

Different Paths For Democrats To Win in 2020

Rust Belt or Sun Belt? Some Aim for Both

By JONATHAN MARTIN
and ALEXANDER BURNS

DES MOINES — At the very first event of her first full day in Iowa as a presidential candidate, Senator Kamala Harris was greeted by a Democratic voter who delivered a pointed recommendation about the best path to the White House.

The voter, Rahul Parsa, who teaches at Iowa State University's business school, said he told Ms. Harris at a gathering of Asian and Latino activists that she needs to think of the Democratic Party in the Midwest like a struggling retail business — and that she should seek out not just the regular customers, but those who are not loyal supporters as well.

"Kamala needs to find out why the people voted for Trump, what are their issues?" said Mr. Parsa, adding that he had one overarching demand for the burgeoning field of would-be nominees: "You need to bring some states in the Midwest."

As the Democratic race takes flight, with one or more candidates entering the race almost every week, Mr. Parsa's viewpoint represents one side of a long-simmering debate within the party: Should Democrats redouble their efforts to win back the industrial heartland that effectively delivered the presidency to Donald J. Trump? Or should they turn their attention to more demographically promising Sun Belt states like Georgia and Arizona?

With polls indicating that electoral viability is as important to voters as any policy issue, a handful of the party's prospects are already holding up their Midwestern credentials to make the case that they are the ones who can turn Big Ten country — Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin — blue again.

Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota went immediately to next-door Wisconsin after declaring her candidacy earlier this month, making a hard-to-miss point about her eagerness to compete in a state Hillary Clinton never visited in the 2016 general election. Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio, who has not officially entered the race, used his first Iowa trip to make a beeline for a county that went for former President Barack Obama by over 20 points in 2012.

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SANDERS HAUL Senator Bernie Sanders opened with the largest 2020 donor network. PAGE A18



BRYAN DENTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Millions in India Converge to Wash Away Sins

This year's Kumbh Mela, the world's largest religious gathering, is the most expensive ever. But a holy man rated it "a zero." Page A11.

As Companies Buy Back Shares, A Sell-Off Wears a Bull's Horns

By MATT PHILLIPS

Armchair investors have been selling stock.

So have pension funds and mutual funds, as well as a whole other category of investors — nonprofit groups, endowments, private equity firms and personal trusts.

The stock market is off to its best start since 1987, but these investors are expected to dump hundreds of billions of dollars of shares this year.

So who is pushing prices higher? In part, the companies themselves.

American corporations flush with cash from last year's tax cuts and a growing economy are buying back their own shares at an extraordinary clip. They have good reason: Buybacks allow them to return cash to shareholders, burnish key measures of financial performance and goose their share prices.

The surge in buybacks reflects a fundamental shift in how the market is operating, cementing the position of corporations as the single largest source of demand for American stocks. The binge has helped sustain a bull market approaching its 10th birthday,



BRENDAN McDERMID/REUTERS

Uncertainty persists, but buybacks have buoyed the market.

even in the face of political, international and economic uncertainty.

Since the market rally began in March 2009, the S&P 500 has risen more than 300 percent as the United States recovered from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. But few expect those kinds of gains over the next

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Diversity Ruled at the Oscars. Then Came a Final Plot Twist.

By BROOKS BARNES

LOS ANGELES — Something seismic was happening during the Academy Awards ceremony on Sunday night. The Hollywood establishment, excoriated for its longtime exclusion of women and minorities, recognized African-American production design and costume virtuosos for the first time. Asian-American filmmakers were honored. A movie about a gay rock star collected four trophies.

"I want to thank the academy for recognizing a film centered around an indigenous woman," Alfonso Cuarón said as he accepted the award for best director for "Roma," about a domestic worker in Mexico City.

But then came "Green Book."

In a choice that prompted immediate blowback — from, among others, the director Spike Lee, who threw up his hands in frustration and started to walk out of the theater — the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences gave the best-picture Oscar to a segregation-era buddy film. While admired by some as a feel-good depiction of people uniting against the odds, the movie was criticized



JASON MORGAN

"Green Book" proved to be a divisive best-picture winner.

by others as a simplistic take on race relations, both woefully retrograde and borderline bigoted.

It was the ultimate Lucy-pulling-away-the-football moment for those who had hoped the film academy was going to reveal itself as a definitively progressive organization. That the 2017 selection of "Moonlight" as best picture

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CHINESE LEADER ON EDGE IN YEAR RIFE WITH RISKS

STARK WARNING FROM XI

Sensitive Anniversaries and Trade War Could Ignite Turbulence

By CHRIS BUCKLEY

BEIJING — China's leader, Xi Jinping, abruptly summoned hundreds of officials to Beijing recently, forcing some to reschedule long-planned local assemblies. The meeting seemed orchestrated to convey anxious urgency. The Communist Party, Mr. Xi told the officials, faces major risks on all fronts and must batten down the hatches.

Whether dealing with foreign policy, trade, unemployment, or property prices, he declared, officials would be held responsible if they slipped up and let dangers spiral into real threats.

"Globally, sources of turmoil and points of risk are multiplying," he told the gathering in January at the Central Party School. At home, he added, "the party is at risk from indolence, incompetence and of becoming divorced from the public."

The speech was one of Mr. Xi's starkest warnings since he came to power in 2012, and has been echoed at hundreds of local party meetings nationwide.

It underscores how slowing growth and China's grinding trade fight with the United States have magnified the party leadership's chronic fears of social unrest. Trade talks in Washington between American and Chinese officials ended last week without an official agreement, although President Trump delayed a deadline to increase tariffs on Chinese goods, saying that negotiators were making progress.

"Beijing is confronting significant pressure from the international community over its political and business practices that only adds to its difficulties in dealing with its domestic issues," said Elizabeth C. Economy, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York who wrote "The Third Revolution," a study of Mr. Xi.

There are no political challenges on the horizon who could pose an immediate threat to the Communist Party or Mr. Xi. But his remarks made clear that especially in 2019 — a year of politically sensitive anniversaries — the party would aggressively extinguish sparks that could ignite protests and turbulence.

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Cautious and Calm Prosecutor Quietly Anchors Mueller Team

By NOAH WEILAND and MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT

WASHINGTON — The routine was always the same. President Trump's lawyers would drive to heavily secured offices near the National Mall, surrender their cellphones, head into a windowless conference room and resume tense negotiations over whether the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, would interview Mr. Trump.

But Mr. Mueller was not always there. Instead, the lawyers tangled with a team of prosecutors, including a little known but formidable adversary: Andrew D. Goldstein, 44, a former Time magazine reporter who is now a lead prosecutor for Mr. Mueller in the investigation into whether the president obstructed justice.

Mr. Mueller is often portrayed as the omnipotent fact-gatherer, but it is Mr. Goldstein who has a

much more involved, day-to-day role in one of the central lines of investigation.

Mr. Goldstein, the lone prosecutor in Mr. Mueller's office who came directly from a corruption unit at the Justice Department, has conducted every major interview of the president's advisers. He questioned Donald F. McGahn II, Mr. Trump's former White House counsel, and Michael D. Cohen, Mr. Trump's former fixer and lawyer, for dozens of hours. He signed Mr. Cohen's plea agreement. He conducted grand jury questioning of associates of Roger J. Stone Jr., the former adviser to Mr. Trump who was indicted last month.

And he was one of two prosecutors who relayed to the president's lawyers dozens of questions about

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NIPAM H. PATEL

Male, Female, All of the Above

Split-sex creatures may help researchers fight diseases. Above, the middle butterfly has male and female characteristics. Page D1.

Elect Mayor? Many Black Chicagoans Give City Itself a 'No' Vote

By MONICA DAVEY

CHICAGO — The sparkle of downtown, the influx of tech jobs, the tourist dollars pouring into city coffers: None of those things are keeping many in Chicago's black neighborhoods from loading their belongings into car trunks and moving vans and seeking better lives someplace else.

As Chicagoans go to the polls on Tuesday to choose a new mayor in one of the most wide-open elections the nation's third-largest city has experienced in generations, many African-Americans have cast their votes another way. They have moved out.

Downtown Chicago is booming, its skyline dotted with construction cranes. Yet residents only a few miles to the south and west

still wrestle with entrenched gang violence, miserable job prospects and shuttered schools — some of the still-being-identified forces, experts say, that are pushing black Chicagoans to pack up and get out.

Of the nation's largest five cities, only Chicago saw its population decline in 2017, the third year in a row. Over all, the drops in this city of 2.7 million residents are

only slight. But the trend is alarming to city leaders, and demographers say it reveals a larger truth: Black residents are leaving by the thousands each year even as new white residents flow in.

The Rev. Ira Acree said members of his West Side congregation have begun approaching him in growing numbers to say goodbye;

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Trying to Curb Housing Costs

Oregon is expected to enact the nation's first statewide rent control law. Other states are watching closely. PAGE A12

Worries Over Border Action

G.O.P. leaders worked to get the troops in line ahead of a House vote to reject an emergency declaration. PAGE A17

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New Support for Brexit Revote

A shift by the Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn, to back a second referendum is no guarantee that the "people's vote" will happen. PAGE A8

Cardinal's Conviction Revealed

A judge in Australia unsealed the conviction of Cardinal George Pell for sexually abusing two children. PAGE A7

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Keeping Poland's Lights On

Liquid natural gas producers will fuel the country, complicating relations between Russia and the U.S. PAGE B1

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End of an Education Initiative

Mayor Bill de Blasio is canceling a disappointing school improvement program, \$773 million later. PAGE A20

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Stylishly Uncommitted

In Milan, fashion's rulers seemed uninterested in addressing political or social issues, Vanessa Friedman writes.

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Rewriting Cosmic History

Fueled by dark energy, the universe is growing faster than expected. PAGE D1



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In Shape for the Whitney

The museum's biennial displays works of 75 artists. Above, Brendan Fernandes's "The Master and Form." PAGE C1

Satirizing Sondheim

John Mulaney and Seth Meyers poke fun at the composer with a faux documentary that doubles as a tribute. PAGE C1

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Kraft's Charges Are Escalated

The Patriots owner Robert K. Kraft now faces two first-degree misdemeanor counts of soliciting prostitution. PAGE B6

She's a Soccer Pro. She's 13.

Olivia Moultrie signed with an agent and with Nike, giving up the college scholarship she had accepted at 11. PAGE B8

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Michelle Goldberg

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