Wilted Arrowhead Spinach. (This half chicken was so large that after Susan finished and David had a piece, the amount left which Debbie and I took home was enough for us for dinner the next two nights.) Susan also ordered Steak Fries – Zippy Mayonnaise

David ordered Ora Organic King Salmon – Radish Kimchi, Purple Potato Puree.

Debbie ordered Candy Stripe Beet Salad Annabelle – Hans Avocado Mousse, Quinoa, Almonds. She then ordered Alina Duck – Quince, Pistachio, Braised Endive.

I started with Applewood Smoked Trout – Braised Celery Waldorf, Cider Gelee. I then selected Horst Co-Operative Pork, Shoulder Pot Roast and Roasted Loin, Yorkshire Pudding. I added Roasted Winter Squash, Pumpkin Seeds, Muscat Raisins.

For dessert we ordered two Kalorama Tortes – Chocolate Stout Cake, Chocolate Hazelnut Mousse, Kumquat Marmalade, Caramel Stout Ice Cream.

Susan, David and Debbie were delighted with their entrée choices. I did not enjoy mine as much. Part of it was undoubtedly that I rarely order pork, but the other part was that that shoulder roast was a bit tough.

When Ashok Bajaj decided to buy the building that housed Nora and open his tenth DC restaurant, he named it Annabelle. When asked about the name he explained that there is a very old private club in London called “Anabel” which has been open since 1963. Bajaj apparently tried to join and was turned down.

Bajaj recruited Chef Frank Ruta, who had previously owned Palena (one of my favorites). Most recently he was at Mirabelle but left to work for the Knightsbridge Restaurant Group, owned by Bajaj. Chef Ruta first worked at Bibiana which was rebranded as Modena.

At the back of the restaurant just before the small dining room, there are two gender neutral restrooms across from one another. Given their design they are

intended to be used by one person at a time. They are small, each housing a counter with an oval ceramic washbasin sunk into the counter with a square hole in the counter which serves as a waste receptacle. There are doors beneath the counter and while I did not look inside, I assume they are for storage of relevant supplies.

Across from the counter is a white ceramic floor-based commode. The walls are covered to shoulder height with a square tile design. The white floor is covered with tiny white square tiles. The walls above shoulder height are covered with a swirling reddish design.

As I was waiting to use one of the restrooms, one of the floor managers came by and suggested that there were two more such restrooms on the other side of the restaurant.

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BRESCA
1906 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
202- 518-7926
www.brescadc.com

Debbie and I went to Bresca with Ricki and Tony. The restaurant has been open for about two years.

Bresca has a single Michelin star, one of 18 restaurants in the D.C. area that has one or more Michelin stars. Our experience proved that it deserves this honor. Neither Debbie or nor could recall a better meal from any of the many restaurants at which we have dined. (More about those 18 Michelin restaurants at the end of this piece.)

As you enter the restaurant there is a greeter's station followed by a small wall after which starts a banquette that runs the length of that side of the restaurant and then half of the back wall of the dining room. On the other side of the room there is an L-shaped bar that seats 12 people on high-backed stools.

There are a variety of 2 and 4 tops. The restaurant seats roughly 60 people at a single sitting.

We were seated in an alcove at the far side of the front of the restaurant. The table seats two people on an unpadded bench with pillows. Ricki and Debbie were

seated there, and Tony and I sat on comfortable chairs facing the windows. The tables and chairs throughout the restaurant are not very fancy but quite comfortable.

Our server was Harrison, an experienced server with culinary training who has worked at other restaurants outside of Washington. He has been at Bresca for a year.

Tony ordered wine for the three wine drinkers and I ordered one of three non-alcoholic drinks that are outlined on the menu. My choice was called SOBER PINEAPPLE – Pineapple/Saison Yeast/Chamomile.

As with many restaurants these days, there is a charge for bread and butter. We decided to order a series of dishes that would be shared by all.

To begin – Bread & Butter – brioche/cultured cow’s milk butter/smoked maple – with trout roe. There were exactly four slices.

For the next course we selected:

SCALLOP MI-CUIT – turnip/buttermilk/horseradish/lime.

BEET SALAD – honey crisp apple/black walnut/brown butter/blowhorn cheese.

RABBIT PANSOTTI – kabocha squash/rye/jus gras/hazelnut streusel. (Ricki, who seemed to be put off by the thought of eating a poor rabbit, conceded that this was especially tasty.)

For the second course we opted for two dishes:

AMISH CHICKEN – brioche & herb panade/roast chicken jus/charred lee/pistachio/sherry/black truffle. This was an entire roasted chicken.

Ricki and Debbie said they preferred the dark meat, the leg and thigh. Tony and I acceded to their request, leaving the two white meat breasts.

While generally I do not particularly like the white meat, to my surprise, and Tony’s as well, these breasts were exceptional; tender and juicy, better than any breast meat that either of us had experienced in the past.

The second dish was:

WHOLE ROASTED FLUKE – grapefruit “sauce vierge”/olive/salad of winter citrus/ kohlrabi/champagne vinaigrette.

It was excellent, our server had not offered to bone it and Tony did the serving. While he did an excellent job, the fact that it not been boned made it a little complicated. (A bit later I asked our server whether he would have boned it if we asked him and he said yes. My instinct is that he should have offered.)

One thing we would have changed was how quickly the fluke was delivered to our table after the chicken was delivered. By the time we got around to eating it, it was no longer warm.

Something else I had never experienced before, is that after each course, our individual plates and the forks, knives and spoons were removed and replaced, whether or not they had been used and thus the silverware always matched the dish. The one time that did not happen was when we were ready to eat the fluke. The remains of the chicken were still on our plates and we had to ask for replacement dishes to eat the fish.

The other entrée options were Beef Short Ribs and Rohan Duck A La presse. For the latter dish, there are only four orders available each night and they had already been selected. The dish is built around a 21-day dry aged duck breast.

For the dessert course we chose:

CHOCOLATE – earl grey/brown butter caramel/milk & honey sherbert

TROPICAL AMBROSIA – tapioca/mango/meringue/passion fruit

French Press coffee (Regular or Decaf) along with Green or Earl Gray Tea. Espresso is not available.

If searching for a criticism, the size of the individual plates provided for each service could have been larger.

There are two gender neutral restrooms intended to be used by one person at a time. There is no signage on the doors, but restaurant staff pointed me to them.

In one corner of the restroom there is a square, wall-hanging white ceramic washbasin with a wall-hanging mirror above. There is a wooden structure that frames the area. To the right is a small table with an ample supply of paper towels. Farther to the right is a floor based white ceramic commode. To the left of the commode is a device with four rolls of toilet paper.

There are appropriate wall-hanging horizontal handicap bars to the side and behind the commode.

The floor is covered with a series of large six-sided patterned tiles. The wall to about shoulder height is covered with a series of six sided even larger decorative tiles with a different pattern. Above the tiles the walls are painted off-white.

The restaurant is open Tuesday through Sunday; 5pm to 10 pm Tuesday – Thursday & Sunday and 5 pm to 11 pm on Friday & Saturday. The restaurant is also open for brunch on Easter Sunday, April 12th, and Mother’s Day, May 10th, in 2020.

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Michelin Stars

Here are the descriptions of the Michelin Stars

- Three Stars – cooking worth a special journey
- Two Stars – excellent cuisine, worth a detour
- One Star – a very good restaurant in its category

Here are the 18 DC restaurants with one or more Michelin Stars.

Three stars:

The Inn at Little Washington

Two stars:

Minibar, Pineapple and Pearls

One star:

Bresca, Fiola, Gravitas, Kinship, Komi, Little Pearl, Masseria, Maydan – Metier, Plume, Rose’s Luxury, Sushi Nakazawa, Sushi Taro, Tail Up Goat, The Dabney

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