

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

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STATE OF THE NATION

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Where We Get Our News, Political and Otherwise

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There Are Polls and Then There Are Polls

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PRESIDENT OBAMA

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THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION

**Funny Things are Happening on the Way to Tampa
Score Card**

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2012 PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTION

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THE CONGRESS

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STATE OF THE NATION

59% say the country is on the wrong track, with 35% saying it is on the right track. This is a change from a month ago, when 66% said the country was on the wrong track and only 29% said it was on the right track. It is also the lowest “wrong track” number recorded in the last year. [CBS/NYT 2/12]

This change is mirrored in the most recent CNN/ORC survey, in which 60% said that things are going badly in the country, down from the 70% recorded two months earlier. 40% say things are going at least fairly well, up from the 30%, recorded two months earlier. [2/12]

In February, 22% of Americans said they were satisfied with the way things are going in the United States. That is up from the 11% satisfaction rate recorded in September. 37% of Democrats are satisfied, but only 10% of Republicans and 19% of Independents agree. [Gallup]

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All signs show that the economy is improving. When those signs will be recognized by the average American remains to be seen.

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37% of Americans think the economy will get better over the next 12 months. This is the most positive number found by the NBC/WSJ since January 2011, when 40% had that view. Conversely, the number who are pessimistic about the future has also dropped to the year-ago level of 17%. [1/12]

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The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported an unemployment rate of 8.3% in the month of January. This represents a continuing drop on this most vivid of numbers.

Gallup came up with a slightly higher number of 8.6% for the same period, a slight increase from the previous month. It also reported an increase to 10.1% (from 9.8%) in the number of people who are working part-time, but want full-time employment. Thus, a total of 18.7% are considered to be unemployed.

Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, Florida, and California had the highest underemployment rates in 2011, at least 21%. Two States, North and South Dakota, had underemployment rates of 12%, the lowest in the country.

[Note: this still undercounts the real unemployment rate because neither test includes those who have stopped looking for work.]

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- * Confidence in the U.S. economy has gone up for five months through January. It is now a minus 27, up from a minus 52.
- * 36% think the economy is getting better, up from a low of 18% in the summer of 2011. The high point in the last four years was in January 2011, when it hit 41%.
- * 83% are dissatisfied with the state of the nation's economy, and 69% are dissatisfied with the size and power of the Federal government.
- * 49% see themselves as worse off today than they were a year ago.
- * 49% say the U.S. economic system is unfair, but 62% say that the system is fair to them.
- * 36% worry about losing their job in the next year. 51% worry about maintaining their standard of living, while 43% fear they will not be able to pay medical bills. [Gallup]

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On February 15th, Gallup published the results of a survey of small business owners. The headline said, "Health Costs, Gov't Regulations Curb Small Business Hiring." And then there was a sub-headline that read, "Nearly half of small-business owners name those issues." All of the above is accurate based on the report of the survey.

It is not until you get into the report that you discover that yes, 48% are worried about the potential cost of healthcare and 46% are worried about government regulations, but those issues rank 5th and 6th in the list of concerns expressed by small business owners.

- 76% Don't need any additional employees at this time
- 71% Worried revenues or sales won't justify adding employees
- 66% Worry about the current status of the U.S. economy
- 53% Worry about cash flow or ability to make payroll

Then come concerns about healthcare and government regulations.

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66% of adults believe there are "strong or very strong" conflicts between rich and poor, an increase of nearly 20% in the last two years. Across the political spectrum this view is held by 55% of Republicans, 68% of Independent, and 73% of Democrats.

43% believe that rich people attained that status mainly because of "hard work, ambition or education." 46% think that wealthy people became rich primarily because of "knowing the right people or being born into wealthy families." [PEW]

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In various forms, the poor in America have been a topic of conversation in this election season. Notably, about 25% of Republicans and Republican-leaning registered voters have annual family incomes of less than \$30,000. 57% of that population think that the government does too little for poor people. 21% think the government does about the right amount. [PEW 2/12]

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53% of Americans think the government taxes too much to help people who "could get by without help."

41% think the "government is providing benefits for too many people who don't actually need them."

54% believe that "high unemployment has left more people in need of government assistance."

38% do not believe that the safety net is sufficient for those who need help "just to get by." [UT/NJ Connection Poll 2/12]

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32,000,000 Americans live alone today, up from 27,200,000 in 2000 and 31,000,000 in 2010. 5,000,000 people between the ages of 18-34 and 15,000,000 of those aged 35-64 live alone. Following are the percentage of households with only one occupant in various countries:

- * 47% of all households in Sweden
- * 27% of all households in the United States
- * 7% of all households in China
- * 3% of all households in India [NYT 2/5/12]

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There are two things on which 80% of Democrats and 89% of Republicans appear to agree – giving tax breaks to U.S. corporations that bring manufacturing jobs back from overseas.

77% of Democrats and 71% of Republicans also agree that the U.S. should do more to pressure China to allow fairer trade with this country. But that is where agreement seems to end.

* 84% of Democrats, but only 46% of Republicans, think the Federal government should spend more to support development of alternative energy sources.

* A majority of Republicans -- 54% -- think the Federal government should spend more on education and job training for the long term unemployed. 93% of Democrats hold this view.

* And while 81% of Democrats would increase taxes on upper-income Americans, only 41% of Republicans hold this view. [Gallup]

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The issue that most divides Democrats and Republicans is the importance of environmental protection. 27% of Republicans say it should be a top priority. Just over twice that number, 58%, of Democrats say it should be a top priority. [PEW]

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- * 40% of Americans continue to see themselves as conservatives, nearly twice as many as the 21% who see themselves as liberal.
- * 36% of Independents see themselves as conservative, while 10% see themselves as liberal.
- * 71% of Republicans see themselves as conservative and a modest 4% see themselves as liberal.
- * 39% of Democrats see themselves as liberal, while 20% see themselves as conservative. [Gallup]

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Over the last 15 years, opposition to gay marriage has fallen substantially. Those who support and oppose are now even in number. 45% support these unions, while 46% oppose them. In 1996, 65% opposed, while only 27% supported gay marriage. [Pew 2011]

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Beginning during the second term of President George W. Bush, and continuing through the first three years of the Obama Administration, the public has been dissatisfied with the position of the United States in the world today. [Gallup 2/12]

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64% are dissatisfied with the level of immigration into the country. Of those with that point of view, 6% would like to see immigration increased, while 42% want it decreased. [Gallup]

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Where We Get Our News, Political and Otherwise

When asked to name their two main sources for national news, here is how Americans answered. The numbers in the column titled “2008” represent the results from 3.5 years earlier and show a substantial change over that period. Notable is the drop in the role of daily newspapers and the increase in attention to

Fox News Channel, websites of news organizations ,and news pages of ISPs.

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2008</u>
Daily Newspapers	27%	45%
Local TV News	20%	
FOX News Channel	20%	13%
CNN	18%	
Websites of News Orgs	16%	5%
News Pages of ISPs	10% (i.e. Yahoo/MSN)	5%
NPR	9%	
ABC Network	9%	
NBC Network	7%	
CBS Network	7%	
MSNBC/CNBC	5%	
Talk radio	4%	
General Radio News	4%	
News Magazines	4% (i.e. Time, USNews)	
Sunday News Shows	1%	
Opinion Websites	1% (i.e. Drudge or Slate)	
Morning TV Shows	*	
Political Talk Shows	*	
Public TV News Shows	* (i.e. McNeil Lehrer)	
Opinion Magazines	* (i.e Weekly Standard)	
Religious radio	*	
CSPAN	*	
Comedy Shows	*	
Late Night TV	*	
Other	17%	

[11/7-9/2011- national sample by a
pollster WW respects]

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When it comes to the primary source of campaign news, cable news leads the way. This is where Americans follow campaigns and candidates. Notable is the drop in local TV news, network news, and local newspapers, and the increase in the internet.

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2000</u>
Cable	36%	34%
Local TV News	32%	48%
Network News	26%	45%
Internet	25%	9%
Local newspaper	20%	40%

Since 2008, there has been a significant decline in the number of those 18-29 years of age who follow the election campaigns on the internet. There have been increases in those 30+ who are following the candidates on the internet.

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2008</u>
18-29	29%	42%
30-49	33%	26%
50-64	21%	20%
64+	11%	5%

Facebook and Twitter are not yet significant online sources of campaign-related information. 6% regularly turn to Facebook, while only 2% regularly turn to Twitter. Only 6% of Facebook/Twitter users say they have become a “friend” to a candidate on a social networking site. However, this is up from 3% in 2008.

The average Facebook user makes seven new Facebook friends each month. On average, Facebook users can reach more than 150,000 Facebook users through friends.

The top online sources used regularly by 20 % are websites and the apps of print, TV and radio organizations.

The top online sources for campaign news are CNN and Yahoo/Yahoo News.

CNN	24%
Yahoo/Yahoo News	22%
Google/Google News	13%
Fox/Fox News	10%
MSN	9%
MSNBC	8%
Facebook	5%
New York Times	5%
AOL/AOL News	4%

Fox News is cited by far more Republicans than Democrats as the place they get most of the campaign news. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to prefer CNN and MSNBC.

67% (37% great deal/30% fair amount) say there is a great deal of political bias in news reporting. This includes 49% of Republicans and 32% of Democrats.

While we are only in the early stages of the 2012 presidential campaign, 72% of registered voters say they have seen or heard campaign commercials.
[PEW Research Center 2/12]

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There Are Polls and Then There Are Polls

When I began absorbing political surveys the highest state-of-the-art method had polltakers going door-to-door, having direct one-on-one conversations with respondents.

Over time that changed, and the highest state-of-the-art method became and still is the telephone survey, with a direct one-on-one conversation between a questioner sitting in a phone bank and a respondent. Until recent years, those telephone conversations were on landlines. Now, because of the number of people who only use cell phones, a proper sample includes cell phones as well as landlines.

Various techniques have been designed for creating random samples that are likely to approximate a particular group. That group might be all adults, only those who are currently registered, or only those who say they are likely to vote in the election that is the focus of the survey.

Over the last few years, a number of polls and polling organizations have come into play that use a variety of “new” techniques whose “efficacy” remains to be seen. These include wholly automatic telephone surveys and on-line surveys.

The moral of the story is that, when considering survey research, published or private, you need to take into account the methodology used in conducting the research. This is especially true when the result is out of whack with other surveys of the same group during roughly the same time period.

The following are items to which you might pay attention when evaluating a survey:

- * Is it conducted online and, if so, how does it purport to create a random sample? Random samples can be developed online when the universe is fixed, for example when surveying the membership of an organization for which the email addresses of the members are available. Otherwise, no good device yet seems obvious.
- * Is it conducted among registered voters or likely voters, and how close is it to the election? Likelyvoters makes more sense closer to election day.
- * What is the size and nature of the sample? Is it smaller than the sample of other polls surveying the same landscape? Small samples often result in less than reliable results.
- * Are all potential participants included in the sample? Nate Silver cited an example of a survey taken for a primary election that did not include Independents when they are free to participate in the partisan primary.
- * If it is a telephone survey, are an appropriate number of cell phone respondents included?
- * Is it clear as to the time period in which the survey was conducted, as opposed to the time at which it is published?
- * Is information about the survey methodology, sample size, and timing of the survey prominently displayed with the results?

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There are a number of aggregators of national and State surveys. They provide an invaluable service, making it unnecessary for consumers of this kind of data to scour various sources for the latest information.

However, to the extent that such services calculate an average number for some time period, there is a need to pay attention to which surveys are included in the average.

An average that includes with equal weight a survey taken by NBC/WSJ and an automated telephone survey that does not include cell phones needs to be viewed and used with care.

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The following are the published surveys and survey research organizations with which I am comfortable without further analysis. This is not to say that other entities don't do credible survey research.

ABC/WP
CBS/NYT
CNN/ORC
NBC/WSJ

Gallup
PEW Research
Quinnipiac
PPP – Public Policy Polling
Survey USA

Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group
Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner
Winston Group

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When considering comparisons of survey results from different time periods it is important to remain mindful of the context.

As the election approaches, one of the popular comparisons is the relevance, of a sitting President's job approval to the prospects of re-election. The test seems to be whether the incumbent President is at or above the 50% mark. Of course, George W. Bush was reelected with a 48% approval rating. And, there have been only 11 Presidents who sought re-election since the advent of polling. It is not much of a sample, but it is all there is.

In a recent Washington Post article about the Democrats' prospects for retaking the House, the writer makes the point that the Republicans have had a margin of this size 5 times since 1900. Each time they had huge losses in the next

election. To the credit of the writer the article goes on to make the point that the Republicans have not had a margin of this size since the 1940. A lot has changed since then. [WP 2/7/12]

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PRESIDENT OBAMA

Barack Obama is not a typical politician or President. He eschews the usual touchy-feely aspects of the political dance. In many ways he is inscrutable. He is described by many as a loner. The number of Members of Congress who talk about never being in contact with the President is legion. And he certainly is not a back-slapper. In short, he seems to see himself as above the traditional expectations we have of Presidential behavior.

On the other hand, he has proven himself to be a timely decision maker in difficult situations. He seems to know what he thinks and why he thinks it. He has not allowed himself to be labeled as a “liberal” or a “moderate,” giving himself leeway to vary as circumstances dictate. And, there is no doubt that he is a fighter.

Later this year we will find out whether the public at large buys his incarnation of the Presidency.

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Americans are split three ways on whether Obama has brought “the right kind of change” to the country or any change at all to the country. As you recall, “change” is what he promised in the 2008 campaign.

35% say he has brought the right kind of change
32% say he has brought the wrong kind of change
31% say he has not brought much change either way. [NBC/WSJ 1/12]

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With 8-1/2 months to go before the general election, the public’s grade for the job he has done so far is lower than that of six previous Presidents, and above one, at this point in their first term.

The President's current job approval rating in Gallup is 46%. The following is the list of 8.

	<u>App</u>	<u>Dis</u>
Eisenhower	75	15
Reagan	55	36
Clinton	53	40
Nixon	52	37
Carter	52	38
GW Bush (II)	51	46
Obama	46	47 (2/12)
G Bush (I)	39	47

The following are several additional cuts at the President's job approval rating over the last six months. There is a consistency among these major media surveys.

	<u>NBC/WSJ</u>	<u>NYT/CBS</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN/ORC</u>
Feb 2012	---	50/43%	50/46%	50/48%
Jan 2012	48/46%	45/47% (CBS)	48/48%	47/51%
Dec 2011	46/48 %	44/46 % (CBS)	49/47%	49/48%
Nov 2011	44/51%	---	44/53%	44/54
Oct 2011	44/51%	46/46%	42/54%	45/52%
Aug 2011	44/51%	48/47%	44/46 WP	44/54%

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The President's approval rating for all of 2011 was 44%. His average for the year was less than any of the previous 8 Presidents, except for Jimmy Carter who scored a 37.4% average.

For his first year in office, Obama had a 57.2% average. [Gallup]

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Here is how the President's performance is rated on a number of other issues. On the issues which are most prominent in American's minds, the economy and job creation, his rating is subpar. [Gallup]

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Economy	38%	59%
Creating jobs	40%	58%
Foreign affairs	48%	46%
Foreign trade	38%	48%
Healthcare policy	41%	56%
National Defense	53%	42%
Taxes	45%	51%

[Gallup]

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By 47% to 38%, Americans disapprove of the job that Obama has done in creating jobs for them. 54% disapproved in January 2011. [CBS/NYT 2/12]

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By 47% to 37%, adults believe that President Obama is more likely than Congressional Republicans to offer tax and spending proposals that reflect their own priorities. [UT/NJ Connection Poll 2/12]

There has been only the slightest droop in the approval of Catholics for President Obama following the dust up with the Catholic Church hierarchy over making contraception available to workers at Catholic institutions, like hospitals and schools. Churches are exempt.

Polls also show that approval by Catholics mirrors the population at large, and there is no difference between those who attend church weekly and those who go less often. [Gallup 2/12]

However, 50% of the public at large disapproves of the new policy, even though 81% of the public at large, including 77% of Catholics, do not think that using artificial means of birth control is wrong. [CNN/ORC 2/12]

37.7 million people, on 14 different networks, watched President Obama's 2012 State of the Union Address to the Congress, January 24th. The audience was down from 42.7 million viewers in 2011 and 48 million viewers in 2010.

111.3 million people viewed the Super Bowl on 1 network on February 5th.

2.1 million unique viewers watched the game online. This is the first time there was a live stream of this game, and it was the “most-watched single-game sports event” online. [WP 2/9/12]

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2012 REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

22 people have been tempted or have joined the race
18 people have announced they are not running, quit the race, or have written it off

4 people are still running

Rick Santorum

Mitt Romney

Newt Gingrich

Ron Paul

2 remains the number of real players at the moment

The Goal – 1,142 Committed Republican Convention Delegates
by the time of the Republican National Convention,
August 27-30, 2012

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SCORE BOARD Caucuses and Primaries (Place Finished)

	<u>Romney</u>	<u>Santorum</u>	<u>Paul</u>	<u>Gingrich</u>
Iowa	2	1	3	4
NH	1	5	2	4
SC	2	3	4	1
Fla	1	3	4	2
NV	1	4	3	2
CO	2	1	4	3
MN	3	1	2	4
MO	2	1	3	-
ME	1	3	2	4

1st place finishes – Romney 4, Santorum 4, Gingrich 1
 2nd place finishes – Romney 4, Santorum 0, Paul 3, Gingrich 2
 3rd place finishes – Romney 1, Santorum 3, Paul 3,

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Delegates gained, as tabulated by Green Papers, are: Romney – 107,
 Santorum – 43, Gingrich – 42, Paul – 36.

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GOP Nomination – National Polling

2012 Republican Presidential Candidates

<u>Survey</u>	<u>Last date of survey</u>	<u>Romney</u>	<u>Gingrich</u>	<u>Paul</u>	<u>Santorum</u>
Gallup	2/15	31	14	10	<u>32</u>
CNN/OpRes	2/13	32	15	16	<u>34</u>
CBS/NYT	2/13	27	10	12	<u>30</u>
Pew Res.	2/12	28	17	12	<u>30</u>
Gallup	2/8	<u>36</u>	20	10	20
ABC/WP	2/4	38	24	14	18
NBC/WSJ	1/24	28	<u>37</u>	12	18
ABC/WP	1/15	<u>36</u>	16	16	13
Gallup	1/10	<u>31</u>	16	13	15
CBS News	1/8	<u>19</u>	15	10	14
Pew Res.	1/8	<u>27</u>	16	12	16
Gallup	1/2/12	<u>24</u>	23	13	6
ABC/WP	12/18	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	15	4
Gallup	12/11	23	<u>33</u>	8	3
NBC/WSJ	12/11	23	<u>40</u>	9	3

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Intrade Prediction Market

At Intrade you can buy and sell shares on the prospects of candidates for President (and other offices). In other words, you are investing on the percentage probability of that event occurring (election of that candidate). The following are

the last prices paid on 2/15 and 1/12.

	<u>2/15</u>	<u>1/12</u>
Romney	71.1	85.8
Gingrich	4.0	4.7
Paul	---	3.6 (apparently no current market)
Santorum	16.0	1.6

If you are interested, go to www.Intrade.com.

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Turnout

As compared to the 2008 Republican primaries and caucuses, in 7 of 9 contests to date, turnout has been down.

IA – Up; NH – Up; SC – Up; FL – Down; NV– Down; CO - Down ; MN - Down ; MO - Down ; ME - Up

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Here are the four tranches of the Republican primary....

- 1st tranche – January 3 – 31, 2012 - Completed
- 2nd tranche – February 4 – March 3, 2012
- 3rd tranche – March 6 – 24, 2012
- 4th tranche – April 3 – June 26, 2012

The following represents the state of the race in the remaining States in the 2nd tranche. The only State in which WW can find a published poll taken after Santorum's February 7th three-state parley is Michigan.

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>2/12*</u>	<u>2/14**</u>	<u>2/14***</u>
Romney	27%	25%	33%
Gingrich	21	5	11
Santorum	<u>33</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>43</u>
Paul	12	11	8

* American Research Group

** Mitchell/Rossetta Stone

*** Inside Mich Politics/MRG

February 4 – March 3, 2012

Arizona (p) 2/28 , Michigan (p) 2/28, Washington (c) – 3/3

March 6 – 24, 2012

Of the 19 primary and caucus States that commence their processes during this period, their delegates must be allocated on a proportional basis.

March 6 – Alaska (c), Georgia (p), Idaho (c), Massachusetts (p), North Dakota (c), Ohio (p), Oklahoma (p) Tennessee (p), Vermont (p), Virginia (p).

March 10 – Kansas (c), Wyoming (c), U.S. Virgin Islands (c), Guam (c)

March 13 – Alabama (p), Hawaii (c), Mississippi (p), Missouri (c)

March 18 – Puerto Rico (c)

March 20 – Illinois (p)

March 24 – Louisiana (p)

April 3 – June 26, 2012

The 21 primaries and caucuses scheduled during this period are free to allocate their delegates proportionally or on the basis of winner take all.

[Note: For more information about the 2012 Republican Party delegate selection rules see Washington Watch, Issue 105, December 2011. Keep in mind that the Republican National Convention can change these rules.]

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What a difference six weeks makes.

	<u>2/14</u>	<u>1/10 (Gallup)</u>
Romney	32	31
Santorum	34	15
Gingrich	16	15
Paul	13	16

At least for now, this is a race between Santorum and Romney. Paul and Gingrich are, for practical purposes, out of the race.

Paul and Gingrich both retain significant followings, but they are not showing any growth. Paul has no prospect for real growth. It remains an open question whether Gingrich can rise again between now and the end of Super Tuesday, March 6th. Given the nature of the Paul and Gingrich supporters, Romney must hope that they stay in the race for some period of time. While not all of their supporters would go to Santorum if either or both end their campaigns, on balance, Santorum would be the primary beneficiary.

There are many things that define the differences between Santorum and Romney.

Santorum has a core set of beliefs and values that are the basis for the philosophical aspects of his campaign. You may not agree with him, and some of the things he believes may seem to be pretty fringy, but his positions have not been created for the purpose of this campaign. When faced with a new question he can quickly express an answer that is consistent with those core beliefs and values. He rarely, if ever tries to shade his responses.

Romney appears to be the polar opposite. He may well have a set of beliefs and values, but it is hard to find them, and they are not the core from which his positions spring forth. When faced with a new question, he must first recall the substantive framework that has been created for his campaign, and then come up with an answer. He often shades.

In short, Santorum is if nothing else, authentic. Romney is not.

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Santorum should also be credited with designing a campaign plan based on what is possible for him. In short, he has gone to places where he can get votes on the cheap. That is to say, since he did not have unlimited resources, he spent his time in locations where his personal appearances and a modest amount of organization can result in “victories” which keep him on the path to nomination.

Since his first election to the House of Representatives, and continuing into his current campaign, Santorum has had the strategic assistance of a Pennsylvania

consultant, John Brabender. Brabender is apparently particularly adroit at crafting appeals to Catholics and working class people.

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Romney faces what could be another embarrassment in Michigan. Who would have thought that he would be challenged in what is his original “home” State? The position which he took, critical of the Obama administration’s effort to save General Motors and Chrysler, did not and is not going over well. He is now trying hard to explain how what the Administration did was effectively to follow his suggestion. But few, if any, are buying his newly coined version of history.

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Donald Trump has struck again. Trump decided to announce that he was supporting Romney for the Republican nomination. He chose to do it in Nevada, in a fancy hotel, at exactly the time that Romney was facing challenges relating to his wealth. He noted that millions of people were interested in who he would support. It is worth noting that following that endorsement, Romney lost the next three events on the Republican nomination schedule.

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There is a lot of chatter about the amount of money being spent on the primary campaign, much of which is coming from the treasuries of the Super Pacs. But the amounts of money spent by or on behalf of candidates through the end of 2011 suggest that money may not be the end all that it is often considered to be.

The amounts of money spent during January are not yet available. But, they are likely to be substantial. However, here is the raising and spending by select candidates, and the Super Pacs supporting them, in the millions. Remember there were no delegate contests before January.

	Campaign Organization		Super Pac	
	<u>Raised</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Raised</u>	<u>Spent</u>
Romney	\$57.1	37.2	\$30.2	6.6
Paul	26.1	24.2	1.0	.4
Gingrich	12.7	10.6	2.1	.9
Santorum	2.2	1.9	.7	.7

So, by the time of the Iowa Caucuses, won by Santorum (if only by a hair), Romney had spent \$37.2 million from his own campaign coffers and Santorum had spent only \$1.9 million. Of course, Romney was spending on States down the road, as well as in Iowa, but even so, his spending over Santorum's was substantial.

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Of the 19 media-sponsored Republican nomination debates to date, the largest audience – 7.58 million viewers – remains the ABC/ DesMoines Register/ Yahoo News debate on December 8, 2011. The second most-watched debate was the NBC News debate on January 23, 2012. Fox News holds 3rd place, with 6.713 million viewers on December 15, 2011.

Republican nominating process

Debates with one or more media sponsors

5/5/11	Fox News - 3.26 million viewers
6/13/11	CNN - 3.2 million viewers
8/11/11	Fox News - 5 million + viewers
9/7/11	NBC/MSNBC/Politico - 5,400,000 viewers
9/12/11	CNN - 3,600,000 viewers
9/22/11	Fox/Google - 6,100,000 viewers
10/11/11	Bloomberg/Washington Post – no ratings available (Bloomberg does not subscribe to Nielsen)
10/18/11	CNN - 5.46 million viewers
11/9/11	CNBC - 3.33 million viewers
11/12/11	CBS/National Journal - 5.3 million viewers
11/22/11	CNN - 3.6 million viewers
12/10/11	ABC/DesMoines Register/Yahoo News/Iowa GOP/ 7.58 million viewers
12/15/11	FOX/Iowa GOP - 6.7 million viewers
1/7/12	ABC/WMUR - 6.25 million viewers
1/8/12	NBC/Facebook/Union Leader - 4.715 million viewers
1/16/12	FOX/GOP of South Carolina – 5.475 million viewers
1/19/12	CNN/Southern Rep Leader Conference – 5.0 million viewers
1/23/12	NBC/ - 7.125 million viewers
1/26/12	CNN - 5.357 million viewers
3/1/12	CNN - Canceled, 3 of 4 potential participants said they would not participate
3/19/12	Oregon Public TV et al

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THE PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTION

Interest in the November 2012 Presidential election is running slightly behind where it was running in 2008 at this time. Currently, on a scale of 10, with 10 being “very interested”, 78% score their interest at 8, 9 or 10. In 2008, that number was 86%. [NBC/WSJ 1/12]

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12 States were seen as solidly Democratic politically in 2011, down from 30 States which were described that way in 2008, when Barack Obama was elected. An additional 7 States were described as lean-Democratic, about the same number as 2008. The number of States described as solidly Republican has grown over the same period from 4 to 10. and the number of lean-Republican States has grown from 1 to 7. Truly competitive States have grown from 10 to 15.

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2008</u>
Solid Democratic or Lean	19	36
Competitive	15	10
Solid Republican or Lean	17	5

[Gallup]

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The number of those who describe themselves as supporters of the Tea Party Movement has not grown over the last year, with 27% expressing that view in January of both 2011 and 2012. The number who describe themselves as not supporting the movement has grown slightly to 66%. [NBC/WSJ 1/12]

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From the point of view of the President’s re-election effort, the scenarios remain the same. If the election is a referendum on Obama he has a problem. If it is a contest between himself and the Republican nominee, his prospects are improving. And, should he have the good fortune of being able to make the election a referendum on the Republican nominee, he is on his way to a good victory. Recent statements and actions of the Republican nominees make the possibility of the latter slightly better.

Obama's team must also be listening with a certain pleasure to those in the Republican Party who talk of a brokered convention. It is hard to imagine the type of campaign that would be put together by a nominee who was not certain he would be in the general election until the Thursday before Labor Day, two months before the election.

But it is important not to forget that all that goes on now is, in fact, preliminary. More likely than not, the Republicans will have a nominee long before their convention and before a whole new cluster of voters begin to pay real attention to the election.

2012 Presidential General Election

Over the past 6 weeks, Obama's general election prospects appear to have improved.

<u>Survey</u>	<u>Last Date</u>	<u>Obama</u>	<u>Republican (generic)</u>	<u>Sample</u>
NBC/WSJ	1/12	47	42	RV
Pew	1/8	41	41	RV
NBC/WSJ	12/11	43	45	RV
		<u>Obama</u>	<u>Romney</u>	
PEW	2/12	52	44	
CNN/ORC	2/12	51	46	
CBS/NYT	2/12	48	42	
CBS News	1/8	45	47	
CNN/Op.Res.	12/18	52	45	
USA/Gallup	12/18	50	48	
NBC/WSJ	12/11	47	45	
		<u>Obama</u>	<u>Santorum</u>	
PEW	2/12	53	43	
CNN/ORC	2/12	52	45	
CBS/NYT	2/12	49	41	
CBS News	1/8	47	43	

		<u>Obama</u>	<u>Paul</u>
CNN/ORD	2/12	52	45
CBS/NYT	2/12	50	39
CBS	1/8	46	45
CNN/Op.Res	12/18	52	45
ABC/WP	12/18	49	44
NBC/WSJ	12/11	50	37

		<u>Obama</u>	<u>Gingrich</u>
CNN/ORC	2/12	55	42
CBS/NYT	2/12	54	36
CBS News	1/8	49	41
CNN/Op.Res.	12/18	56	40
USA/Gallup	12/18	50	48
NBC/WSJ	12/11	51	40

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As a point of comparison, at this same time in 2004, John Kerry led George Bush by 55% to 43%. And in 1996 at this time, Bill Clinton headed Bob Dole By 56% to 40%. [Gallup]

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The Electoral College

Here are two cuts that WW will regularly reprint as we head toward the Presidential election. 270 Electoral votes are needed to win.

The Cook Political Report – Democrat vs. Republican

	<u>1/12</u>	<u>2/12</u>
Solid Dem	186	175
Likely Dem	0	7
Lean Dem	35	19
	221	201
Toss Up	98	142

Solid GOP	159	143
Likely GOP	37	48
Lean GOP	23	4
	219	195

The Rothenberg Political Report – Obama vs. Romney

Obama States	186	186
Lean Obama	31	51
	217	237

Toss Up	46	64
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Romney States	191	191
Lean Romney	84	46
	275	237

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Just how much money will the Obama campaign be able to raise? For months commentators have talked about the campaign raising \$1 billion. The Obama campaign has been assiduous in calling that talk crazy.

The campaign collected \$130 million in 2011. This is a substantial amount, but that leaves \$870 million to be raised in order to reach the \$1 billion mark. This money would have to be raised in time to be used in the campaign, which effectively means by the 1st of October. That means the campaign would have to take in \$96.6 million each month. Short of simply passing out dollars, most high cost campaign activity requires advance planning and reservation. We will shortly know how much the campaign took in during the month of January. [Note – The Obama campaign announced on February 17th that the campaign and the DNC had raised \$29.1 million together in January. The campaign share was not broken out.]

Of course these numbers do not take into account the amounts that will be raised by the Democratic National Committee and Priorities USA, the super Pac established to support his re-election.

Obama has changed his tune when it comes to “acknowledgement and support” of the Super PAC created to support his candidacy.

Given the relatively modest amount that the PAC raised in 2011, \$4.4 million, it was clear that Obama was going to have to do something if the PAC was going to be of value in the coming election.

And so, while claiming that he opposed the whole idea of Super PACs, the President did what was necessary to signal that he wanted wealthy Democratic donors to play beyond their contributions to his campaign and the Democratic National Committee. Others announced that he had agreed that Cabinet members , senior White House officials, and campaign staffers were free to participate in the Super PAC's ongoing efforts.

The President's new position was inevitable. No one believed that the two ex-White House staffers who started Priorities USA did it without at least the implicit approval of the President. However, without his acknowledgement of its importance, it would not have met its goals or the broader campaign's needs.

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InTrade Prediction Market

As of 10 a.m. February 16th , here are the bids for shares in Obama's re-election prospects. (The higher the bid the more likely the buyer believes the prospects of victory.)

	<u>1/12</u>	<u>2/16</u>
Barack Obama	50.6	60.3

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THE CONGRESS

The Congress continues to set new records. Approval of Congressional job performance is now at 10%, the lowest score ever recorded by Gallup. This score is confirmed by the latest CBS/NYT survey.

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THE SENATE

If incumbent Massachusetts Republican Senator Scott Brown loses his bid

for re-election, the Republican caucus in the Senate will bear considerable responsibility. Had the Republicans not stopped the President from nominating Elizabeth Warren to head the new consumer protection agency she would not be the Democratic nominee in Massachusetts. In the most recent public surveys, Warren is now leading Brown.

A second weak spot for the Republicans is Nevada, where appointed Senator Dean Heller is, at best, running even with Democratic Congressperson Shelly Berkeley.

While loss of either of these States will make it difficult for the Republicans to take control of the Senate, the loss of both seats would seem to make the job all but impossible.

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THE U.S. SENATE

Democrats	51
Republicans	47
Independents	2 (caucus Dem)

Here is how the 33 Senate elections made up of 23 Democratic incumbents (including 2 Independents) and 10 Republican incumbents look to me at this time . (D=Dem incumbent in office, R=GOP incumbent in office, I=Ind. Incumbent in office) Underlining reflects retirement.

Safe	Leaning		Leaning	Safe
<u>Democrat(8)</u>	<u>Democrat(7)</u>	<u>TossUp(8)</u>	<u>Republican(5)</u>	<u>Republican(5)</u>
California	<u>Connecticut</u>	<u>Hawaii</u>	<u>Arizona</u>	Indiana
Delaware	Florida	Mass.	Maine	Mississippi
Maryland	Michigan	Missouri	<u>Texas</u>	Tennessee
Minnesota	Ohio	Montana	Nebraska	Utah
New Jersey	Pennsylvania	Nevada	<u>No. Dakota</u>	Wyoming
New York	Washington	<u>New Mexico</u>		
Rhode Island	West Virginia	<u>Virginia</u>		
Vermont		<u>Wisconsin</u>		

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Seats not up in 2012	30	37
Safe in 2012	8	5
Leaning in 2012	7	5
Total	45	47

Toss-ups 8 (2R/6D)

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

While the Democrats have a lot going for them in the fall elections and prospects for a pickup of seats by the Democrats is high, at least for now, a take over of the House by the Democrats appears not likely.

WW has regularly reprinted the “House Dashboard” published by the Cook Political Report. The data from January 20, 2011 is from the Dashboard. However, the Dashboard is not being published at this time because of the uncertainties caused by re-districting. Therefore, the chart below (other than 1/20/11) reflects the Cook’s current Competitive House Race Chart through February 9, 2012 . [As always, thanks to “The Cook Political Report.”]

THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Republicans 242
 Democrats 192
 Vacancy 1 (D)

	<u>1/20/11</u>	<u>8/12/11</u>	<u>12/8/11</u>	<u>1/5/12</u>	<u>2/9/12</u>
TOTAL Dem	193	---	---	---	---
Solid Dem	150	---	---	---	---
Likely Dem	27	22	18	16	20
Lean Dem	12	17	14	13	12
Toss-up	10	15	21	20	19
D	4	6	8	8	5
R	6	9	13	12	14
Lean GOP	15	20	21	19	20
Likely GOP	38	40	29	31	03

Solid GOP	183	---	---	---	---
TOTAL GOP	242	---	---	---	---

The Rothenberg Political Report has posted a report that deals with the entire House. It reports the following:

	<u>1/12</u>	<u>2/12</u>
Safe Democrat	166	164
Competitive	78	78
Safe Republican	191	193

* * * * *

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