

Mike Berman's

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State of the Nation

63% of respondents say that the country is on the wrong track. 29% say the country is headed in the right direction. A 63% finding is the average wrong track finding for all of 2015. [NBC/WSJ 1/13/16]

The recent CBS/NYT survey is slightly more negative, with 67% saying the country is on the wrong track. A combination of surveys taken by CBS/NYT and others taken by CBS alone, results in an average of 62.3%. [CBS/NYT 1/10/16]

35% believe that the direction of the country will improve five years from now. 22% believe the direction of the country will decline. [NBC/WSJ 1/13/16]

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Don't be fooled by the BLS "headline" unemployment rate

The current ,widely publicized BLS unemployment rate of 5% does not represent reality. In any given month it is from 75-100% off.

When I have asked various media folks why they continue to use this number in their reporting rather than the real number, the only answer I get is that it allows comparisons to the past. The fact is that it is just as easy to compare the real unemployment rate to the past as it is to compare the rate that draws current attention.

There has been clear, substantial improvement in the amount of real unemployment over the last five to six years. However, for working people, the situation is not nearly as good as the official, widely reported number suggests.

First, let's take a look at the "official" numbers.

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2015 is 5%, the same as November.

In October 2009, the official unemployment rate was twice as high at 10%. In December of 2009, the unemployment rate was at 9.9%. In November 2010, the rate was still at 9.9%.

However, if one takes into account the total unemployed + those marginally attached to the labor force + those working part-time who want full-time work, the current rate is 9.9%.

In October 2009 this more inclusive standard was 17.1%. In December 2009 the rate remained at 17.1%. In November 2010 this figure was 16.9%.

Here is what is wrong with the so-called “headline” rate of 5%. Included in that rate are people who do not have a job, are available for a job, and have actively looked for work in the prior 4 weeks.

The broadest definition of unemployment includes everyone covered in the “headline” rate plus discouraged workers, marginally attached workers, and those who work part-time but would like to work full-time. [Marginally attached workers are those who “currently are neither working nor looking for work, but indicate that they want and are available for a job, and have looked for work sometime in the past 12 months.”] At this time including these folks in the broader definition of unemployed increases the “headline” rate nearly 100% to 9.9%.

All of the data above is found in the same charts published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. [Thanks to David Brown for the term “headline” rate.]

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In the last week of November, Gallup found an unadjusted unemployment rate of 5.6%. It also found an under-employment rate (unemployed +those working part-time but wanting full time) of 14.0%. [This is based on those 18 years of age and older. BLS data is based on those 16 years of age and older.]

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49% of respondents believe that the national economy is “good,” with 5% saying it is “very good.” Another 49% believe the economy is “bad,” with 18% saying it is “very bad.” [NYT/CBS 1/10/16]

57% believe that 2016 will not be “a time of economic expansion for you and your family nor an opportunity to get ahead.” [NBC/WSJ 1/13/16]

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57% believe that the laws covering the sale of guns should be made more strict. Only 10% believe that the laws should be less strict. 88% support requiring a background check on all potential gun buyers. However, only 26% believe that stricter gun laws would do much to prevent gun violence. [NYT/CBS 1/10/16]

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53% of Americans believe that persons who are not legal immigrants in the United States should be allowed to apply for citizenship. An additional 13% say these immigrants should be allowed to stay, but not be allowed to apply for citizenship. [CBS/NYT 1/10/16]

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81% believe that “news has become like entertainment and too influenced by special interests.” 83% of Republicans, 84% of Independent, and 77% of Democrats share this view. 16% still believe that “news is generally fact-based and credible.” [Winston Group 12/30/15]

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Last year was the hottest year recorded, temperature-wise, compared to data which exists from 1880. Last year was 0.23 degrees Fahrenheit hotter than 2014, which was the previous record year. This was a particularly large increase. December of last year was also the hottest on record. [NASA and NOAA]

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47% of Americans say that the Republican Party is friendly toward religion. Only 29% believe that the Democrat Party is friendly to religion. 30% of Republicans are neutral to religion. 39% of Democrats neutral toward religion. 15% of Republicans and 25% of Democrats are unfriendly to religion. [Washington Post from PEW Research Center, 12/23/15]

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Both parties have lost confidence and trust in the public’s political wisdom. In 2007, 61% of Republicans and those who leaned Republican had confidence in the political wisdom of the American people. Today, that number is 36%. During the same period 67% of Democrats and those who lean Democrat were confident

about the political wisdom of the American people; today 37% have that confidence.

55% of respondents say that “ordinary Americans” would do a better job solving the Nation’s problems than elected officials. 39% have the counter view. [Pew 12/11/15]

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In the current atmosphere there are few things on which Republicans and Democrats agree. But one thing on which they do agree is a shared concern about “money’s influence on politics.”

76% of Republicans/lean Rep and 76% of Democrats/lean Dem, believe that “money has greater influence on politics today than before.”

62% of Republicans/lean Rep and 68% of Democrats/lean Dem believe that the “high cost of presidential campaigns discourages good candidates.” [Pew Research 12/7/15]

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Much is being made of the schism in the Republican Party between the so-called establishment and the new conservative activists who resent the “insiders” who populate the leadership class represented by Washington.

Some believe that this situation creates an opportunity for the Democratic Party.

In fact, the Democratic Party is involved in the same conflict as the Republicans, except the challenge is coming from the left.

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President

The public’s grade of President Obama’s job approval (as found by Gallup 1/24) is 48% approval/47% disapproval. Obama’s approval rating at the time of his first inauguration was 67% approval/14% disapproval. [Gallup]

Here are other approval scores going back 3+ years.

<u>Date</u>	<u>NBC/WSJ</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN/ORC</u>	<u>NYT/CBS</u>	<u>FOX</u>
January 2016	47/49	50/46		46/47	42/53
December 2015	43/51	xxx	47/52	44/48	43/51
November 2015	xxx	44/53	xxx	45/48	40/54
October 2015	45/49	48/48	46/51	45/46(CBS)	42/53
September 2015	47/47	47/49	44/50	xxx	44/50
Jan 2015	46/48%	47/48%	xxx	xxx	45/51
Jan 2014	43/51%	45/52%	45/51%	46/47(CBS)	42/53
Jan 2013	52/44%	55/41%	55/43%	51/41%	

App Dis – Beginning of last year of second term

Eisenhower	66	19 (1/11/60)
Clinton	63	35 (1/10/00)
Reagan	49	40 (1/25/88)
<u>Obama</u>	47	48 (1/20/16)
G W Bush	32	64(1/4/08)

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Americans are negative about how Obama is handling the following six issues.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
Foreign Policy	34	52	
Economy	45	49	
Terrorism	40	54	
Health care	43	54	
Immigration	37	55	
Gun policy	43	51	[NYT/CBS 1/10/16]

47% of Americans feel positively toward Barack Obama, while 42% have negative feelings toward him. This compares to Americans' current feelings toward the following public figures.

	Positive	Negative
Bill Clinton	45	36
<u>Hillary Clinton</u>	40	49

<u>Bernie Sanders</u>	38	31	
George W Bush	37	43	
Mario Rubio	31	29	
Ted Cruz	31	36	
Ben Carson	30	35	
<u>Donald Trump</u>	29	58	
Chris Christie	24	36	
Jeb Bush	19	46	[NBC/WSJ 1/13/16]

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Starting with Eisenhower, the two Presidents who have had the highest approval ratings were George H. W. Bush – 89% -- and George W Bush – 86%. The only other President who broke 80% was John Kennedy.

George H. W. Bush's high point came when the U.S. freed Kuwait, and for George W. Bush, it was 9/11.

The spread between the high and low for G. W. Bush was 62 points, and between the high and low for G. H. W. Bush was 60 points.

The following is a list of the high and low approval ratings for each President starting with Eisenhower.

Obama 64/41 - GW Bush 86/22 - GHW Bush 89/29 - Clinton 71/38
Reagan 68/35 - Carter 75/28 - Ford 71/37 - Nixon 68/24 - Johnson 79/35
Kennedy 82/56 - Eisenhower 79/48. [Pew Research Center 1/12/16]

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Congress

Currently, 75% of Americans disapprove of the job being done by Congress, while 15% approve. s [CBS/NYT 1/10/16]

Americans disapprove of the job being done by Democrats in Congress by 65% to 28%, and they disapprove of the job being done by Republicans in Congress by 78% to 15%. [Quinnipiac University 12/20/15]

The House

The 2016 election is about 10 months from now. Any prospect of the Democrats' taking back control of the House has not really improved since the last issue of the Watch. As it stands now, the Republicans can hold the House without a whole lot of effort. All they need to do is hold the 'Safe' Republican seats and 11 of the 13 seats that are "Likely Republican." (As usual, The Cook Political Report is the source of the data below.)

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

	Democrat	188	
	Republicans	246	
	Vacancy	1	
	<u>Democrats</u>		<u>Republicans</u>
Safe in 2016	170		207
Likely	12		13
Lean	5		12
		<u>Toss Ups</u>	
	4		12

The Senate

At the moment a two-seat pickup by the Democrats seems possible. Senator Mark Kirk (R) in Illinois and Senator Ron Johnson (R) in Wisconsin seem to have a hard road to re-election. After those races, the task gets more difficult for the Democrats.

Many folks suggest that Senator Kelly Ayotte (R) is also vulnerable. So far, public polls find her leading Democratic Governor Maggie Hassan. Ayotte has been taking steps to separate some of her positions from those of her Party.

The possible outcome is likely to be **heavily** affected by the nature of the Presidential candidates who will also be on the ballot and driving turnout.

THE U.S. SENATE

Republicans	54
Democrats	44
Independents	2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Seats not up in 2016	36	30
Safe in 2016	8	14
Leaning in 2016	2	5
	Bennett	Burr
	Kirk	Portman
		Blunt
		McCain
		Indiana
Total	46	49

	<u>Toss Up</u>
Nevada	Johnson
	Florida
	Ayotte
	Toomey

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Looking Ahead to 2016 – Contest for President

The 2016 Presidential campaign may well be described as “never a dull moment.” The New York Times has reported that Michael Bloomberg is again considering an independent race for President. He has instructed his advisers to draw up plans for a campaign this year. According to the article, Bloomberg’s thinking is driven by the possibility that the final candidates will be Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. [NYT- on line – 1/23/16]

A top advisor to former Mayor Bloomberg had this to say, as reported in Mike Allen’s Playbook, on January 23. The former NYC Mayor “has become increasingly concerned about the tenor, tone and substance of both parties.”

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The campaign will also be remembered by the rise and fall of Dr. Ben Carson.

Whether or not he ends up winning the Republican nomination and the White House, he will have changed the “rules” of Presidential campaigning.

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By 46% to 43%, Americans would prefer that a Democrat be elected President. Roughly three-quarters of the Democrats and three-quarters of the Republicans feel strongly about their preferences.

When thinking about the coming election, 61% believe we should be looking for a President who will bring greater changes to current policies, even if he or she is less experienced and tested. 36% opt for a person who is more experienced and tested.

33% of Republicans say they will vote in their State’s primary, while 27% of Democrats hold that view. This is the same number of Republicans that held this view last month. Among Democrats this is a drop from the 33% who held this position last month. [NBC/WSJ 1/13/16]

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In the most recent NBC/WSJ survey (1/13/16) Republican and Democratic primary voters were asked how well each of several statements applies to them. They were asked to rate each one from 10 – 1. A score of 10 represents a description that is perfect for you and a score of 1 represents a description that is totally wrong for you. [WW has selected 4 statements which show up on both the list rated by Republicans and the list rated by Democrats.]

	GOP		Dem	
	<u>8-10</u>	<u>1-3</u>	<u>8-10</u>	<u>1-3</u>
Supporter of traditional definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman	65	18	26	59
A National Rifle Association supporter	62	13	14	67
A supporter of Right-to-Life movement	54	18	27	45

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In his January 15th column, Charlie Cook offers a perspective on the current Republican contest. The following is an excerpt.

“Finally, there is the argument that has been made repeatedly in this column—that once these angry populists have finished venting their spleens, once they feel their voices have been heard, they will switch to a more plausible vehicle for their discontent, to a candidate that they could, in fact, envision in the White House Situation Room with a finger on the proverbial nuclear button, someone whose temperament and judgement might be on firmer ground.

“It is worth remembering that 94% of the 2,472 Republican convention delegates are not from the February states of Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada; these delegates are picked on or after March 1, and the winner-take-all States don’t come online until Florida and Ohio on March 15. Fifty-eight percent of delegates are picked in March, 16 percent in April, and 8 percent in May, with the final 12 percent in early June. It’s a long slog to the nomination.

“In short, take a deep breath and beware of talking heads behaving as if their hair is on fire. This process only starts beginning in three weeks with Iowa and doesn’t start in earnest until March 1.”

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35% of registered voters think that Hillary Clinton would be a great (11%) or good (24%) President. 30% describe Bernie Sanders as a good President, with 11% describing him as great.

31% think Donald Trump would be a great or good President, and 28% think that about Ted Cruz.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, 28% think that Hillary Clinton would be a terrible President, while another 16% say she would be a poor President. 17% say Sanders would be a terrible President, while an additional 18% said he would be a poor President.

Trump takes the cake, with 38% saying he would be a terrible President and an additional 14% saying he would be a poor President, a total of 52%. [Pew 1/20/16]

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The following are a series of charts that provide basic information about the 2016 election and the candidates.

1. The list of current candidates/those who have left the field
2. Select national polls
3. Select state polls
4. The money game
5. Primary/caucus dates and state delegate numbers and allocation
6. The Primary Debates
7. The conventions

1. The current list of candidates

Twelve is the number of candidates still seeking the Republican nomination
Three Democrats continue to seek the Democratic nomination. .

On The Field – Candidate has filed with the Federal Election Commission; .

Fallen by the Wayside – Candidate has been on the field, but has now left.

On the Field

Democrats	Republicans
Hillary Clinton, 67 Martin O'Malley, 52 Bernie Sanders, 73	Ted Cruz, 44 Rand Paul, 52 Marco Rubio, 43 Jeb Bush, 62 Ben Carson, 63 Carly Fiorina, 60 Mike Huckabee, 59 Rick Santorum, 56 Lindsey Graham, 59 Donald Trump, 68 Chris Christie, 52

	John Kasich, 62 Jim Gilmore, 65
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Fallen by the Wayside

Democrats	Republicans
Jim Webb, 69: Dropped out 10/20* Lincoln Chafee, 62: Dropped out 10/23 Lawrence Lessig, 54; Dropped out 11/2	Rick Perry, 65: Dropped out 9/11 Scott Walker, 47: Dropped out 9/21 Bobby Jindal, 43; Dropped out 11/17 Lindsay Graham, 59; Dropped out 11/20 George Pataki, 69; Dropped out 12/29

2. Selected polls, early January through 3rd week of January.

The following is a selection of national polls for the month of January.

Republicans

	CBS/NYT 1/7-1/10	NBC/WSJ 1/9-1/13	Monmouth 1/15-1/18	Fox News 1/18-1/21	ABC/WPost 1/21-1/24
Trump	36	33	36	34	37
Cruz	19	20	17	20	21
Rubio	12	13	11	11	11
Carson	6	12	8	8	7
Bush	6	5	5	4	5
Christie	3	5	3	3	4
Kasich	2	3	3	4	2
Fiorina	3	3	1	1	3
Paul	1	3	2	2	1
Huckabee	4	1	3	2	2
Santorum	0	0	1	0	0
Spread	Trump +17	Trump +13	Trump +19	Trump +14	Trump +16

*Jim Gilmore is still in the race but was not included in RCP polling

Democrats

	Fox News 1/4-1/7	CBS/NYT 1/7-1/10	NBC/WSJ 1/9-1/13	Monmouth 1/15-1/18	CNN/ORC 1/21-1/24
Clinton	54	48	59	52	52
Sanders	39	41	34	37	38
O'Malley	3	2	2	2	2
Spread	Clinton +15	Clinton +7	Clinton +25	Clinton +15	Clinton +14

Source: RealClearPolitics

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3. Select state polls

(Republican lists include only those candidates scoring 5% or better.)

Iowa

GOP	
	CBS/YouGov 1/17-1/21
Trump	39
Cruz	34
Rubio	13
Carson	5
Spread	Trump +5

Dems	
	CBS/YouGov 1/17-1/21
Sanders	47
Clinton	46
O'Malley	5
Spread	Sanders +1

New Hampshire

GOP	
	CBS/YouGov 1/17-1/21
Trump	34
Cruz	16
Rubio	14
Kasich	10
Bush	7
Christie	7
Carson	5
Spread	Trump +18

Dems	
	CBS/YouGov 1/17-1/21
Sanders	57
Clinton	38
O'Malley	5
Spread	Sanders +19

South Carolina

GOP	
	CBS/YouGov 1/17-1/21
Trump	40
Cruz	21
Rubio	13
Carson	9
Bush	8
Spread	Trump +19

Dem	
	CBS/YouGov 1/17-1/21
Clinton	60
Sanders	38
O'Malley	0
Spread	Clinton +22

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4. Money raised and spent since September 30th

The amounts raised and spent will not be available until January 31, 2016.

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5. Primary/Caucus dates and state delegate numbers and allocation

Included are the number of delegates assigned to each Party in each State and how the delegates will be allocated. The DNC mandates a proportional allocation for all States. The RNC allows States more flexibility.

Definitions for Republican Allocation of Delegates:

Conv: State will bind delegates to the national convention at a State/territory convention. Other conventions will leave the delegation unbound.

Prop: State will proportionally allocate delegates based either on the Statewide primary/caucus vote or on the combination of the Statewide and Congressional district votes.

Prop w/ Trigger: State will follow above proportional rules, but allows for a winner-take-all allocation if a candidate wins a majority of the vote Statewide or at the Congressional district level.

Hybrid: State will follow some form of winner-take-most plan (i.e., winner-take-all by Congressional district) or directly elects delegates on the primary ballot.

Winner-take-all: State will award all delegates to the plurality winner of the primary or caucus.

The following is the tentative list (subject to change):

February

- ☐ Feb 1:
 - Iowa caucuses- (52D- Prop) (30R- Prop)
- ☐ Feb 9:
 - New Hampshire primary- (32D- Prop) (23R- Prop)

- Feb 20:
 - Nevada Dem caucuses- (43D- Prop)
 - South Carolina GOP primary- (50R-Hybrid)
- Feb. 23:
 - Nevada GOP caucuses- (30R- Prop)
- Feb 27:
 - South Carolina Dem primary- (59D- Prop)

March

- March 1 (Super Tuesday):
 - Alabama- (58D- Prop) (50R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Alaska GOP- (28R-Prop)
 - Arkansas - (37D- Prop) (40R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Colorado caucuses- (79D- Prop) (37R-Conv)
 - Georgia- (116D- Prop) (76R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Massachusetts- (116D- Prop) (42R- Prop)
 - Minnesota caucuses- (93D- Prop) (38R- Prop)
 - Oklahoma- (42D- Prop) (43R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Tennessee- (76D- Prop) (58R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Texas- (252D- Prop) (155R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Vermont- (26D- Prop) (16R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Virginia- (110D- Prop) (49R- Prop)
- March 5:
 - Kansas caucuses- (37D- Prop) (40R- Prop)
 - Kentucky GOP caucuses- (45R- Prop)
 - Louisiana- (58D- Prop) (47R- Prop)
 - Maine GOP caucuses- (23R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Nebraska Dem caucuses- (30D- Prop)
- March 6:
 - Maine Dem caucuses- (30D- Prop)
- March 8:
 - Hawaii GOP caucuses- (19R- Prop),
 - Idaho GOP primary- (32R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Michigan- (148D- Prop) (59R- Prop w/ Trigger)
 - Mississippi- (41D- Prop) (40R- Prop)
- March 12:
 - Washington, DC (GOP convention)- (19R- Prop)
- March 15:
 - Florida- (246D- Prop) (99R-Winner take All)
 - Illinois- (182D- Prop) (69R-Hybrid)

- Missouri- (84D- Prop) (52R-Hybrid)
- North Carolina- (121D- Prop) (72R- Prop)
- Ohio- (159D- Prop) (66R-Winner take All)
- March 22:
 - Arizona- (77D-Prop) (58R-Winner take All)
 - Idaho Dem caucuses- (27D- Prop)
 - Utah caucuses- (37D- Prop) (40R- Prop w/ Trigger)
- March 26:
 - Alaska Dem caucuses- (18D- Prop)
 - Hawaii Dem caucuses- (33D- Prop)
 - Washington Dem caucuses- (118D- Prop)

April

- April 5:
 - Wisconsin- (96D- Prop) (42R-Hybrid)
- March 5:
 - Wyoming Dem- (18D- Prop)
- April 19:
 - New York- (291D- Prop) (95R- Prop w/ Trigger)
- April 26:
 - Connecticut- (70D- Prop) (28R-Hybrid)
 - Delaware- (31D- Prop) (16R-Winner take All)
 - Maryland- (118D- Prop) (38R-Hybrid)
 - Pennsylvania-(210D- Prop) (71R-Hybrid)
 - Rhode Island- (33D- Prop) (19R- Prop)

May

- May 3:
 - Indiana- (92D- Prop) (57R-Hybrid)
- May 10:
 - Nebraska GOP primary- (36R-Winner take All)
 - West Virginia-(37D- Prop) (34R-Hybrid)
- May 17:
 - Kentucky Dem primary- (61D- Prop)
 - Oregon- (73D- Prop) (28R- Prop)
- May 24:
 - Washington GOP-(44R- Prop)

June

- June 7:

- California- (546D- Prop) (172R-Hybrid)
- Montana- (28D- Prop) (27R-Winner take All)
- New Jersey- (142D- Prop) (51R-Winner take All)
- New Mexico- (43D- Prop) (24R- Prop)
- South Dakota-(25D- Prop) (29R-Winner take All)
- North Dakota Dem- (23D- Prop)
- June 14:
 - Washington, DC Dems- (46D- Prop)
- States that the RNC reports will not hold Presidential preference votes in 2016
 - North Dakota- (28R-Conv)
 - Wyoming- (29R-Conv)

Sources: RNC website, Balletpedia, US Presidential Election News

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6. Presidential Primary Debates

Republicans:

The Republican National Committee is currently planning to sanction at least twelve Presidential primary debates. Six have already been held, in Ohio, California, Colorado, Wisconsin, Nevada, and South Carolina,

Trump, in response to his dustup at the previous Fox News debate, with Fox news anchor, Megyn Kelly, had threatened not to participate because she was to be one of the moderators of that debate. This was made more complicated by a news release distributed by Fox News. Trump then said he would not participate.

The Republican National Committee has decided to replace NBC with CNN as the moderator for the debate scheduled for February 26th. This is in response to CNBC's performance at the October 28, 2015 debate. The date will be changed to February 25th.

Current planned Republican primary debates:

1. Fox News, August 6, 2015, Cleveland, Ohio – Completed
2. CNN, September 16, 2015, Simi Valley, California - Completed
3. CNBC, October 28, 2015, Boulder, Colorado - Completed

4. Fox Business, November 10, 2015, Milwaukee, Wisconsin - Completed
5. CNN, December 15, 2015, Las Vegas, Nevada - Completed
6. Fox Business, January 14, 2016, Charleston, South Carolina - Completed
6. Fox News, January 28, 2016, Des Moines, Iowa
7. ABC News, February 6, 2016, Manchester, New Hampshire
8. CBS News, February 13, 2016, Greenville, South Carolina
9. CNN, February 25, 2016, Houston, Texas
10. CNN, March 10, 2016, Miami, Florida

One other is pending:

Fox News, March 2016, location TBD

Polling before and after Republican Debates

	Fox News 11/1- 11/3	4 th GOP Debate- Fox Business/WSJ : 11/10/2015	Bloomberg 11/15- 11/17	ABC/WP 12/10- 12/13	5 th GOP Debate- CNN: 12/15/2015	Fox News 12/16- 12/17	NBC/ WSJ 1/9- 1/13	6 th GOP Debate- FOX Business: 1/14/15	FOX News 1/18- 1/21
Trump	26		24	38		39	33		34
Carson	23		20	12		9	12		8
Rubio	11		12	12		11	13		11
Bush	4		6	5		3	5		4
Cruz	11		9	15		18	20		20
Fiorina	3		3	1		3	3		1
Huckabee	4		3	1		1	1		2
Paul	4		3	2		3	3		2
Kasich	4		3	2		2	3		4
Christie	2		4	4		3	5		3
Santorum	0		1	0		1	0		0
Spread	Trump +3		Trump +4	Trump +23		Trump +21	Trump +13		Trump +14

Source: RealClearPolitics

Democrats:

There will be six Presidential primary debates. They will be held in Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Florida, and Wisconsin.

Current planned Democratic primary debates:

1. CNN, October 13, 2015, Nevada- Completed
2. CBS News, November 14, 2015, Des Moines, Iowa - Completed
3. ABC News, December 19, 2015, Manchester, New Hampshire - Completed
4. NBC News, January 17, 2016, Charleston, South Carolina - Completed

5. PBS, February 11, 2016, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
6. Univision, March 9, 2016, Miami, Florida

Polling before and after Democratic Debates

	CBS/NYT 11/6- 11/10	2 nd Debate- CBS: 11/14/15	ABC/WP 11/16- 11/19	Fox News 12/16- 12/17	3 rd - ABC News: 12/19/15	CNN/OR C 12/17- 12/21	NBC/ WSJ 1/9-1/13	4 th Debate: 1/17/15	CNN/ ORC 1/21- 1/24
Clinton	52		60	56		50	59		52
Sanders	33		34	34		34	34		38
O'Malley	5		3	2		3	2		2
Spread	Clinton +19		Clinton +26	Clinton +22		Clinton +16	Clinton +25		Clinton +14

Source: RealClearPolitics

The size of the television audience for each debate has steadily declined.

Republican - Fox News, August 6, 2015, Ohio – 24 million viewers

Republican - CNN, September 16, 2015, California -23 million viewers

Democrat - CNN, October 13, 2015 – 15.8 million viewers

Republican – CNBC, October 28, 2015 – 14 million viewers

Republican – Fox Business News, November 10, 2015 – 13.5 million viewers

Democrat – CBS/WSJ, November 14, 2015 - 8.5 million viewers

Republican - CNN, December 15, 2015, Nevada – 18 million viewers

Democrat - ABC, December 19, 2015, New Hampshire – 6.7 million viewers

Republican – Fox Business, January 14, 2016 – S. – 11 million viewers

Democratic – NBC – January 17, 2016 – South Carolina – 10.2 million viewers

The Republican debates have drawn a total audience of 103.5 million viewers; an average of 17.25 million viewers. The Democratic debates have drawn 41.2 million viewers; an average of 10.3 million viewers.

7. The Conventions

- ☐ Republicans: July 18-21, Cleveland, Ohio
- ☐ Democrats: July 25-28, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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The Necktie

[**Note:** I do not like wearing neckties. I have avoided wearing ties for some 45-50 years. In circumstances when not wearing a tie would constitute an insult or show a lack respect, I do so. But off it comes as soon as possible. For example, in the days when I was going to meetings on Capitol Hill, off the tie came as soon as I got back in the car heading to the office. The following are brief excerpts from a 1978 Time Magazine article entitled “The Odd Practice of Neck Binding.”]

“...-that vestigial bib, that morning noose- is a strange and sinister article of clothing. When a man feels ill, the first thing to do is loosen his tie, it is, after all, pressing against the carotid arteries, impeding the flow of blood to the brain.

“Often, the tie is a uniform signaling solidarity among certain kinds of men, a semaphore announcing that ‘we all speak the language.’ It gives men a feeling of security, a certain formality, a necessary distance. Although the tie may be physically uncomfortable, they take psychic comfort from it.

“ To be neat, the tie requires a shirt buttoned snugly at the Adams apple. So, especially of course in summer, the body notices that it is airlessly bound at the waist, wrists and neck. Food for the stomach and air for the lungs must pass down this strait constricted to appease teachers, bosses and headwaiters.

“ Over the centuries, the tie has gone through thousands of fitful and pointless variations; stocks, string ties and once during the 19th century, a crescent-shaped bowtie worn with a choker collar so high and stiff that the wearer would neither see to the side nor turn his head.

“A necktie cannot be the final answer. A man’s clothes should not throttle him.”

* * * * *

Restaurants

Osteria Morini
301 Water Street S.E.
Washington, DC
202-484-0660

Debbie and I went to Osteria Morini with Rhoda, Debra and Michael on a Saturday night.

Other than a couple of trips to the baseball stadium, I have not spent any time in Southeast Washington in recent years (or ever for that matter). But it has clearly become a destination. There are many new restaurants, apartments and office buildings. Among the new restaurants are Due South, The Arsenal at Bluejacket, and Aqua 31. A place I must try on another visit is a store called Jubilee Ice Cream, which is in the same building as Osteria Morini. Even on a very cold night there were at least a half dozen people in the store.

The restaurant has floor to ceiling glass walls on two sides. As you enter the restaurant on the water side there is a reception desk straight ahead. To the immediate left there is a small area with high tables that will seat 8-10 people. Continuing on the left there is a long bar, which seats 14 people in high backed stools. The wall behind the bar is a mirror and completely covered, it seems, with every kind of liquor one can imagine. Starting at the end of the bar, which is about half way down the restaurant, the open kitchen begins. It runs all the way to the back of the restaurant.

The entire right side of the restaurant is dedicated to seating. There are 2, 4 and 6 tops which can easily be configured to provide a larger table. There are a couple of separate sections along the right side. There is also an area that can be closed off for events, which has a U shaped table that looks to seat around 30 people.

The restaurant seats around 220 people when fully occupied, and like so many of these large restaurants, it is quite noisy, but we were able to have a normal voiced conversation.

There is also a small glassed-in area which provides the grill for the kitchen.

The crowd was on the younger side; I suspect we were the oldest table in the room. But most interesting, families were there with very young children.

At our table there was quite a bit of sharing.

First we shared two salads, Insalata Verde – escarole, radicchio, truffle vinaigrette, radish, pecorino; and Cacio e Pepe – romaine, fried capers. Both were excellent and particularly tasty.

Along with the salads we had Trota – smoked trout, olives & sour cream; Ceci – chickpeas, broccoli rabe pesto, almonds; and Burrata – house made – mozzarella, grapefruit, pistachio, prosciutto.

Rhoda and Debra shared Branzino – Mediterranean sea bass, chickpeas, charred broccoli, taggiasca olives, bagna cauda. Debbie ordered Spaghetti – manilla clams, charred Treviso, bottarga. Michael ordered Anatra – duck breast, spaetzli, mushrooms, spinach, radish. I ordered Tagliatelle – ragu antica, Parmigiana.

For dessert we shared Mele – Gold Rush apple, vanilla bavarian, candied pecan brown butter cake, maple pecan gelato; and Tortino – warm guanaja dark chocolate cake, caramelized jivara milk chocolate, vanilla gelato.

On warm days and nights there is outside seating along the waterfront side of the restaurant.

On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights I am told that the restaurant turns its tables over 2.5 times. All of which is to say that reservations are critical on those nights.

The service was quite attentive, notwithstanding this was the first day that our server worked in the restaurant.

The men's room is inviting, despite the fact that both restrooms are located as far from the front of the restaurant as is possible.

The floor of the men's room is covered by very large, oblong, tan tile-like material. The walls around the wash basins are covered with tan mid-size tiles and the urinals and commode walls are covered with yet smaller tan bricks.

Directly to your right upon entering are two square sunken ceramic washbasins with a very large mirror directly in front of them.

Just past the washbasins are two wall-hanging ceramic white urinals with a floor to ceiling separation of tan wood.

Directly across from the urinals is a single large commode area with floor to ceiling walls.

There is no street parking. Parking Lot L is located on 3rd Street Southeast and an easy walk to the restaurant. The restaurant is located in the southern-most building on Water Street Southeast between 3rd and 4th Streets Southeast. The main entrance faces the water on the southeast side of the building.

As you might guess, finding a parking place to enjoy the restaurant on game day could be problematic unless you are already planning to go to the game.

* * * * *

Char Bar & Eli's Market
2142 L Street NW
Washington, DC 20037
202-785-4314
www.dccharbar.com

Hours: Sunday-Thursday 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.
Friday 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 pm

For many years Eli's Restaurant, located on 20th and N Street NW, was the primary kosher restaurant in Washington. A number of years ago I ate lunch there with Jacob.

In mid-2014, Eli's relocated, and became Char Bar & Eli's market. Recently, I had lunch at the Char Bar with Jacob and his sons Menachem and Yosef.

As you enter the restaurant there is a six person bar to your right. At the back of the restaurant there is a partially open kitchen.

The restaurant seats 75 people. The eating area of the restaurant is located on two levels. The lower level has a variety of table sizes. The upper level (a couple of feet above the lower level) wraps around two side of the lower level. It also has a variety of table sizes. We had a table designed to seat five.

There is a private room that appears to seat 11 people. Reservations are required.

Jacob and Menachem had Ribeye Steak – 16oz marinated, then grilled over flame, served with baked potato and chopped salad.

Josef selected Country Style Chicken and Steak Fajita – grilled vegetables, herb brown rice and beans, guacamole and pico de gallo.

I had a Caesar salad; the House Burger, plain with Lettuce and Tomato; and Hand-Cut Onion Rings.

It is fair to say that the portions are quite ample.

The service was quite attentive.

The restaurant offers a full catering service. There are limits to the addresses to which it will deliver. However, you can pick up an order. The menu is on the restaurant's website.

Reservations are not accepted for lunch, but they are accepted for dinner and for use of the private room.

The Char Bar is affiliated with the Blue Star House of Beef, Burgers and BBQ in Rockville.

The Char Bar is under the supervision of the Orthodox Union. Char Bar's letter of certification can be found on its website.

The restaurant is closed from 2:30 p.m. on Friday until 11:00 a.m. on Sunday.

Mike

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