

GLEANINGS II - 749
Thursday February 22nd, 2018

Impact of populism on European politics - In the Netherlands in 1986 86% of voters supported the traditional three main parties, but last year only 36% did so. And the situation is similar in Germany : four decades ago 90% voted for the two main parties but last fall only 53%.

Thomas Friedman's assessment of the Trump Presidency - His relatively short (14 para) Op-Ed piece in the February 18th NYT entitled Whatever Trump is hiding is hurting all of us now is bracketed between an opening sentence stating "Our democracy is in serious danger" & a closing one that "That (*i.e. the undermining the FBI and the Department of Justice to keep his compromised status hidden*) must not be tolerated. This is code red¹. The biggest threat to the integrity of our democracy today is in the Oval Office." But he **really** ups the ante in its third paragraph when he writes "In sum, Trump is either hiding something so threatening to himself, or ... is criminally incompetent to be commander in chief" - *And while Friedman may not be the most unbiased source on Trump, he is only be verbalizing what more & more patriotic, politically-aware Americans are starting to think. Meanwhile Donald Jr. is on week-long visit to India, a willing participant in the shameless hyping of the Trump 'brand' that screams "conflict of interest" in the marketing of US\$1MM "luxury apartments" (in a country whose government is planning a minimum wage that 'activists' say should be US\$1,680/year) by M3M, one of the Trump Organization's local partners. And his visit will be bookended by his telling journalists upon his arrival that Prime Minister Modi's reform program is "very positive for the country" & his addressing a 'business summit' in New Delhi on February 22nd on the subject of "Reshaping Indo-Pacific ties : The New Era of Cooperation" (in sharp contrast to the Trump Sr's increasingly isolationist policy prattling?) So now there are three foreign policy 'experts' in the Trump family : the Donald, Jared Kushner, & Donald 2.0?*

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AMAZON IS TAKING OVER THE STOCK MARKET TOO (WSJ, Akani Otany)

Three technology titans have powered nearly half the S&P500 advance this year. YTD to February 20th Amazon had accounted for 27% of the broader index's gain, Microsoft for 13% & Netflix for 8.3%.

This scares the wits out of me : in my life I have too often seen such "irrational exuberance" lead to tears among the "Great Unwashed"

BRIDGEWATER'S RAY DALIO SEES 705 PERCENT CHANCE OF RECESSION BEFORE 2020 (Reuters, Svea Herbst-Bayliss)

During an appearance at the Harvard Institute of Politics he said "I think we are in a pre-bubble stage that could go (*quickly?*) into a bubble stage ... The probability of a recession prior to the next presidential election would be relatively high, maybe 70 percent". And when Lawrence Summers, a one-time Harvard President & former Treasury Secretary for both Clinton (*briefly*) & Obama, asked him what advice he would give to individual investors who may have been rattled by the market's recent turbulence, his response was "The greatest mistake the individual

¹ Code Red is a medical term indicative of a potentially life-threatening emergency.

investor makes is to think that a market that did well is a good market rather than a more expensive market.”

This is what is commonly known as a Delphic Oracle prediction, i.e. one open to several different interpretations, most, if not all, of them wrong.

LAST NIGHT DEMOCRATS FLIPPED A KENTUCKY STATE LEGISLATIVE SEAT IN A DISTRICT TRUMP WON BY 49 POINTS (Vox, Matthew Iglesias)

Early Tuesday evening February 20th Democrat Linda Belcher was pronounced the winner of the Special Election in Kentucky’s 49th district that in 2016 Trump had carried by a 72-23 margin (& Romney in 2012 by 66-33). So her 68-32 victory was a 45 point improvement over Hillary Clinton’s performance, while in 2016, as the incumbent, Belcher had narrowly lost the seat 49.6-50.4² to Daniel Johnson who subsequently killed himself while under a cloud of sexual harassment allegations (& whose widow was Belcher’s opponent in the Special Election). And this seems to be part of a trend that’s accelerating; for in the 70 Special Elections in 2017 Democrats ran 10 points ahead of Hillary & 14 of Obama. And this appears to be having a real world impact : thus Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is leaving a number of previously GOP-held seats empty rather than risk losing them in Special Elections, national Republicans are pushing the panic button on a Special Election in Pennsylvania, & the GOP leadership is letting the scandal-plagued fourth term Rep. Blake Farenthold³ (*Net Worth 6.6MM*) keep his seat in Texas’ 27th district rather than risk it in a Special Election.

*And polls suggest that the GOP has reason to worry since, according to RealClearPolitics, the latest polls have the following readings : **Trump’s job approval** : Harvard-Harris 45% approval & 55% disapproval, Quinnipiac 35-58, Rasmussen 48-51 & Economist/YouGov 44-51); **Congressional approval** : Economist/YouGov 10-70 approval/disapproval, **Generic Congressional Vote** : Economist/YouGov Dems 43 Reprs 35, Harvard-Harris 41-36⁴, and **Right Direction, Wrong Track** :Harvard-Harris 37-54 & Economist/YouGov 35-55.*

NEW PENNSYLVANIA MAP GIVES DEMOCRATS BIG BOOST IN MIDTERMS (Politico, Elena Schneider)

Under Pennsylvania’s existing congressional district map, drawn up by a GOP legislature & approved by the then Republican Governor in 2011, in 2016 Republicans won 13 of the state’s 18 congressional districts & Trump carried 12 of them. But last month the State Supreme Court ruled it “clearly, plainly and palpably violates” the state’s constitution, since the GOP had unreasonably gerrymandered districts to favor their party, & earlier this month the U.S. Supreme Court denied a request from the Pennsylvania Legislature to intervene. And when Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf & GOP legislative leaders failed to agree on a new map the Court had to use, & *published on February 19th*, its own map, drawn up with assistance of Stanford University law professor Nathaniel Persily who has produced similar maps now in use in several other states.

² So her performance this time around was a nearly 18 point over that in the 2016 election.

³ Accused in 2014 of sexual harassment he settled out of court for US\$84,000 which became a real issue two months ago when it became public knowledge that this had been on ‘the taxpayers’ dime’, after which he announced he would not run for re-election this fall.

⁴ So now the Democrats are starting to close in on the gap in the nationwide popular vote that, due to gerrymandering, they must overcome to regain control of Congress.

Early estimates are it could result in only 10 GOP seats in the midterms, causing Christopher Nicholas, a GOP consultant, to call it “pretty close to a Democratic wet dream” and State GOP leaders to promise “further action in federal court” on the grounds that “Implementation of this map would create a constitutional crisis where the Pennsylvania Supreme Court is usurping the authority of the Legislative and Executive branches ... This map illustrates that the definition of fair is simply a code for a desire to elect more Democrats.” Meanwhile the March 13th Special Election in the Western Pennsylvania 18th District seat vacated by the 65 year-old former seven term Rep. Tim Murphy, *who resigned after his extra-marital peccadilloes & the fact his out-of-court settlement was settled with taxpayers’ money*, is proceeding using the old map.

The Democrats need to gain at least 24 seats to regain control of the House & getting a net two or three more seats in Pennsylvania would be a nice down payment thereon; but it won't be all peaches & cream, for under the new map there are at least a couple seats that could go from blue to red. Meanwhile over in the State's 39th district, a Monmouth University poll gave 60 year-old three term Rep. Rick Saccone a 50-45 edge (just within its 5.5% margin of error & “nowhere near the double digit advantage Republicans typically enjoy in this district”) over 33 year-old political newcomer Conor Lamb, with the Director of the Monmouth U. polling institute commenting “The potential for a Democratic surge like we have seen in other Special Elections helps keep Conor Lamb in the hunt but does not close the gap”. Meanwhile, Tim Murphy's paramour, 32 year-old Shannon Edwards, like him a psychologist, announced on February 21st she will contest the GOP nomination in a district adjoining Murphy's 19th.

SECURITY DUST-UP OVER U.S. NUCLEAR ‘FOOTBALL’ (New York Post, Joe Tacopino)

Last November, *during President Trump's two day visit to Beijing*, the Presidential military aide carrying the “nuclear football” (a briefcase that contains all a US President needs to launch a nuclear strike, that must be kept close to him 24/7) was blocked by Chinese security officials from following the President into the Great Hall of the People on Tian'anmen Square, upon which a colleague rushed to inform Chief of Staff John Kelly who *in turn* rushed over & announced “We're moving in”. And when they proceeded to do so, a Chinese security official grabbed Gen. Kelly who pushed him aside upon which a member of the President's Secret Service tackled the Chinese official & knocked him to the ground, after which the fracas quickly ended. Chinese security officials eventually apologized.

The President's Secret Service bodyguards always make it very clear that, regardless of whose country they're in, they're “the cock of the walk”.

AS CHINA PUTS PRESSURE ON TAIWAN, SIGNS OF A U.S. PUSHBACK (NYT, Keith Bradsher)

In recent months Chinese strategic bombers escorted by jet fighters have started making “Island encirclement flights”, around Taiwan, Beijing has discouraged Chinese tourism to-, & imports from-, Taiwan, and has persuaded Taiwan's most important remaining ally, Panama, to shift its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing. So concern about this is now building in Washington while President Trump continues (*rather unsuccessfully?*) to seek China's help on other issues, incl. North Korea, and to limit its nearly US\$400BN bilateral trade surplus (that has nevertheless has continue to widen further).

So Washington has begun to gradually reinforce its ties with Taiwan, a vigorous democracy facing an increasingly authoritarian government in Beijing. Bills have been introduced in Congress to promote visits to Taiwan by US Navy warships & civilian officials. In December President Trump signed a bill bitterly opposed by Beijing that included a provision encouraging

mutual port calls by US & Taiwanese naval vessels. A group of defense contractors will visit Taiwan in May to discuss the production there of weapons' components for assembly over here. In June the American Institute in Taiwan, the de facto US embassy in Taipei will move into an elegant new building. And this week Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK), the second-ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Forces Committee after Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), is in Taiwan leading a large delegation of lawmakers & their staffs for meetings with President Tsai Ing-wen & her senior ministers & in response to questions, said "With China becoming more aggressive and intent on expanding its influence globally, the United States-Taiwan security relationship is now more important than ever ... By ensuring they have the ability to defend themselves, Taiwan will continue to be an important part of promoting regional stability."

Chinese officials are showing signs of annoyance *with this* & accusing the US of interfering with one of Beijing's 'redline issues'. And earlier this month Huaxia, a Beijing news service on Taiwan issues, commented "It is horrible that the present situation of the two sides on the Taiwan issue will probably be turbulent." And two issues are coming up that will further annoy Beijing, namely the May visit by the US defense contractors & the June opening of the new home for the American Institute in Taiwan. And while there has been no suggestion that President Trump (who didn't attend the opening of the new US embassy in London last month) would come to the June event, the question now is how senior a US official will do so. For while the first Bush-, the Clinton-, & the Obama administrations from time to time sent cabinet officials to Taipei, they always carefully avoided sending top flight Cabinet Members, such as the Secretaries of Defense or of State, Beijing always complained & the Global Times (that is owned by-, & has a more populist bias than-, the People's Daily) warned "If any U.S. high-level official pays an official visit to Taiwan, Beijing will treat it as a severe provocation and adopt all possible countermeasures, including uniting Taiwan by military force."

President Xi Jinping has placed greater emphasis than his recent predecessors on uniting Taiwan with the mainland & in his 3+hour speech at last October's National Congress received the most enthusiastic applause, especially from generals in full uniform, when he declared "We will never allow anyone ... at any time or in any form to separate any part of Chinese territory from China." And Beijing has been more confrontational vis a vis Taiwan since Ms. Tsai, whose party has long favoured formal independence for Taiwan, was elected President two years ago and is biding its time until next November's Taipei mayoral election that it hopes will be won by the Nationalist Party, that has long favoured a more cooperative relationship with the Mainland.

The 'encirclement flights' are quite a production; for they don't just involve bombers & (two classes of) jetfighters but also reconnaissance-, advance warning-, transport-, & refueling-, planes. And their route from the air space over the East China Sea to that over the Western Pacific takes them over the Moyako Strait between the Moyako- & Okinawa- Islands (the latter of which is home to a major US base & its 29,000 American military personnel).

WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR TAIWAN IN 2018? (Taiwan News, Christopher Rivera)

On the eve of the Lunar New Year, February 15th, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen delivered a special message to her people from the Presidential Office, focusing on the blessings for the year ahead & the country's resilience in the wake of the February 6th 6.4 strength (on Taiwan's 7-point scale) earthquake that struck Hualien, 160 kms South of Taipei, on the island's mountainous East Coast (followed since, *on February 22nd, by another, 5.6 strength one, that hit Taitung County, 160 kms further South Taiwan's East coast*). In it she urged her fellow citizens to be vigilant in their efforts towards crisis preparation & said that, since earthquakes *in East Asia's 'Ring of Fire' region* are inevitable, the government too would establish an effective disaster preparedness program to minimize the damage resulting from earthquakes. And she

also told the country that in 2017 Taiwan's economy had exceeded expectations & exports had been the second highest in history, and that unemployment was at a 17-year low.

And another Taiwan News staffer, David Spencer, reported that China's Taiwan Office, a Communist Party entity with a mandate to destabilize or overthrow the democratically elected Taiwanese government had held a conference to plan ways & means to interfere with Taiwan's local elections this year so as to achieve a heavy defeat of Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party.

ITALY'S FINAL PRE-ELECTION POLLS PUT CENTRE-RIGHT IN THE LEAD (The Local)

YouTrend on Friday February 17th published the aggregate outcome from seven different polling institutes in their final polling allowed before the March 4th election (for 630 seats in the Chamber of Deputies & 315 in the Senate). It showed that the right-wing coalition led by 81 year-old Silvio Berlusconi (who is ineligible to be Prime Minister due to a tax fraud conviction) was in the lead with 37.2% support⁵ but wouldn't get an absolute majority, the populist Five Star Movement (M5S), until recently led by comedian Beppe Grillo, had 27.8% popular support, & the left-wing coalition, that includes the ruling Democratic Party (of former Prime Minister Mario Renzi who resigned in December 2016 after getting his head handed to him in a referendum), 27.4%. The degree of uncertainty about the eventual outcome of the election has dominated the campaign because political mistrust is widespread. And according to Antonio Noto, a polling expert, "It would take a magician to predict today what will happen in 15 days ... Ten million voters have still not decided whether or not to vote and who they would vote for ... *and in the 2013 election that brought the Five Star Movement to the fore* seven percent of the people who went to vote changed their minds in the polling booths and voted for a party other than the one they originally thought they were voting for."

According to the Washington Post last December, "the anti-immigrant, anti-Euro populism on the left and right ... has steadily gained power as an alternative to Italy's old-guard political leadership". Support for the left-wing coalition has collapsed because of the poor performance of the economy (GDP grew by 1.5% last year, up from 0.1% in 2014, 0.8% in 2015 & 0.9% in 2016, and the unemployment rates are still staggeringly high (10.8% overall & 32.7% for 'youth'). The Italian economy has grossly underperformed that of other countries; for since the creation of the Eurozone in 1999 it has grown by a cumulative total of just 4%, vs. France's 24.5%, Germany's 26.4% & the US' 39.8%. Its banking system is overburdened with 14% non-performing loans (vs. 6% in the Eurozone as a whole & the US' 2%). House prices have declined by 23% in the past decade. Fiscally the government has one foot in the grave & the other on a banana peel; for its national debt-to-GDP ratio is 133% (up from 100% a decade ago) & its debt-to-tax revenue ratio 1,015%; nevertheless all parties are promising to hike spending & cut taxes . With voters over the age 55 accounting for 41% of the total & those 35 or younger for just 22%, it is small wonder the government spends 4x as much on seniors as on education & day care combined. The median age of its population is 45.5 years, well above the EU's 42.9 years, France's 41.4 years & Spain's 42.7 years (albeit below Germany's 47.1 years) and this situation is not helped by the fact that in the past decade 1.5MM Italians (2.5 % of the population & one-third of them university graduates), have emigrated. So the combination of Brexit, the wave of populism & anti-immigrant feelings sweeping the continent, the reactionary attitude of the Hungarian & Polish governments, the prospect of a weak German government & the likely disappearance of Frau Merkel from the scene & now the growing probability of serious

⁵ With 16.8% thereof accounted for by his own centre-right Forza Italia party, 13.2% by the anti-immigration Northern League & 4.7% by the far right Fratelli d'Italia party.

political & economic/financial problems in Italy, suggest a real possibility of some heavy weather ahead for the EU, with Macro's France starting to play a bigger role therein - The Local is an English language digital news publisher active in nine Continental European countries. It got started in Sweden in 2004 as a weekly email newsletter that expanded into Germany in 2008 & Switzerland in 2011, and now has offices as well in six other countries (Austria, Denmark, France, Italy, Norway & Spain), each of them with its own editorial staff & wholly focused on local news. In 2015 had 4½ MM monthly readers.

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Actions speak louder than words - Some US politicians in receipt of gobs of NRA (National Rifle Association) campaign funding have been shedding crocodile tears for-, & sending messages of condolence, thoughts & prayers to-, the families of victims of the Valentine's Day shooting at the Parkland, FL high school, incl. :

- **President Trump** tweeted "My prayers and condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible Florida shooting. No child, teacher or anyone else should ever feel unsafe in an American school." - He got US\$21MM in NRA money for his run for the Presidency while US\$9.6MM more NRA money was spend paying for pro-Trump ads & another US\$12.6MM for Hillary attack ads;
- **Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)** : "Just spoke to Broward School Superintendent. Today is that terrible day you pray never comes." - he has received US\$3,303,355 from the NRA;
- **Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA)** : "Please join me in praying for the students, faculty and staff at Marjorie Stonewall Douglas High School as well as their loved ones . Let us also show our gratitude to the courageous first responders." - in her three years in the Iowa State-, & another three in the US-, Senates she received US\$3,124, 273 in NRA funding;
- **Sen. Rob Portman @-OH)** : "Heart breaking news out of Florida. Jane & I sent our prayers to the school, the community, and the victims of this tragedy" - in the 2015-2016 election cycle he received US\$64, 877 & during his 12 years in the House & 7 in the Senate he collected US\$ 3,061,941 in NRA campaign contributions ;
- **Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO)** : "I am heartbroken for the students and family of those involved in this horrible tragedy and I am praying for our first responders as they act swiftly to contain the situation." - During his six years (2005-2011) in the Colorado House, four in the House (2011-2015) & three in the US Senate (2015-present) he benefited from US\$3,879,064 in NRA money; and
- **Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA, but a supporter of Democrat politicians until 2004)** told his followers his heart goes out to the victims & their families - but during his 6 years in the House & 14 months in the US Senate he got US\$2,861,047 in NRA.financial support.

See below for the Ten Top Recipients of NRA money in each of the US Senate & House.

Gun controls - A poll done February 15th-18th of 808 adults (31% of them Democrats, 24% Republicans & 40% Independents) for the Washington Post & ABCNews found that :

- 64% supported stricter gun controls, 41% "strongly" so vs. 29% who opposed the idea (16% strongly so);
- 62% said Trump-, & 77% that Congress-, wasn't doing enough on the issue;
- 57% said mass shootings were primarily a function of the problems in the early identification & treatment of those with mental problems, 28% blamed unduly lax gun controls & 9% both;
- 58% said stricter gun controls would have prevented the Parkland High School shooting (86% of the Democrats, 29% of Republicans & 57% of Independents); and

- 42% said the Parkland shooting could have been prevented if teachers had been allowed to wear guns.

Even though mental health is a scourge of modern Western society, blaming school shootings for them is 'head in the sand escapism' & a diversionary tactic, as is promoting the idea of teachers wearing guns as a solution (they likely would be 'outgunned' & there may little to be gained from turning one-man shooting events into a multiple party gun fights. And phrasing the gun control debate in Second Amendment terms is another diversionary tactic; for in 1791, when it was passed, guns typically were single shot muskets or flint lock pistols, both of them single shot weapons that took time to reload and had limited accuracy & effective ranges (although according to gun enthusiast sources there were then already (a few?) guns that could be reloaded quicker & had greater accuracy). And in those days most Americans lived in rural areas with limited police protection & needed guns to put meat 'on the table', and were often under threat from Indian marauders. And significant progress in school safety could be made without ever touching the Second Amendment by simply outlawing certain kinds of guns. And there is nothing wrong in principle with adapting ancient laws to modern circumstances. NOTE FOR THE RECORD : I am not a lefty "gun obstructionist, have owned guns & have fired quite a number of them, some of them likely bigger & more deadly than any most NRA members may ever have fired. But for me guns are simply tools (like knives or forks, cooking pots, hair combs & screw drivers) used for protection, entertainment on gun ranges, hunting, in war for killing killing enemies at the fastest rate possible, and/or for killing oneself or others who have really, really annoyed oneself (although the law takes a dim view of the latter thereof), but in all except war, no serious gun handler worth his salt needs more than a couple rounds to get the job done.

NRA (National Rifle Association) may have 'Feet of Clay' in the form of a lack of direct voter support⁶ - By its own count it has 5MM members whereas there are about 80MM gun owners in the United States many of them not 'in sync' with NRA policies & objectives. And in relative terms the number of gun owners has declined to one-third today-, from almost half-, the US adult population a half century ago. And there are about 50MM children & 3.2MM teachers in the US public primary & secondary school system (& another 5+MM in private schools); so there are 50+MM voters out there who have a vested interest in the safety of their most precious possessions, their own-, & their offspring's-, lives. So the students of the Marjorie Stoneham Douglas High School who seem to be doing such a remarkable job of raising the profile of the gun control issue & the need for dealing with the underlying cause rather the symptoms thereof, would be well-advised to quit wasting their time talking to lawmakers who **want** to 'stay bought' & focus on getting politicians' attention by hitting them where it would really hurt. i.e. by launching a campaign in this mid-term election year to have parents & teachers nationwide start writing 'their' representatives in Congress that there is no way they are going to vote for anyone who won't seriously commit him/herself to serious gun control legislation (while leaving the language of the Second Amendment as is).

NYT's Top Twenty Lawmakers in the NRA funding chase :

	NRA	Net Worth	Comments
Sen John McCain (R-AZ)	US\$7,740,521	US\$21MM	Wife's Net Worth US\$100MM

⁶ Its support has always been top-down driven : The NRA was founded in 1871 & of the 28 Presidents since nine have been NRA members (all but one, John F. Kennedy, Republicans), including Bush 41 (who did, however, quite publicly resign in 1995, after the then EVP, & now President, Wayne LaPierre, in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing referred to federal law enforcement agents as "jack-booted thugs") & the Present Commander-in-Chief, Donald J. Trump.

			& annual income US\$400,000
Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC)	US\$6,968,620	US\$3.1MM	(2015)
Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO)	US\$4,551,146	US\$4.6MM	(2014)
Sen. Thom Tillis @-NC)	US\$4,418,012	US\$9.0MM	(2014)
Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO)	US\$3,879,064	US\$0.2MM	(2014)
Sen. Marco Rubio @-FL)	US\$3,303,355	US\$0.4MM	(2014)
Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA)	US\$3,124,273	US\$0.6MM	(2014)
Sen. Rob Portman @-OH)	US\$3,061,941	US\$14.5MM	(2014)
Sen. Ted Young (R-IN)	US\$2,896,732	US\$0.1MM	(2014)
Sen, Bill Cassidy (R-LA) ⁷	US\$2,861,047	US\$2.1MM	(2014)
Rep. French Hill (R-AR)	US\$1,089,477	US\$0.3MM	(2014)
Rep. Ken Buck (R-CO)	US\$ 800,544	US\$1.2MM	(2014)
Rep. David Young (R-IA)	US\$ 707,662	US\$0.4MM	(2016)
Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID)	US\$ 385,731	US\$2.4MM	(2014)
Rep. Greg Gianforte@-MT)	US\$ 344,630	US\$315MM	(2017)
Rep. Don Young (R-PA)	US\$ 245,720	US\$1.2MM	(2014)
Rep. Lloyd Smucker @-PA)	US\$ 221,736	US\$2.1MM	(2014)
Rep. Bruce Poliquin @-ME)	US\$ 221,398	US\$11.1MM	(2014)
Rep. Pete Session (R-TX)	US\$ 158,111	US\$0.3MM	(2014)
Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-VA)	US\$ 137,232	US\$1.6MM	(2014)

According to two pro-gun control groups, Everytown for Gun Safety & Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, in the 2015-2016 election cycle 276 federal law makers (i.e. 50% of their total in the House & Senate) got US\$54MM in campaign funding from the NRA & other gun rights groups (i.e. an average of almost US\$200,000 each).

One year ago today, on February 22nd, 2018, 48 days after assuming the office of Governor of New Hampshire, 43 year-old Chris Sununu signed Bill 22 into law after it had been twice vetoed during her four year tenure by his predecessor, former Democrat Gov. Maggie Hassan - It repealed that part of the State's gun control legislation that, while it allowed legally-owned, loaded or unloaded, fire arms to be carried openly, required gun owners to get a 'concealed hand gun license' for any gun not in plain sight due to clothing or by being carried in a woman's purse - *Chris is a son of John Sununu who was Governor of New Hampshire for six year ended in 1989 & Bush 41's Chief of Staff for two years ended in 1991.*

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In the Senate the top two Democrats in terms of their NRA funding are Joe Marchin (D-WV) & Patrick Leahy who rank 52nd & 53rd behind every Republican except Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK).