

Mike Berman's

WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 108

March 24, 2012

STATE OF THE NATION Gas prices, Birth control

* * * * *

PRESIDENT OBAMA

* * * * *

THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION Score Card The Money

* * * * *

2012 PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTION

* * * * *

THE CONGRESS

* * * * *

RESTAURANTS Corky & Lenny's

* * * * *

STATE OF THE NATION

63% say the country is on the wrong track. 29% say it is on the right track. A month ago, 59% said the country was on the wrong track and 35% said it was on the right track. [CBS/NYT 3/13/12] A year earlier, 64% said the country was on the wrong track and 30% found it to be on the right track, just about the same as it is today. [CBS 3/21/11]

This month, 26% of Americans are satisfied with the way things are going in the United States. A year ago, the satisfaction level was 18%. The high point in the intervening year was in May 2011, when it hit 26% before steadily dropping to 11% in August and September. Satisfaction was at 15% in President Obama's first month in office. [Gallup]

* * * * *

49% of Americans are optimistic about the next 12 months, while an almost identical number of 48% are pessimistic about that time period. This is an improvement from the 44% who expressed optimism last December and the 52% who were pessimistic. [WP/ABC 3/12]

* * * * *

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported an unemployment rate of 8.3% in the month of February. That is no change from January. Looking back at the rate for this period of time over the last several years you find the following: February 2011 – 9.0%; February 2010 – 9.8%; February 2009 – 8.3%; February 2008 – 4.9%.

Gallup reported an 8.8% unemployment rate for mid- March. This is up from 8.6% in January, and 8.5% in December 2011, but down from 9.1% in February. It also reported a drop to 18.6 % in the number of people unemployed or who are working part-time, but want full-time employment.

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

* * * * *

- * Economic confidence in the U.S. dropped in the week ending March 18th. The -21 score was down from -18 a week earlier, when it scored more positively than any time in the last 4+ years.
- * 40% believe the U.S. economy is growing, up from 3% in late 2008. 46% say the economy is in a recession/depression, down from 69% in 2008.
- * Job creation fell slightly in February, but it is still a full two points better than it was in February 2011.
- * 28% of small businesses plan to increase capital spending in the next 12 months, while 23% plan to decrease spending.
- * 73% of American investors say that “a politically divided Federal government” hurts the investment climate in the United States.
- * The percentage of Americans getting their health insurance from an employer continues to drop. The 44.5% who had this benefit in 2011 is down from 49.2% in 2008. [Gallup]
- * In the 12 months ending January 31, sales at full-service restaurants were up 8.7% over the previous 12 month period. [NYT 3/17/12-Census Bureau]

* * * * *

49% say the recent rise in gas prices has had “quite a bit of impact” on them and their families. [NBC/WSJ 3/12]

51% believe gas prices will go up and then down, while 46% believe they will go higher and stay higher. 89% are at least somewhat concerned about the recent rise in prices.

63% say recent increases in the cost of gasoline has caused financial hardship for themselves and others in their household. 36% say it has caused a serious problem. Of this latter group who are most feeling the impact, about half of them have household incomes of less than \$50,000/year. [WP/ABC 3/12]

Based on an early March Gallup survey, the “tipping point” -- when the average family would have to make significant changes in spending because of gasoline prices -- is \$5.25-\$5.30.

* * * * *

Democrats are seen as caring more about issues that are especially important to women than Republicans by 58% to 30%. [WP/ABC 3/12]

* * * * *

By 61% to 35% Americans believe that health insurance companies should be required to “cover the full cost of birth control for women.” However, of those who think the insurance companies should be required to cover the cost of birth control (61%), the willingness to require insurance companies to pay even if the insured organization is affiliated with a religious institution is only 49% to 46%. [WP/ABC 3/12]

53% favor the Federal government requiring employers to offer “free birth control coverage” as part of their health insurance benefit plans. 33% oppose this requirement. The supportive group includes 58% of women and 49% of men. However, if the language is changed to require employers to provide “free contraceptive services, including the morning after pill,” 43% favor this requirement, while 43% oppose it.

When asked whether the Federal government should require health insurance plans for employees of Catholic or other religiously affiliated colleges and hospitals to provide birth control coverage and require health insurance companies to pay for it, the proposition is opposed 45% to 38%. Furthermore, if the language of the question is changed to “contraceptive services and the morning after pill,” opposition grows to 49% to 34%. [NBC/WSJ 3/12]

* * * * *

Overall, 51% disapprove of the Federal government bailouts of a number of players in the auto industry. This includes 73% of Republicans, 50% of Independents, and 31% of Democrats. [Gallup]

* * * * *

While the nominal corporate tax rate is 35%, companies actually paid at a rate of 12% in 2011. [Time 2/20/12]

* * * * *

While there is increased criticism of government expenditures, Americans are increasingly dependent on various forms of Federal/state/local government subsidies. Various entitlements provided, on average, \$7,448 per person in the United States in 2010. These include more than 50 government programs ranging from Social Security to food stamps.

In 1979, the lowest 5th/least affluent households in America received 54% of those benefits. In 2007, that had dropped to 36%.

1% of Americans relied on government benefits in 1929. In 2011, the number was 18%. [NYT 2/12/12]

* * * * *

Between 1985 and 2012, the weekly income for a high school graduate has grown from \$333 to \$638 per week. For those who have graduated from college the increase is from \$506 to \$1,150. [NJ 3/3/12]

* * * * *

Tuition, room and board averaged \$15,123 for in- state students at four year public institutions in 2009. Those who attended private non-profit colleges and universities paid an average of \$35,636 per year. Eight years from now, a four-year education at a private school will cost an average of \$250,000. [The Georgetown Dish 2/20/12]

* * * * *

The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report for 2011-12 ranks the United States 26th in the world on how well its education system meets the needs of a competitive economy. #1 is Switzerland and Canada is #7. [WP 2/12]

* * * * *

53% of Americans believe that China is the leading economic power in the world, with the U.S. chosen as #1 by 33%. However, 54% see the U.S. as the number one military power in the world. [Gallup]

* * * * *

More than half of all births to American women under the age of 30 happen outside of traditional marriage. 51% of births to women with no college education occur outside of marriage. The rate for women with a college degree is 8%. [NYT 2/18/12]

* * * * *

The most religious Americans have higher overall wellbeing than those who are moderately religious or nonreligious. [Gallup]

* * * * *

Of the 10 States that have the lowest percentage of residents without health insurance, ranging from Massachusetts 4.9% to Maine 12.9%, 9 of the 10 were won by Barack Obama in the 2008 Presidential election. Of the 10 States with the highest percentage of residents without health insurance, ranging from Louisiana 20.4% to Texas 27.6% , 7 of 10 were won by John McCain in 2008.

Even global warming has taken on a partisan tint. When asked whether the current warmer temperatures are normal year-to-year variations or due to global warming, 43% of Democrats select global warming, but only 19% of Republicans make that choice. [Gallup 3/12]

* * * * *

PRESIDENT OBAMA

With 7-1/2 months to go before the general election, the public's grade for the job President Obama has done so far is lower than that of four previous Presidents, and above three, at this point in their first term.

The President's current job approval rating in Gallup is 46% approval and 47% disapproval. The following is the list of 8.

| | <u>App</u> | <u>Dis</u> |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| Eisenhower | 72 | 18 |
| Nixon | 56 | 32 |
| Reagan | 54 | 39 |
| Clinton | 52 | 39 |
| Obama | 46 | 47 (3/12-18) |
| Carter | 43 | 45 |
| G Bush (I) | 41 | 47 |

The following are several additional cuts at the President's job approval rating over the last seven 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> |
|----------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Mar 2012 | 50/45% | 41/47% | 46/50% | --- |
| 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% |

* * * * *

There is currently a strong correlation between Americans' economic confidence, as described above, and President Obama's general job approval. If economic confidence continues to grow so will the President's job approval rating. (Note: This correlation does not always play out.) [Gallup]

And here is how Obama is rated on a number of other issues.

| | <u>Approve</u> | <u>Disapprove</u> |
|--|----------------|-------------------|
| The economy | 38% | 59% |
| Federal Budget Deficit | 32% | 63% |
| Gas Prices | 26% | 65% |
| Energy Policy | 38% | 48% |
| Situation in Afghanistan | 46% | 47% |
| Possibility of Iran getting nuclear weapons | 36% | 52% |

[WP/ABC 3/12]

* * * * *

Currently, 49% of us have positive feelings toward the President, and 37% have negative feelings. This measurement is roughly the same as it was a year ago, 50% to 36%, and two years ago, 50% to 38%. [NBC/WSJ 3/12]

* * * * *

There are at least three issues, in addition to jobs and the economy, which plague the President's re-election efforts: gasoline prices, birth control, and the new healthcare law.

55% say the government has at least quite a bit of control over gas prices. [NBC/WSJ 3/12]. 54% believe the President can do a lot about the price of gasoline. [CBS/NYT 3/12] It is worth noting that Frank Newport of Gallup and Susan Page of USA Today say that, so far, gas prices are not hurting Obama's job approval rating.

In the most recent WP/ABC survey [3/12], while 50% believe that the President can do something about gas prices, as noted above, 65% disapprove of the job he is doing to reduce prices.

All adults, by 48%-45% (men: 49% to 44%, women: 47% to 46%), are more supportive of religious leaders than they are of the Obama Administration relative to requirements that even religious organizations provide contraception coverage for their employees. [Gallup]

* * * * *

By 47% to 44%, Americans would favor a potential Republican President doing what is necessary to repeal the healthcare law passed with the leadership of President Obama. [Gallup]

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

* * * * *

There is a strong argument for the proposition that the Republican nominating process is, in fact, all but over. It is hard to see how any of the other three active candidates can overcome the delegate lead built up by Mitt Romney.

To the extent there is a race, it is a two person race, Romney and Rick Santorum. Newt Gingrich and Ron Paul are simply not in it, even though they are continuing their campaigns. 51% of Republicans say that all four should stay in the race until one person actually clinches the nomination.

Romney has finished in first place 20 times and second 8 times. He is the only candidate who has participated in every primary and caucus. Santorum has finished first 10 times and second 11 times.

Romney has racked up 563 of the 1144 delegate votes required for nomination. Santorum is won 263 delegate votes. Even if one adds all the Gingrich and Paul votes to the Santorum total, Santorum still trails by 115 delegates. (Gallup polling suggests that Gingrich supporters – not necessarily delegates – split about 40/40 between Romney and Santorum.)

Paul expresses no illusions about whether he might be the nominee. Rather, he is using this forum, as he has in the past, to express his point of view about the

Federal government and how it should be changed.

On the other hand, Gingrich continues to restate the proposition that he could actually win the nomination. As will become evident in the various elements of the Score Board below, he is one of the few people who continue to harbor this illusion.

It is hard to understand why Gingrich continues to press forward . With the primary/caucus season roughly half over, he is running a poor third in the delegate count. If he is aiming for a prime speaking role at the convention (which few people outside the convention hall will see) he could certainly negotiate that as a condition of his withdrawal.

* * * * *

As might be expected, Republican voters trust Romney the most to handle the economy (35% to 18%) and Santorum to handle social issues (31% to 22%). These same voters marginally select Santorum as best reflecting the core values of the Party, 27% to 25%. However, by 52% to 15%, they think Romney has the best chance to beat Obama. [WP/ABC 3/12]

* * * * *

The campaigns of the two front runners could not be more different.

Romney and the Super PAC supporting him have spent so many times more money than Santorum and the Super PAC supporting him that it is almost beyond calculation. The moral of the story is that media and inexpensive ways of communicating are so ubiquitous that, if a candidate has an interesting story or point of view, she can get out her message.

Romney has an established national headquarters in Boston and well-structured offices in each State in which he competes. Santorum's campaign has clearly not invested in real estate, but does have a P.O. Box in Verona, PA.

Romney has delegate slates everywhere. Santorum did not have a slate at all in Virginia (a State where his point of view could be quite attractive), and did not field full slates in Ohio or Illinois. Organizing delegate slates (with the possible exception of Virginia) is not an expensive endeavor. It can, for the most part, be done with organized volunteers.

Romney has had to structure a public point of view and message that he and his advisors deemed necessary for him to be appealing to more conservative Republican primary voters and caucus participants. Santorum knows exactly who he is and what he believes, and has decided to be that person, for better or worse.

Santorum is totally comfortable with the hurley burley of the campaign trail and the interaction with potential voters. That is not Romney's natural turf.

The delegate math suggests that Romney can achieve the number of delegates necessary to secure the nomination by the conclusion of the Utah primary, the last step on the primary journey. There are any number of individuals or groups that thrive on the delegate math and they seem to be generally in tune with each other.

* * * * *

Exit Polls

Exit polls are just that, polls taken of voters as they are leaving their polling places. A consortium of media companies underwrites the cost of exit polls in national elections. The media companies do not reveal the results of the exit polls before voting has ended. They do talk about the composition of the electorate. The first tabulation is shared with the sponsors at 5 p.m., and the results do move around in a limited way, but are not broadcast. Here is how the 5 p.m. exit poll results in Alabama and Mississippi compare with the final results.

| | Alabama | | Mississippi | | Illinois | |
|----------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| | <u>Poll</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Poll</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Poll</u> | <u>Actual</u> |
| Santorum | <u>36</u> | <u>34.5</u> | 29 | <u>32.8</u> | 45 | 46.7 |
| Romney | 29 | 29.0 | <u>37</u> | 30.6 | 35 | 35 |
| Gingrich | 27 | 29.3 | 29 | 31.2 | 12 | 8 |
| Paul | | | | | 8 | 9.3 |

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 |
| MI | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| AZ | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| WY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| WA | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| AK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| GA | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| ID | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| MASS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| ND | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| OH | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| OK | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| TENN | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| VT | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| VA | 1 | x | x | 2 |
| Guam | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| VI | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Am Sam | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| KS | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| ALA | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| HI | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| MISS | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| PR | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| ILL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

WINS AND PLACES

| | <u>1st place</u> | <u>2nd place</u> | <u>3rd place</u> | <u>4th place</u> | <u>Zero</u> |
|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Romney | 20 | 8 | 4 | - | - |
| Santorum | 10 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 3 |
| Gingrich | 2 | 5 | 7 | 15 | 3 |
| Paul | 0 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 2 |

DELEGATE TOTALS

| | Romney | Santorum | Gingrich | Paul | Not Comit |
|---------------------|--------|----------|----------|------|-----------|
| Wash Post | 563 | 263 | 135 | 50 | |
| ABC | 563 | 263 | 135 | 50 | |
| NBC | 485 | 193 | 137 | 34 | |
| AP | 563 | 263 | 135 | 50 | |
| Green Papers (hard) | 449 | 182 | 133 | 26 | 263 |
| Green Papers (soft) | 568 | 251 | 156 | 78 | |
| Real Clear Politics | 560 | 246 | 141 | 66 | |

* * * * *

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 | 3/20 | <u>37</u> | 13 | 10 | 27 |
| CBS/NYT | 3/11 | 30 | 13 | 8 | <u>34</u> |
| Gallup | 3/11 | <u>34</u> | 15 | 12 | 25 |
| ABC/WP | 3/10 | <u>33</u> | 14 | 12 | 29 |
| NBC/WSJ | 3/3 | <u>38</u> | 13 | 13 | 32 |
| Politico | 2/22 | 34 | 13 | 7 | <u>36</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 |

* * * * *

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 March 20th, February 15th and January 12th.

| | <u>3/22</u> | <u>2/15</u> | <u>1/12</u> |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Romney | 92.9 | 71.1 | 85.8 |
| Gingrich | .6 | 4.0 | 4.7 |
| Paul | 1.4 | --- | 3.6 |
| Santorum | 2.3 | 16.0 | 1.6 |

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

* * * * *

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

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

March 6 – 24, 2012

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.

April 3 – Maryland (p), Wisconsin (p), Connecticut (p), Delaware (p)

April 24 – New York (p), Pennsylvania (p), Rhode Island (p)

April 28 – Indiana (p)

May 8 – North Carolina (p), West Virginia (p)

May 15 – Oregon (p), Arkansas (p)

May 22 – Kentucky (p)

May 29 – Texas (p), California (p), New Jersey (p)

June 5 – New Mexico (p), South Dakota (p)
June 1-10 - Nebraska (c)
June 14-16 – Montana (c)
June 26 – Utah (p)

There are 1099 delegates to be selected after April 1st.

[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.]

* * * * *

THE MONEY

The following is an attempt to summarize campaign fundraising and expenditures for selected campaigns, political organizations, and Super PACs.

Information is based on Federal Election Commission reports and various other sources. All of which is to say that the picture painted is pretty accurate, but not perfect.

The data does not include any information about various 501(c)(4) organizations, which can spend roughly fifty percent of their assets on campaign related advertising. They are not required to disclose under campaign finance laws and there is no effective analysis of whether they are spending more than 50% on campaign-related communications.

The Obama campaign continues to operate at a level that draws into question whether it can raise and spend as much money in 2012 as it did in 2008. Given that it has raised about \$163 million so far this cycle, it must raise \$587 million over the seven month period, March – September 30, in order to reach the \$750 million raised in 2008. This amounts to roughly \$84 million dollars a month. (The September 30 date is selected because most campaign-related activity must be paid for in advance. If one assumes that the campaign will have one additional month to raise its funds then the necessary total per month is just over \$73 million per month.)

FUNDRAISING AND NET AVAILABLE CASH
(in millions)

| | <u>Raised 2011</u> | <u>Raised in (Jan/Feb)</u> | <u>Total Raised</u> | <u>3/1/12 Net Cash on hand</u> |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <u>Republican Candidates</u> | | | | |
| Romney | 56.1 | 17.8 | 73.7 | 7.3 |
| Santorum | 2.2 | 13.3 | 15.6 | 1.7 |
| Gingrich | 12.7 | 8.1 | 20.8 | - \$7,000.00 |
| Paul | 26.1 | 7.8 | 34.1 | 1.4 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|
| <u>President Obama</u> | | | | |
| Obama | 139.5 | 23.1 | 162.6 | 84.6 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|
| <u>National Political Parties</u> | | | | |
| Republican Nat. Comm | 88.1 | 21.7 | 109.8 | 15.8 |
| Democratic Nat. Comm | 108.3 | 34.7 | 143.0 | 15.2 |

SuperPACs

(*based on sources other than Federal Election Commission)

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|-------|------|------|
| <u>Republican</u> | | | | |
| Restore our Future (Romney) | 30.2 | 13.0* | 43.2 | 16.3 |
| Winning our Future (Gingrich) | 2.1 | 16.8* | 18.8 | 2.4 |
| Endorse Liberty (Paul) | 1.0 | 2.7* | 3.7* | .06 |
| Red, White & Blue (Santorum) | .7 | 5.0* | 5.7 | .6 |
| American Crossroads | 18.4 | 8.5 | 26.9 | 20.4 |
| Freedom Works for America | 2.7 | | | 2.0* |
| Club for Growth | 2.0 | -- | | 2.8* |

Democratic

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| Priorities USA Action (Obama) | 4.4 | 2.1* | 6.5 | 1.3 |
| American Bridge 21 Century | 3.7 | | | .8 |

There is no doubt that SuperPACs will play a huge role in the 2012 elections, both Presidential and congressional. Interestingly, 56% of conservative Republicans think that SuperPACs should be illegal. This view is held by 69% of Americans generally, 80% of Democrats, and 62% of moderate to conservative Democrats. [WP/ABC 3/12]

There is a new SuperPAC. The “Campaign for Primary Accountability” was created for the sole purpose of trying to achieve the loss in the primaries of various incumbents in both Parties. The PAC is apparently not interested in shifting power between Democrats and Republicans. Rather, it is interested in “shifting power between Congress and the people.” The group seems to plan to focus on long time incumbents.

* * * * *

THE PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTION

[Note: As you begin reading this section keep in mind that the general election is 7.5 months away. When the Republican primaries are over and the identity of the Republican nominee is known, there will be a refocusing or reset of attention to the general election. Anything can, and likely will, happen.]

Interest in the November 2012 Presidential election is running behind where it was running in 2008 at this time. Currently, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being “very interested,” 73% score their interest at 8, 9 or 10. In 2008, that number was 85%. Strangely, the public’s level of interest has dropped since January. [NBC/WSJ 1/12]

* * * * *

The number of those who describe themselves as supporters of the Tea Party Movement has remained steady over the last year, with 28% expressing that view in January 2011 and January 2012. The number who describe themselves as

not supporting the movement has dropped slightly, to 63%. [NBC/WSJ 3/12]

* * * * *

2012 Presidential General Election

During the first couple of weeks of March Obama's position against Romney and Santorum has been relatively static. The exception is the March NBC/WSJ survey, which was finished on March 3rd, which had Obama beating Romney by 6 points and Santorum by 14 points. A week later, Obama led Romney by 3 points in one major survey, and trailed Romney by 2 points in another major survey.

| <u>Survey</u> | <u>Last Date</u> | <u>Obama</u> | <u>Romney</u> |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| CBS/NYT | 3/11 | 47 | 44 |
| ABC/WP | 3/10 | 47 | 49 |
| NBC/WSJ | 3/3 | 50 | 44 |
| PEW | 2/12 | 52 | 44 |
| CBS/NYT | 2/12 | 48 | 42 |
| NBC/WSJ | 12/11 | 47 | 45 |
| | | <u>Obama</u> | <u>Santorum</u> |
| CBS/NYT | 3/11 | 48 | 44 |
| ABC/WP | 3/10 | 49 | 46 |
| NBC/WSJ | 3/3 | 53 | 39 |
| PEW | 2/12 | 53 | 43 |
| CBS/NYT | 2/12 | 49 | 41 |
| | | <u>Obama</u> | <u>Gingrich</u> |
| CBS/NYT | 3/11 | 52 | 38 |
| NBC/WSJ | 3/3 | 54 | 37 |
| CBS/NYT | 2/12 | 54 | 36 |
| NBC/WSJ | 12/11 | 51 | 40 |
| | | <u>Obama</u> | <u>Paul</u> |
| CBS/NYT | 3/11 | 52 | 38 |
| CBS/NYT | 2/12 | 50 | 39 |
| ABC/WP | 12/18 | 49 | 44 |

| | | | |
|---------|-------|----|----|
| NBC/WSJ | 12/11 | 50 | 37 |
|---------|-------|----|----|

* * * * *

The Electoral College

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

The Cook Political Report scores the Democratic candidate vs. the Republican candidate. The Rothenberg Political Report scores the specific Democratic nominee, Barack Obama, versus each of the top two Republican potential nominees.

The Cook Political Report – Democrat vs. Republican

| | <u>1/12</u> | <u>2/12</u> | <u>2/23</u> |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Solid Dem | 186 | 175 | 175 |
| Likely Dem | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| Lean Dem | 35 | 19 | 35 |
| | 221 | 201 | 217 |
| Toss Up | 98 | 142 | 126 |
| Lean GOP | 23 | 4 | 4 |
| Likely GOP | 37 | 48 | 48 |
| Solid GOP | 159 | 143 | 143 |
| | 219 | 195 | 195 |

The Rothenberg Political Report – Obama vs. Romney

| | | | <u>3/12</u> |
|---------------|-----|-----|-------------|
| Obama States | 186 | 186 | 186 |
| Lean Obama | 31 | 51 | 51 |
| | 217 | 237 | 237 |
| Toss Up | 46 | 64 | 82 |
| Romney States | 191 | 191 | 191 |
| Lean Romney | 84 | 46 | 28 |
| | 275 | 237 | 219 |

* * * * *

The Rothenberg Political Report – Obama vs. Santorum

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| | <u>2/12</u> |
| Obama States | 332 |
| Lean Obama | 26 |
| | 358 |
| Toss Up | 0 |
| | |
| Santorum States | 156 |
| Lean Santorum | 24 |
| | 180 |

* * * * *

InTrade Prediction Market

As of close of business on March 20 , 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> | <u>3/20</u> |
| Barack Obama | 50.6 | 60.3 | 59.9 |

* * * * *

On election day there is one question that will be on the mind of voters, the answer to which will predict the outcome of the election. "How are you doing?" [Stan Greenberg]

* * * * *

Latinos will likely represent 8.7% of the total voters. They represent more than 13% of the vote in the following states: Arizona (19.2%), Nevada (15.1%), Florida (15.9%), and Colorado (13.7%). 27% of Latinos feel the Republican Party is hostile to them, and an additional 45% believe Republicans don't care much about them. [Univision 1/12]

* * * * *

At this stage in the campaign Republicans/Leaning Independents are more enthusiastic about the coming general election than Democrats/Leaning Independents by 53% to 45%. By way of comparison, at this time in the 2008 and 2004 elections Democrats/Leaners were more enthusiastic than Republicans/Leaning.

| | <u>Republicans /Leaners</u> | <u>Democrats/ Leaners</u> |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2008 | 44% | 79% |
| 2004 | 53% | 59% |

* * * * *

One of the unknowns heading into the 2012 general election is the impact of a number of State laws that have been passed that require particular forms of voter identification including photo IDs. Those opposing these laws argue that they have a disproportionate affect on the poor and the elderly. Those who support the statutes argue that they are designed to combat voter fraud, although there is little proof that voter fraud has been a significant problem.

There are a variety of Federal and State actions pending relating to these laws. Stay tuned.

* * * * *

According to the Pew Center on the States, approximately 24,000,000 active voter registrations in the United States are no longer valid or are inaccurate. In a recent report the Pew Center noted the following:

- * At least 52 million eligible citizens remain unregistered (24% of the eligible population)
- * More than 1.8 million deceased folks are listed as active voters
- * Roughly 2.7 million people have active registrations in more than one State
- * About 12 million records have incorrect addresses as a function of the voter moving or an error in basic information collection.

[Pew Center report – Inaccurate, Costly and Inefficient]

* * * * *

THE CONGRESS

In a resounding jump, the Congress's job approval has moved from 10% in January to 12% in March. [Gallup] The work being done by the Democrats in Congress is disapproved by 60% of Americans, but the rating of the Republican members is even worse at 71% disapproval. [WP/ABC 3/12]

* * * * *

THE SENATE

The number of Senate races in the Toss-Up category has moved from 8 in January to 10 in March.

In Florida, the race has moved from Lean Democrat to Toss-Up. Republican Congressman Connie Mack is the leader of the pack in the Republican primary, and over the last few months he has moved up to within a few points of Democratic incumbent Bill Nelson, whom he would face in the general election.

Maine Republican incumbent Olympia Snowe's announcement that she would not seek re-election moves a Safe Republican seat to a Toss-Up. There will likely be a three-way race, with former Governor Angus King running as an Independent. King is the odds-on favorite. King has not announced how he will caucus if elected. However, there is a working assumption that he will caucus with the Democrats.

Texas moves from Leaning Republican to Safe Republican, and Indiana moves from Safe Republican to Leaning Republican.

With the entry of former Nebraska Governor and former U.S. Senator Bob Kerry into the race as the putative Democratic candidate, a number of folks suggest that this is a race that should be moved from Leaning Republican at least to Toss-Up. WW thinks that Jennifer Duffy, Senior Editor of the Cook Political Report, has it right when she suggests that it remains to be seen how this race will develop. It has been a long time since Kerry lived in Nebraska, raised political money, or campaigned.

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 <u>Democrat(8)</u> | Leaning <u>Democrat(6)</u> | <u>TossUp(10)</u> | Leaning <u>Republican(4)</u> | Safe <u>Republican(5)</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| California | <u>Connecticut</u> | <u>Hawaii</u> | <u>Arizona</u> | Mississippi |
| Delaware | Michigan | Florida | Indiana | Tennessee |
| Maryland | Ohio | <u>Maine</u> | Nebraska | <u>Texas</u> |
| Minnesota | Pennsylvania | Mass. | <u>No. Dakota</u> | Utah |
| New Jersey | Washington | Missouri | | Wyoming |
| New York | West Virginia | Montana | | |
| Rhode Island | | Nevada | | |
| Vermont | | <u>New Mexico</u> | | |
| | | <u>Virginia</u> | | |
| | | <u>Wisconsin</u> | | |

| | <u>Democrats</u> | <u>Republicans</u> |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Seats not up in 2012 | 30 | 37 |
| Safe in 2012 | 8 | 5 |
| Leaning in 2012 | 6 | 4 |
| Total | 44 | 46 |

Toss-ups 10 (3R/7D)

* * * * *

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 good, a takeover of the House by the Democrats does not seem to be in the cards at the moment.

The big question is whether general angst might impact a series of House incumbents who might otherwise seem to be relatively safe.

In general, potential voters prefer a Democratic-controlled Congress to a Republican-controlled Congress, by 46% to 41%. When voters are asked whether their current Representative deserves reelection or a new person should be given a chance, they opt for the election of a new person by 48% to 40%. [NBC/WSJ 3/12]

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 | 191 | | | |
| | Vacancies | 2 | | | |
| | <u>1/20/11</u> | <u>12/8/11</u> | <u>1/5/12</u> | <u>2/9/12</u> | <u>3/15/12</u> |
| TOTAL Dem | 193 | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Solid Dem | 150 | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Likely Dem | 27 | 18 | 16 | 20 | 18 |
| Lean Dem | 12 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 13 |
| Toss-up | 10 | 21 | 20 | 19 | 21 |
| D | 4 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 8 |
| R | 6 | 13 | 12 | 14 | 13 |
| Lean GOP | 15 | 21 | 19 | 20 | 20 |
| Likely GOP | 38 | 29 | 31 | 30 | 28 |
| 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> | <u>3/12</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Safe Democrat | 166 | 164 | 164 |
| Competitive | 78 | 78 | 79 |
| Safe Republican | 191 | 193 | 192 |

* * * * *

RESTAURANTS

CORKY & LENNY'S
27091 Chagrin Blvd
Woodmere, Ohio 44122
216-464-3838
Fax 216-464-1822

Corky and Lenny's is a traditional Jewish style delicatessen. There are 216 items on the menu, ranging from an offering called "Mish Mash" -- Matzo ball, Kreplach, Noodles, and Rice in a large bowl for \$7.50 -- to the "Lee D's Apollo -- Out of This World" -- Imported ham, Roast Turkey, Swiss Cheese, Coleslaw, Lettuce, Tomato, and Thousand Island Dressing on French Bread served with Coleslaw at \$11.25.

I have visited Corky and Lenny's a couple of times, most recently with Debbie and Libby for breakfast.

Debbie ordered the corned beef hash with poached egg. Libby went for an omelet with bacon on the side. I chose an egg-white omelet with mushrooms and onions. I also ordered turkey sausage on the side.

We had a relatively late breakfast and the size of the portions left little room or interest in having lunch that day. Each principal item on the menu is to one extent or another, oversized. This is not the place to dine if you are counting calories.

There is, of course, a fulsome deli counter where you can order meats, fishes, salads and other items to go. If, while eating, you decide to order something off the menu to take with you, your server will take the order and it will

be waiting for you at the checkout counter at the front of the restaurant.

The restaurant is very large, with numerous booths and tables of varying sizes. There was a line of people waiting for a table when we arrived, the entire time we were there, and when we departed.

The restaurant feels rather old and so does the men's room. It is fully serviceable and reasonably clean, but not special and a little musty. There is one urinal and two commodes that are separated by metal dividers. There is a white ceramic wash basin. There are large grey tiles across the floor and up the walls to waist height. Smaller tiles cover the rest of the walls up to the ceiling.

Parking is not a problem. There is a very large parking lot at the front of the strip mall in which the deli is located.

Corky and Lenny's is opening a second location in the food court of the new casino, scheduled to open on May 14th, in downtown Cleveland.

Mike

Suite 500
2100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20037
202-728-1100

mberman@dubersteingroup.com