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Here we are again with our weekly news update. We know that you are busy people, and you probably do have a lot of news to sift through, online, on social media, on news feeds. But we will bring you a weekly update of news we curate from major news sources that may be of interest to you. We may even be able to introduce you to some new news sources you will enjoy exploring.

So read these on your devices, or print them out for your morning coffee reading this weekend. (We do not expect you will read these all at once: this is slow news, not Facebook news. So explore, linger, and share with friends—we mean share the links with actual, physical, real friends!)

1. A. **Tuesday's primary elections** were big news, in particular the California races, which were nonpartisan first-two-past-the-post elections. As the most populous state, California has 53 representatives, many in vulnerable Republican-held districts where Hillary won in 2016. There was a risk that in key districts, two Republicans could face off in November, and that could affect the national Democratic political goal of a 23-seat flip of the House. But the fear was unfounded. Of course, it is not certain that all the Democrats who won first or second place in primaries will win in November, but as *The New York Times* reported, the political divisions and pushes by the DCCC and the state party did not create the feared havoc.

“National Democrats were increasingly optimistic overnight that they had managed to push their favored candidates into the general election in several important races in Southern California. And importantly, they seemed poised to avoid the primary disaster they feared: Being shut out of the November balloting under the state’s so-called ‘top-two’ system, in which only the top two finishers advance to the general election, regardless of party.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/06/us/politics/california-primary.html>

Read the report in *The Los Angeles Times* here: “Gamesmanship was everywhere. Could a feared opponent be shut out of a spot on the fall ballot? Might a political party’s leaders convince some hopefuls in crowded races to step aside and thus avoid splitting the vote? In the end — either because of those efforts or in spite of them — the playing field looked very much like a traditional primary. Unofficial returns Tuesday showed that only two statewide races, at most, will end up as a same-party showdown in November. Otherwise, and in the overwhelming majority of California’s races, the two-party system seems to have survived.

“The candidates who succeeded were largely staunch defenders of either liberal or conservative principles — moderation was not the big winner in California on election night.”

<http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-ca-california-primary-rules-election-analysis-20180606-story.html#nt=oft-Single%20Chain~Flex%20Feature~top-chain-double~top-two-314a~~1~yes-art~curated~curatedpage>

B. But elsewhere in the country, that was not the case. **Moderates and even conservative Democrats won primaries** in Republican districts in New Jersey and Iowa, as commentator Michael Tomasky points out in Wednesday’s *New York Times*: [T]he results prove that the conventional story line about the Democrats charging damn the torpedoes to the left is overstated. That may well be true of most (though not all) of the putative presidential contenders at this point, and it’s certainly the case that any American political party’s direction is largely set by its presidential nominee.

“For now, though, the only real candidates are congressional ones, and they are a mixed lot, reflecting the point — which I never tire of making, because some people seem not to want to accept it — that while the Republicans can gain a House majority with only conservatives, the Democrats can’t do so with only liberals. There simply aren’t enough liberal districts or voters.” So, as even Bernie Sanders [has pointed out](#), there are 435 congressional districts, and on many issues Democrats will have to appeal to local sensibilities, without of course sacrificing the main foci of the party. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/06/opinion/democrats-did-well-last-night-the-left-didnt.html>

For political junkies who wish to examine the races in detail, see the summary of national races here, in *The Washington Post* for Wednesday: https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/primary-elections-california-alabama-iowa-new-jersey-montana/2018/06/04/5a4946c4-6764-11e8-bea7-c8eb28bc52b1_story.html.

2. In a stunning **ICE raid** Tuesday morning in Ohio, agents arrested 114 workers at a garden and landscaping company. As *The Washington Post* reports, “About 200 federal officers blitzed two locations of Corso’s Flower and Garden Center — one in Sandusky, on the shoreline of Lake Erie, and another in nearby Castalia, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement told the Associated Press.

“Agents surrounded the perimeter of the Castalia location, blocking off nearby streets as helicopters flew overhead, AP and local television stations reported. They arrested 114 workers suspected of being in the country illegally and loaded many onto buses bound for ICE detention facilities. Dozens of the workers’ children were left stranded at day-care centers and with babysitters, local activists wrote on social media.

“Officials expect to charge the undocumented workers with identity theft and tax evasion... ICE is also investigating the role the employer played in hiring the undocumented immigrants... Department of Homeland Security officials have been receiving tips into Corso’s Flower and Garden Center for years but began probing the business in October, when authorities arrested a woman suspected of operating a document mill....

“[According to one Latino advocacy official], dozens of children were stuck at day-care centers and with babysitters ‘without their parents to pick them up.’ She said several of the detained workers were scheduled to be deported that same day. As the group begins identifying those who are in custody, they plan to begin placing funds into their jail accounts so that they can contact relatives and lawyers.” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2018/06/06/utter-chaos-ice-arrests-114-workers-in-immigration-raid-at-ohio-gardening-company>

3. Last week we reported on the issue of **excess deaths in Puerto Rico’s Hurricane Maria**. We picked up a story of a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. We quoted *The Guardian*, which was consistent with other news reports: “[The Report] concludes that as many as 4,600 ‘excess deaths’ occurred in the [aftermath](#) of the storm due to failures of medical and other critical infrastructure, and described the official number as ‘a substantial underestimate.’”

But some challenges have been directed at the report’s methodology. In the interests of accuracy, The Research Team refers you to the summary in *The Washington Post* on June 1, whose fact-checkers offer this explanation: “In response to questions, the researchers posted [a document](#) that includes this question: Does your study say that 4,645 died? The answer: ‘No. We provide a 95% confidence interval of 793 to 8,498, and 4,645 falls in the middle of this range.’” Most sources go for about 1000 deaths, at least, which is still many times the official estimate. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2018/06/02/did-4645-people-die-in-hurricane-maria-nope>

On Wednesday, *Politico* reported that “Puerto Ricans displaced by Maria marched on Capitol Hill demanding housing aid, and Democratic lawmakers, led by members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, called for an investigation of the response and the death toll from Maria.” Trump defended the “perfect score” of his administration. <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/06/06/donald-trump-hurricane-maria-response-629512>

4. You will barely find it mentioned in the US press, but last week the UN **rappporteur on poverty issued a scathing report**, following up his December draft report, excoriating the US for its persistent and deep pockets of poverty, and particularly for the attacks on the poor by the Trump administration. Says *The Guardian* on June 1: “Donald Trump is deliberately forcing millions of Americans into financial ruin, cruelly depriving them of food and other basic protections while lavishing vast riches on the super-wealthy, the [United Nations](#) monitor on poverty has warned.

“Philip Alston, the UN special rapporteur who acts as a watchdog on extreme poverty around the world, [has issued a withering critique](#) of the state of America today. Trump is steering the country towards a

'dramatic change of direction' that is rewarding the rich and punishing the poor by blocking access even to the most meager necessities....

"Millions of Americans already struggling to make ends meet faced 'ruination,' he warned. 'If food stamps and access to Medicaid are removed, and housing subsidies cut, then the effect on people living on the margins will be drastic.'" <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jun/01/us-inequality-donald-trump-cruel-measures-un>

5. A. Also not much covered in the US press was a **statement from the UN Human Rights Office** that "urged Washington to immediately halt its controversial practice of separating asylum-seeking Central American children from their parents at the southern border." So reported *The Guardian* on June 5. The paper continues, "'The US should immediately halt this practice,' [spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani] told reporters in Geneva. 'The practice of separating families amounts to arbitrary and unlawful interference in family life, and is a serious violation of the rights of the child.'"

"The use of immigration detention and family separation as a deterrent runs counter to human rights standards and principles," she said. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jun/05/un-says-us-must-stop-separating-migrant-children-from-parents>

B. **In response to mounting criticism** of the separation policy, Attorney General Jeff Sessions has been defending the policy. As *The Washington Post* reported, "Conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt, who admitted he was 'disturbed' by the separations, [pressed Sessions repeatedly](#) about the morality and necessity of the familial separations. But the attorney general stood his ground.

"If people don't want to be separated from their children, they should not bring them with them,' Sessions said, echoing some of the remarks he made in May when the Justice Department announced that it would begin to prosecuting every person who crossed the border unlawfully, including many seeking asylum. 'We've got to get this message out. You're not given immunity.'

"The agency's Administration for Children and Families is caring for more than 11,000 unaccompanied children at the moment, and it is averaging about 45 days to place children, a spokesman [told NBC](#). The news outlet reported that a backlog that has developed at the HHS since the new policy was implemented has kept hundreds of children, nearly half of them under the age of 12, in custody at U.S. border stations for more than the limit of 72 hours....Hewitt continued to [pepper him with questions](#), asking the attorney general if he could imagine his grandchildren being separated from their parents." Read the whole story of Hewitt's questioning and Sessions's responses, here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2018/06/05/sessions-defends-separating-immigrant-parents-and-children-weve-got-to-get-this-message-out>.

In a response to this story, *The Washington Post* published an op-ed decrying the administration's many justifications, which revolve around the claim that the families are being treated like any other criminals whose children are put in foster care. This argument, says *The Post's* Catherine Rampell, is specious: "There are two enormous problems with this 'it's just like how we treat other criminals' claim.

"First is that U.S. government is ripping immigrant children out of their parents' arms even when the parents *didn't actually commit a crime* (including the crime of crossing the border illegally).

"Second, in some cases the government is refusing to return immigrant children to their parents *even after the parents are released from jail*. That is not something that happens when parents are released from prison for other, non-immigration-related crimes, unless those parents are otherwise accused of being unfit parents. Which is not happening here." The ACLU [is suing](#) in federal court in Southern California. Read *The Washington Post* response here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/rampage/wp/2018/06/06/no-jeff-sessions-we-dont-treat-immigrant-families-the-way-we-treat-other-criminals>.

6. "I'm not enthusiastic about the holding in **Masterpiece Cakeshop**. Indeed, I helped [write a brief](#) on behalf of church-state scholars advocating the opposite outcome, and there is some language in the opinion that offers cause for concern. **But reactions of fury and despair are misplaced**. Kennedy wrote a [narrow opinion](#) that served more to recognize and frame an important conflict than to resolve the

hardest questions. Moreover, there are three features of Kennedy's opinion that should be celebrated by progressives and members of the LGBTQ community." [emphasis added]

So writes Joshua Matz, an attorney based in Washington, DC, who, from 2014 to 2015, served as a law clerk to Justice Anthony M. Kennedy of the United States Supreme Court.

Matz writes in *The Guardian* that the Court's "fact-specific solution dodges many of the hardest issues and leaves the public (and the lower courts) in an uncertain position. Still, the idea that Masterpiece Cakeshop has undermined Kennedy's legacy must be rejected." Read his legal analysis here: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jun/06/fury-despair-masterpiece-cakeshop-ruling-misplaced>.

Moreover, in *Politico*, in a carefully reasoned explanation, John Culhane remarks that "Most observers (including this one) assumed that the case would be decided based on the Supreme Court's view of whether Phillips's involvement in creating wedding cakes amounted to 'expressive conduct,' and, if so, whether that expression was outweighed by the state's strong interest in protecting sexual minorities from discrimination.

"Yet there is another, much less often used, basis on which the justices have found that government is violating the guarantee of religious freedom. **If the court finds that a law was enacted for the purpose of discriminating against a particular religion's practices, the justices will give it the stink eye... [and this is what the justices found]. By finding that the commission's decision had been tainted in this way, the court was able to sidestep the tougher questions of whether Phillips had been engaging in protected expression**, and whether that expression was important enough to justify discriminating against same-sex couples. But it's going to be the rare case where a judge or other official decision-maker announces such an anti-religious point of view. Even relatively liberal justices Elena Kagan and Stephen Breyer concurred with the majority that the commission had 'shown hostility' to religious views. So the case isn't likely to have much of a direct impact on future litigation involving this still-bubbling conflict between the two imperatives of anti-discrimination and the freedom of expression. What it does, though, is buy time." [emphasis added]

Culhane is H. Albert Young Fellow in constitutional law and co-director of the Family Health Law & Policy Institute at Delaware Law School. His thorough treatment here concludes that other cases may not be decided this way, and this is supported by [other legal analysts](https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/06/04/the-supreme-court-punts-on-cakes-for-same-sex-couples-218591) in the press. <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/06/04/the-supreme-court-punts-on-cakes-for-same-sex-couples-218591>

7. Of course, as our readers doubtless know, the week began with the remarkable **assertion of Trump's lawyers**, as revealed by *The New York Times*, **that he is, in effect, above the law**. *The Times* disclosed a leaked confidential memo from Trump's lawyer to the special counsel, arguing that Trump, as head of the executive, is immune from subpoenas, immune from charges of obstructing an investigation of his Justice Department, and he may pardon at will (and to pardon himself, as Giuliani [has stated](#)). *The Times*, on June 2, reported that "president Trump's lawyers have for months quietly waged a campaign to keep the special counsel from trying to force him to answer questions in the investigation into whether he obstructed justice, **asserting that he cannot be compelled to testify and arguing in a confidential letter that he could not possibly have committed obstruction because he has unfettered authority over all federal investigations**." [emphasis added]

"In a brash assertion of presidential power, the 20-page letter — sent to the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, and obtained by The New York Times — contends that the president cannot illegally obstruct any aspect of the investigation into Russia's election meddling because the Constitution empowers him to, 'if he wished, terminate the inquiry, or even exercise his power to pardon.'"

Reaction from legal scholars was swift and dismissive. As *The Washington Post* pointed out, "The assertion by President Trump's lawyers that he cannot obstruct justice because he has absolute authority over all federal investigations is legally problematic, analysts say, because it would essentially mean the nation's commander in chief is above the law.... Legal analysts said that as the head of the executive branch, Trump could issue pardons, fire senior officials or order them to shut down investigations. **But if his motives were corrupt, such actions could constitute obstruction**." [emphasis added]

“The principle laid out in the letter is ‘a ludicrous legal theory,’ said Neal Katyal, a former acting solicitor general who now works in private practice at Hogan Lovells. ‘The idea that a president can’t obstruct justice died with King George III, with a brief attempt at revival by Richard Nixon.’” https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/a-president-cant-obstruct-justice-thats-not-quite-right-legal-scholars-say/2018/06/03/a66f057e-6742-11e8-bf8c-f9ed2e672adf_story.html

This idea of a monarchical (czarist?) presidency is so bizarre, and so roundly condemned by almost all legal scholars, that The Research Team wondered whether to burden our readers with much more commentary on the matter. But as the week went on, Trump and Giuliani seemed to double down on claims that he was immune from prosecution, and also to attack Sessions and the legitimacy of the entire Mueller investigation.

For example, on Wednesday in *The Washington Post*: “President Trump’s lawyer Rudolph W. Giuliani said Wednesday that the legal team of special counsel Robert S. Mueller III is ‘trying very, very hard to frame’ the president. Giuliani’s comments, at a conference in Israel, further escalate the efforts of Trump and his lawyers to discredit the ongoing investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, which is also examining whether Trump has obstructed justice.” The developing aim is clearly to discredit the investigation with Trump’s base. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/giuliani-muellers-team-is-trying-very-very-hard-to-frame-trump/2018/06/06/8979bf36-699a-11e8-9e38-24e693b38637_story.html

Read also the excellent column by Michelle Goldberg in the June 4 *New York Times*, “**Does the Law Apply to Donald Trump?**” In Goldberg’s opinion, “The Trump team’s claims are at once audacious and desperate. It’s hard to know whether they represent a bold power grab, or a panicked response to an investigation that is closing in. I suspect the answer is a combination of the two. If Trump is guilty of serious crimes, and Mueller knows it, then Trump’s future hinges on destroying the mechanisms by which a president could be held accountable, even if it means destroying America’s constitutional order.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/04/opinion/donald-trump-pardon.html>

As *The Huffington Post* pointed out, in a Wednesday summary of Trump’s recent lies, **one item in the legal memo raised significant new questions about Trump’s liability for obstruction**: “[T]he falsehood that has refocused attention on his credibility took place nearly a year ago, as Trump flew back to Washington from Germany after attending the G-20 meeting. Aboard Air Force One, Trump crafted a statement for release by his son Donald Trump Jr., saying that a June 2016 meeting between members of his campaign and a Russian lawyer was primarily about the adoption of Russian children by Americans.

“That Trump Tower meeting has become a focus of the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller into possible cooperation by Donald Trump Sr.’s campaign and Russian intelligence agencies, which were working to help him win the presidency.

“A 20-page letter from his lawyers to Mueller’s office in January acknowledged that Trump ‘dictated’ that statement — flatly contradicting previous statements from Trump lawyer Jay Sekulow and White House press secretary Sarah Sanders.” https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-lies-media_us_5b1849fee4b0599bc6e01bf1

8. In another Republican rebuke to **Trump’s assertions on Twitter that an FBI “spy” infiltrated his campaign**, Rep. Paul Ryan himself told “reporters Wednesday that he has seen ‘no evidence’ to support such claims.... Following Ryan’s comments Wednesday, Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr (R-N.C.) told CNN that he also endorses [Rep. Trey] Gowdy’s take on the evidence. [Gowdy announced last week that there was no such evidence.]” See *The Washington Post*: https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/paul-ryan-splits-with-trump-says-no-evidence-fbi-spied-on-presidents-campaign/2018/06/06/c8bab620-6998-11e8-bea7-c8eb28bc52b1_story.html.

So how did Trump’s idea of a “Spygate” scandal get started? It is an interesting story, and it is well told in a June 6 investigation by Vox’s Jack Beauchamp, “**Trump, Fox News, and Twitter have created a dangerous conspiracy theory loop.**” Beauchamp says, “Late on Tuesday, President Trump tweeted something that’s embarrassing even by his standards: an unfounded conspiracy theory that originated in some of the internet’s worst ‘fake news’ corners.

“Strzok-Page, the incompetent & corrupt FBI lovers, have texts referring to a counter-intelligence operation into the Trump Campaign dating way back to December, 2015,’ [the president wrote](#). ‘SPYGATE is in full force!’

“The supposed source for this claim is text messages between two FBI employees, [Peter Strzok and Lisa Page](#), who were having an affair [during the 2016 campaign](#). Their text messages reveal that they were openly hostile to Trump and supportive of Hillary Clinton.

“The problem is that, as far as we know, none of those texts mentioned anything about there being a counterintelligence operation against the Trump campaign as early as December 2015. So where the hell did the president come up with that idea?”

The answer is instructive: the accusations snowballed on right-wing media, so that “conspiratorial interpretation of texts between two FBI employees, one entirely unfounded in the actual evidence, got laundered from the fringe right-wing media to the right-wing mainstream through Fox News personalities — and eventually reached up to a member of Congress and the president of the United States.” Read this **frightening account of how Trump not only makes stuff up but also can count on conservative media to amplify and endorse the wildest claims**: <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/6/6/17433876/trump-spygate-fox-twitter>.

9. As if **relations with Canada** have not been strained enough by Trump’s imposition of tariffs, now we find him accusing them of burning down the White House in 1812. They didn’t. As CNN revealed on Wednesday, “**President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had a testy phone call** on May 25 [over new tariffs imposed by the Trump administration](#) targeting steel and aluminum imports coming from Canada, including one moment during the conversation in which Trump made an erroneous historical reference, sources familiar with the discussion told CNN. [emphasis added]

“According to the sources, Trudeau pressed Trump on how he could justify the tariffs as a ‘national security’ issue. In response, **Trump quipped to Trudeau, ‘Didn’t you guys burn down the White House’** referring to the War of 1812.

The problem with Trump’s comments to Trudeau is that British troops burned down the White House during the War of 1812. Historians note the British attack on Washington was in retaliation for the American attack on York, Ontario [now Toronto], in territory that eventually became Canada, which was then a British colony.” [emphasis added] <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/06/politics/war-of-1812-donald-trump-justin-trudeau-tariff/index.html>

We now must fear that Trump is thinking of the dangers posed by a Canadian invasion. [Where does he get this stuff? We can only hope this was a joke, but it does not seem to have been taken as one.] We might point out that—as those know who have visited Toronto and taken a tour of Parliament—the Americans looted the town in 1812, and burned the Parliament building. In the process, “[t]he Parliamentary [mace](#) of Upper Canada [symbol of Royal authority] was taken back to Washington and was only returned in 1934 as a goodwill gesture by President [Franklin Roosevelt](#).” [Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_York]

Odd that in the season of D-Day we, or at least a US president, seem to have forgotten who was landing with us at Normandy. (Specifically, that would be the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division at [Juno Beach](#).)

10. **Facebook: busted twice, lying about release of data.** On Wednesday, CNN reported that Facebook “has provided access to its users’ data to Huawei, a Chinese smartphone maker that US intelligence agencies have described as a security threat.” <http://money.cnn.com/2018/06/05/technology/facebook-huawei-china-data-sharing/index.html>

This is in addition to a *New York Times* report that “Facebook has reached data-sharing partnerships with at least 60 device makers — including Apple, Amazon, BlackBerry, Microsoft and Samsung — over the last decade, starting before Facebook apps were widely available on smartphones, company officials said. The deals allowed Facebook to expand its reach and let device makers offer customers popular features of the social network, such as messaging, ‘like’ buttons and address books.

“But the partnerships, whose scope has not previously been reported, raise concerns about the company’s privacy protections and compliance with a 2011 consent decree with the Federal Trade Commission. **Facebook allowed the device companies access to the data of users’ friends** without their explicit consent, even after declaring that it would no longer share such information with outsiders. Some device makers could retrieve personal information even from users’ friends who believed they had barred any sharing, The New York Times found.” [emphasis added] <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/06/03/technology/facebook-device-partners-users-friends-data.html>

Meanwhile, *The Guardian* reports that “**Teens are abandoning Facebook in dramatic numbers, study finds**.” On June 1, the paper said, “Teenagers have abandoned Facebook in favour of other social media platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram, according to [a study from the Pew Research Center](#). Just 51% of US individuals aged 13 to 17 say they use Facebook – a dramatic plunge from the 71% who said they used the social network in [Pew’s previous study in 2015](#), when it was the dominant online platform.

“This is not the first study to [indicate that teens are leaving Facebook](#). In February this year, [an eMarketer study](#) estimated that Facebook’s user base among Americans aged 12-17 declined by 9.9% in 2017 – almost three times greater than the same research firm had [predicted in August of 2017](#). The company predicted that Facebook would lose a further 2.1 million American users under the age of 25 this year.” <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/jun/01/facebook-teens-leaving-instagram-snapchat-study-user-numbers>

11. **Uh, Oh!** *The Associated Press*, in an exclusive analysis of a report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, finds that **Ben Carson’s HUD plan to raise rents in public housing could mean more homelessness** in the nation’s big cities. “Overall, the analysis shows that in the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas, **low-income tenants — many of whom have jobs — would have to pay roughly 20 percent more each year for rent under the plan**. That rent increase is about six times greater than the growth in average hourly earnings, putting the poorest workers at an increased risk of homelessness because wages simply haven’t kept pace with housing expenses. [emphasis added]

“‘This proposal to raise rents on low-income people doesn’t magically create well-paying jobs needed to lift people out of poverty,’ said Diane Yentel, CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. ‘Instead it just makes it harder for struggling families to get ahead by potentially cutting them off from the very stability that makes it possible for them to find and keep jobs.’

“The ‘Make Affordable Housing Work Act,’ announced on April 25, **would allow housing authorities to impose work requirements, would increase the percentage of income poor tenants are required to pay from 30 percent to 35 percent, and would raise the minimum rent from \$50 to \$150 per month**. The proposal would eliminate deductions, for medical care and child care, and for each child in a home. Currently, a household can deduct from its gross income \$480 per child, significantly lowering rent for families.” [emphasis added]

The report’s findings and the AP’s detailed analysis are here: <https://apnews.com/d084d718ddd4fe087219825bad0fcbd/Analysis:-HUD-plan-would-raise-rents-for-poor-by-20-percent>.

12. In this vein, *The Nation* this week offers a special issue on homelessness and the housing crisis in America. The news weekly introduces its issue saying, “**The United States today is in the grip of a devastating affordable-housing crisis**. We hear about soaring home prices in the booming coastal cities and gentrification in newly hip towns, but the problem we face is much broader: All across the country, people are scraping and scrambling for one of the most basic requirements of life—a home. **This fact rarely cracks the news cycle, and even the most progressive potential contenders in the 2020 presidential election fail to mention it**. But travel to any big West Coast city or small Northeastern one, to the growing exurbs or far-flung rural counties, and the evidence begins to mount like clues at a crime scene. [emphasis added]

“You can see it in the eviction filings, the public-housing demolitions, the waiting lists for housing vouchers. You can see it in the [99.6 percent of counties](#) where a full-time minimum-wage worker can’t afford to rent a one-bedroom home.” The editors ask why progressives have not got on board the

agitation in many American cities for rent fairness, rent stabilization, and rent control (including in Chicago). *The Nation* then publishes two in-depth pieces on the housing crisis. See: <https://www.thenation.com/article/its-time-for-progressive-politicians-to-catch-up-to-the-rising-affordable-housing-movement/>

and <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-way-home/>;
<https://www.thenation.com/article/give-us-shelter/>

[Note: *The Nation*, like many periodicals, limits your reading to a few free articles a month. There are ways to avoid the paywalls: some articles may appear in Apple News on phones; you may be able to view on several different devices. In some instances—like the case of *The Washington Post*—restarting a browser may work. But the best solution, of course, is to subscribe! *The Nation*, we point out, is the oldest news weekly in America, and it is a vital source for progressives. We urge subscribing.]

13. **How's that tax cut working out for you?** In a stunning break with Republican orthodoxy, "**Sen. Marco Rubio Admits There's No Proof Tax Cut Is Helping American Workers.**" So headlines *The Huffington Post*, reporting on Rubio's comments to *The Economist*. "In an interview with the Economist, Rubio said he doubts that the tax cuts or Trump's 'America first' protectionism will stop people from losing their jobs to automation.

"There is still a lot of thinking on the right that if big corporations are happy, they're going to take the money they're saving and reinvest it in American workers," he said. "In fact, **they bought back shares, a few gave out bonuses**; there's no evidence whatsoever that the money's been massively poured back into the American worker." [emphasis added] https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/marco-rubio-tax-cuts-didnt-work_us_5ae78e3de4b055fd7fcee214

As *CNNMoney* reported in May, "**Tax cut sparks record-setting \$178 billion buyback boom.**" The site reported that "S&P 500 companies showered Wall Street with at least \$178 billion of stock buybacks during the first three months of 2018, according to Howard Silverblatt of S&P Dow Jones Indices.

"That's a 34% bump from last year and tops the prior record of \$172 billion set in 2007, just prior to the start of the Great Recession. Apple ([AAPL](#)) rewarded shareholders with \$22.8 billion in buybacks -- the [most of any company in any quarter ever.](#)

"Total S&P 500 shareholder payouts -- buybacks plus dividends -- for the past 12 months could top \$1 trillion for the first time ever, Silverblatt said.... That means companies have not significantly boosted spending on equipment, factories and other investments that create jobs and boost wages." Urge your friends, who may be impressed with the big bucks they will get from the Trump tax cuts, to read this one: <http://money.cnn.com/2018/05/20/investing/stocks-week-ahead-buybacks-tax-cuts/index.html>.

14. Of course, the **economic numbers show a booming economy** and a hot labor market. Good news, yes. But that may be bad news, in its way, for the politics of resisting the Trump agenda. **Are Trump policies to get the credit? Not so fast**, explains Robert J. Samuelson, economics editor at *The Washington Post*. "Naturally, President Trump claims paternity. There is nothing unusual about this. When the economy does well, presidents of both parties routinely brag about the results. Trump did just that last week with the latest jobs report. But as I — and many other commentators — have written, the \$20 trillion economy is simply too big and complicated to be easily manipulated for partisan advantage....

"Of course, problems persist. **Half of 22- to 24-year-olds still live with their parents, mostly to save money; by their late 30s, that share had shrunk to 11 percent. About 40 percent of adults say they would have trouble meeting a \$400 emergency expense; however, the share was 50 percent in 2013.** [emphasis added]

"What's powering the economy is the economy. **Its forward momentum is less the product of any sophisticated economic theory or partisan policy than the pragmatic rebuilding of purchasing power and confidence.** Consumer debt burdens have declined; jobs have increased; incomes have risen. The forward motion is not spectacular, but it is steady....[emphasis added]

“The main economic engine now is the classical adjustment process in which excesses are reduced or purged, allowing the expansion of goods and services to resume. That’s the positive news. The negative news is that this process will itself go to excess and cause the economic apparatus to stumble. The question about the next recession is not whether, but when.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-the-economy-is-roaring/2018/06/03/f127a8be-65bc-11e8-99d2-0d678ec08c2f_story.html

In other words, message to politicians: “*It’s the business cycle, stupid!*”

Best wishes, and Peace,
Mark
The Indivisible DuPage Research Team

***“Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number—
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few”***

—From "The Mask of Anarchy. Written on the Occasion of the [army] Massacre at Manchester [1819]", By British Romantic Poet Percy Shelley