



NATIONAL AGENDA 2019: DIRECTION DEMOCRACY

JOHN DELLA VOLPE

“Measuring Millennials”

HOSTED BY Center for Political Communication,
Co-sponsored by the Biden Institute, University of
Delaware

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with support from the Office of the Provost,
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John Della Volpe Director of Polling at the Harvard Kennedy School
Institute of Politics. The *Washington Post* called
Della Volpe one of the world’s leading authorities
on global sentiment, opinion and influence
especially among Millennials. Also, the founder of
SocialSphere, a public opinion and analytics
company, John has appeared on national media
outlets such as MSNBC’s *Morning Joe* and *The
Daily Show with Trevor Noah*.

Transcript of Event

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Newark, DE



DR. HOFFMAN: Good evening everyone. Thank you for attending the final edition of the 2019 National Agenda Speaker Series. Ah, we're here thanks to the University of Delaware's Center Political Communication with support from the Office of the Provost, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Biden Institute. Thank you for being our sponsor tonight. This year's theme is Direction Democracy. We've been looking at where we're at, where we've been and where we're going in this uniquely American experience that is, ah, experiment that is democracy. And, our speaker tonight can talk about 20 years of 18 to 29-year-old's experiences in this democracy. We are a nonpartisan organization and we feature speakers across the spectrum left, right, middle. And you can find our podcast, transcripts and videos of our complete lineup at cpc.udel.edu. I'd like to remind our audience that civil, civil dialogue is vital to the success of National Agenda so let's be candid but also courteous of other people's views. We will have an audience Q and A at the end of the talk so make sure that you are willing to catch a Catchbox, ah, ah, a microphone that we can literally throw around the audience and be sure you can ask, ah, this Harvard pollster questions. So, tonight, John Della Volpe directs polling at the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics. The *Washington Post* called him one of the world's leading authorities on global sentiment, opinion and influence especially among millennials and now Generation Z. I met John at a Biden Institute event earlier this year and I knew I had to invite him to National Agenda to get his perspective on polling and what it means in elections. Great timing, the most recent youth poll from the Institute of Politics just dropped major findings this week, Monday, and he's here to talk about them. So, this is actually his third visit to UD in 2019. I think he really likes us.



AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Ah, so, please give a big Blue Hen welcome to Harvard's John Della Volpe.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, we have our water now, [chuckling], we didn't have water. Um, do you have any, ah, introductory remarks you'd like to make?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Sure. I just want to, um, thank the University of Delaware for, again, three visits in one year.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Ah, thank you to, to , ah, the Biden Institute, specifically Cathy McLaughlin who I certainly wouldn't be here, um, without, ah, Cathy's leadership and vision during her time at the Harvard Institute of Politics. And, perhaps I could just, um, share just a couple of, um, of observations in terms of how, how I got here and the power and the impact of, ah, of young people. It was never my idea 20 years ago to, ah, to be a pollster focusing on young people. I'm so glad, ah, I, I do that and, ah, I continue to be inspired. But, it was the idea of two undergraduate students at Harvard, um, not unlike the conversations that I had over the course of the afternoon here with so many of your really curious and talented students. Um, but I remember talking in the Winter of 1999 and 2000, ah, at Harvard about the seeming disconnect that young people, um, saw. It seemed that, ah, back in those days every member of their own cohort, um, on campus, on our campus, and on other campuses across



the country were engaged in some meaningful form of community service but when they, ah, these students want to take the conversation further it, there were roadblocks, and, there was far less interest in political conversations. And, actually when they looked at the recent, ah, ah, ah, results of, um, turnout there were record low turnouts – 1996 only about a third of, ah, of people under the age of 30 voted. And they came to the Institute of Politics and they asked why does, why, what don't we understand? Don't our peers, ah, realize that if they volunteer and vote we can move the country ahead that much faster? So, that was the inspiration for what was going to be a one semester project and now 38 semesters, 37 semesters later, 38 polls later, ah, we're still here and, um, I'm really kind of honored to do that. And, I'm so excited to report on the results we dropped on, ah, a couple of days ago, and a lot of the other insights, um, ah, from the last two decades now.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I'm glad that six months ago I knew you were going to drop those results this week. [Chuckle.] So –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: It was the first time in an odd year I said that we have not released it in December –

DR. HOFFMAN: Oh.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – so it worked out perfectly.

DR. HOFFMAN: It's –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: It worked out perfectly.

DR. HOFFMAN: – it's the National Agenda bump –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: All right.

DR. HOFFMAN: – I keep saying.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]



DR. HOFFMAN: Um, so, I'd like to start off with saying that you measure attitudes, opinions and behaviors of young people. Do you have any questions for our students here in the audience tonight?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Do I have any questions?

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: I could, I could easily spend my time here asking, asking questions and I think that is such an important part of, ah, of a job of a, of a pollster, right, in that, um, because my job is really to listen, and different pollsters have different perspectives. But I spend a lot of time in rooms not dissimilar from this – large rooms, town halls, and focus groups, and really listening to, um, to ah, well not just what people think about politics but before we can talk about politics I kind of feel like we need to understand what its like to be a young person today. You know? And, and that's what I'll do. I'll, I'll go to high schools and middle schools and, and colleges and, and everywhere and say what's it like to be a 19-year-old, you know, ah, on this campus today. And, um, what don't we, you know, what keeps you up at night? And, you know, um, and what's interesting is consistently whether it's on our campus, on this campus, I think, and so many other places I kind of continue to hear the same things. Um, and um, so I could have that conversation for a long time. But, I think pollsters are better when we start to put things into context asking about what its like to be who you are, where you are, what are the challenges, what do you think about the future, um, you know, what are your kind of goals or objectives, what [indiscernible] to that before we talk about the in's and out's of, ah, of policy and debates and those sorts of things. So, I could certainly, ah, ask a bunch of questions and , um, maybe I will. We'll see.



DR. HOFFMAN: What's the one burning question? We've got students out here. We don't have a microphone out there right now but, like –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um, I want to know, I want to know, I, I think kind of what is the, ah, what keeps you up at night? Right? What don't; what doesn't my generation understand about your generation?

DR. HOFFMAN: Does anyone have a response?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: That's what I want to know. What don't you think we understand about your generation?

DR. HOFFMAN: We can hear you up here. I'll, I'll – yeah.

Q: I don't think people understand why we're angry and why that anger is warranted and how sometimes it's not necessarily directed at the person but just the fact that we have to deal the repercussions and actions. It's like, let us be angry and try to listen to it.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, I don't understand why people don't understand why we're angry. Why do people not get why we're angry?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Why are you angry?

Q: I'm angry because I didn't choose –

UNIDENTIFIED: Hold on.

Q: – to be born into this –

UNIDENTIFIED: I'm going to throw – this is not good.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

UNIDENTIFIED: This is not good.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: I'll –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]



DR. HOFFMAN: All right. We're doing the Catchbox early in the night.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: This is so much better.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: I'd rather listen to you guys than –

UNIDENTIFIED: Christina had it.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – you guys listen to me. So, great.

Q: Is this, ah – can you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yes.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yeah.

Q: I'm a little louder now? Nice. Well –

DR. HOFFMAN: Why are you angry?

UNIDENTIFIED: [Indiscernible.]

Q: Ah, I'm angry because I didn't choose a lot of the things that I have to deal with. When I chose between colleges I chose between \$10,000 of debt a year to up to \$40,000 in debt a year for the majors that I wanted to, to go to school for. And, ah, I'm angry that my family is like a couple of medical emergencies away from bankruptcy and these were not decisions that I made, they're just repercussions that I have to deal with. So, when I sound emotional, like, there's reasons why I get emotional.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Thank you. Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you. And we will continue the Catchbox, box discussion –

Q: Yeah [indiscernible] –

DR. HOFFMAN: – later in the evening. Thank you.



MR. DELLA VOLPE: That's not at all kind of dissimilar from, from, from what I hear. I just hear, ah, tremendous amounts of, ah, anxiety and –

Q: I'm sorry.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – stress and, and many times anger. And, um, the flip side of that is that I don't think folks understand. I don't think, ah, I know that people, people, I don't, people, um, always say that millennials are narcissistic –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – but I did a poll, ah, and I asked every generation their rating, ah, their views of other generations. Right? So, I said, ah, relatively speaking, ah, you know, ah, the silent generation of folks in their 70's and older, what impact, do you, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of that generation, and then baby boomers, and then Xers and millennials: 84 percent, 84 percent of baby boomers have a favorable impression of their own generation. Okay? Ah, 31 percent of baby boomers have a favorable impression of the millennial generation. Essentially they're kind of their kids. So, we, when we talk about – and that's the disconnect I, I think that you're talking about, right? That older people don't understand their, essentially their children and their grandchildren. They don't understand kind of where their anger is coming from and we can see that in our surveys. And then, the benefit of, of the anger, I think, is that it's being fueled into, into organizing, into voting. In, in the past midterm elections of 2018 we saw some of the numbers from, from your campus here. We had the highest turnout of young people, um, in at least a couple of generations and at least in the last 32 years. Over the last, since 1986 the average 18 to 29-year-old voted only, um, only about 16 percent of them showed up on midterm elections. Only 16 percent. So, a low bar. But, at least 32



percent turned out in the 2018 election and were responsible for turning at least 10 seats from, from red to blue.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, and if I can mention that for the University of Delaware it was 14 percent in 2014 and a huge increase, almost 30 percent in 2018.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Ah, ah, yes. And, that's just incredible and, and you should, you know, um, this campus is in particular is important because there's two, two aspects I think of driving turnout one of which is the attitude. The attitudinal shift that we've tracked in our surveys and clearly whether you're a Democrat or you're a Republican whichever side of the aisle you're on you can see the impact that politics, um, has made and the differences between the parties and the candidates very, very clear. That is a, ah, one of the, um, one of the main reasons that young people, ah, voted to participate, but also the mechanical barriers, you know, in terms of registration, absentee ballots, ballot, um, access and those sorts of things. So, this campus in particular, I think the attitudes are already changing but to have like the support from the ground, ah, the mechanical aspects of it, um, is also, I think, the unique combination of why you're increasing more than many other colleges.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah. And, the Biden Institute has been an essential part of that in, in bringing turbo vote to this campus so students can sign up to vote. Well, when I invited you here there was no impeachment inquiry [chuckle], there weren't debates scheduled for tonight.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Right.

DR. HOFFMAN: It's a big day. You know, slow news day. Um, but as reported by the most recent findings from the Harvard Institute of Politics you poll



52 percent of young American's and 58 percent of likely voters under 30 support impeachment of the President. But this is sharply divided among Democrats and Republicans; 82 percent of young Republicans do not support impeachment.

How do you explain this deep partisan divide among young people?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: So, um, the only thing I would add to that is they, a majority support impeachment and removal. So, it's even a, a, a more significant, a more significant statement. And I think a couple of things: one of which is that this generation has been the only generation that I've seen in our polling and other polling to support impeachment and removal. So, if not for, I would argue if not for this generation, millennials and folks all the way up to the age, you know, 38, we may not even be having, there may not be the political support to even move forward with these, um, hearings. So, that is just one additional example of the impact that young people showing up to vote and, um, and, and, and it has made, one. The second thing is that we see, we've seen about a 10-percentage point decrease in the number of self-identified Republicans over the last several years. So, I think what we're finding is that this increase in partisanship has reduced the number of Republicans, increased the number of Democrats and, and independent leaning kind of blue voters. Um, so, you have a smaller but, um, ah, potentially kind of stronger cohort of, of Republicans who are defending, you know, um, ah, their President. Um, his, um, his approval rating, um, among all, ah, young Americans is still in the 20's. It's been pretty consistently below 30 percent every semester since we've polled. But, you know, you have approval ratings in the, in the mid-60's and higher among, among, ah, among young Republican voters.



DR. HOFFMAN: Well, so, do you think these impressions will change after this impeachment inquiry ends, assuming it ends. I don't –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: I don't, I don't –

DR. HOFFMAN: – really know how this is going to work out but –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: The, the, um, I don't; I'm not optimistic that, ah, the opinions of any cohort of Americans are necessary, necessarily going to change I think kind of based upon the, the media silos that folks are in. We were doing some focus groups with some students, um, not long ago up in New Hampshire, um, maybe three or four weeks ago, and we were on the, we were talking about potential hearings and talking to young Republicans who were very much committed I think to supporting the President indicated that they did not believe that, um, they believe that he should be impeached if there was proof that he asked Ukraine to interfere in our elections. They were willing and open and ready to hear that proof. Um, again, whether or not, whether they are watching news from across a variety of networks or analyzing the information from just not one news source we will see. But, there's been very little indication that opinion has been, has been, you know, moving in a significant way, um, even among younger people. Younger people are as partisan in their divides, ah, I think as, as older Americans these days.

DR. HOFFMAN: Wow. Okay.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, well I have this slide about, ah, a comment that you made –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – about, um –



MR. DELLA VOLPE: What'd I say?

DR. HOFFMAN: – engagement.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Indiscernible] right now by nearly two to one more young voters support his removal from office than Democrats. Do you have any other comments on this before we move on to –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: No, I just think it's a, I think it's a prime example. When, when people say, like, why should I pay attention to young people, why should I vote –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – well this arguably isn't happening today if not for, um, record numbers of young people turning out. So that's, that's –

DR. HOFFMAN: And they're –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – correct.

DR. HOFFMAN: – the largest generation that exists today?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yes. So, ah, there's basically, ah, three things. I kind of often times find my, my, I spend my time as a, an interpreter or diplomat or ambassador from younger to older generations and I say three things. One is, um, millennial generations, the largest generation in the history of America, the largest generation in the history of the world. Right? So, it's essentially the baby boomer generation with immigration, um, ah, is responsible for, you know, 74, 75 or some million Americans. Um, that's kind of part one. The second part is that they are, ah, growing; their values are significantly different than any other generation alive today. For example, so not only are they the, the largest, for example, when we first studied this generation back in 2000, if you look at the



exit polls that, of course that was a razor tight, you know, election but the, ah, 25-year-old and a 65-year-old voted essentially the exact same way. Um, 49-49 or so, ah, Gore versus Bush. In fact, when you look at it the older voters were, were about two points more likely to be, be Democrats than younger voters back in 2000. Okay? Um, we then had 9/11, we had Katrina, we had a recession, we had school shootings, etcetera and now in 2018 that, ah, plus-two advantage, ah, ah, for, um, ah, for Democrats among older people is a 36 point net, net disadvantage. What that means is there's a 38-point swing in public opinion between 2000 and 2018. Young people were two points less likely to be Democrats; they are 36 points more likely to be Democrats today. So, they're the largest. They have continued to, ah, turn progressive based on every single measure that we can use. That's the second part. And the third part is, unlike, as I mentioned earlier, unlike, um, Gen Xers, unlike baby boomers when they had their chance to vote when they were young rather than 16 percent showing up 32-33 percent showed up. Largest, most progressive and, ah, the most active. And a, a, a political force not just in this country actually, um, I'd argue, but around the world. If not for young people – we're not talking about Hong Kong today, right – in June if not for young people we have, ah, we, we would have the current governor of Puerto Rico probably still in office; or the former governor probably still in office in July. In August Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart made decisions to change decades of, ah, of their policy and stopped selling certain kinds of, ah, assault weapons, that's in August. In September there was a presidential debate which focused extensively on healthcare. I don't think that happens without young people and Bernie Sanders.

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.



MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um, that's in September. In October, obviously with September and October I'm losing count, Greta Thunberg and the UN General Assembly a climate strike; Santiago, Chile, ah, ah, Beirut. You know, young people feel empowered not just here but around the world and, and, um, they're changing how we operate in, in the public as well as in the private sphere.

DR. HOFFMAN: That's fascinating. Um, so, I'm going to move to a different approach, ah, for this conversation. So many of my students want to understand the mechanics of polling.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: They don't understand who is polled, what does it mean, how do you interpret things. So, they have a lot of questions about polling. So, let's get some basics cleared –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Sure.

DR. HOFFMAN: – if we can do that. What happened in 2016? How do you explain the polling, what it got wrong –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – and why, and if that polling influenced voter turnout in the presidential election. So, it's a multipart question.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yes. So, so if a, um, if a venture capitalist is right three out of ten times they are retired by the time they're 50 years old. Right? Ah, three out of ten times, ah, they're playing with somebody else's money to begin with and then they're millionaires, if they pick two or three, you know, ah, companies right. The same thing with a baseball player. Same thing with the weather. You know? Ah, but a pollster is supposed to get it right, what, 99 out of 100 times or 100 times out of 100 just to, just to basically live to conduct another poll.



So, I think that kind of the perceptions of social science, what it's designed to do, what a poll is designed to do, need to be reset in some ways. Right? So, I'll talk about how I think we should interpret polls and then we can talk about the specifics of, of 2016. You know, polls are what they say kind of snapshots of a particular moment. They're not necessarily designed to predict, um, what is going to happen days or weeks or months ahead of time with an electorate that, um, you know, um, may or not, ah, exist or, you know, it may change over time. So, we need to appreciate and understand that polls are designed to measure that particular moment in time. I think that's kind of one thing. And I think we spend far too much time trying to use them as kind of predictive measures. Having said that, when we look at the national polling from 2016, um, I often remind my friends that it was accurate as it has ever been. When you look at the, ah, the averages on Real Clear Politics which averages without any sort of weighting all of the major national polls – again, its not a national contest of course – but the national polls, um, had it within, you know, less than half a point. Hillary Clinton won the, um, won the popular vote. So, on a national basis they were fine, they were good. Excellent. But, um, the challenge is obviously in places like Michigan, an incredibly important places like Michigan, Wisconsin, etcetera –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – where most all the polls were wrong and, um, in a couple of things. One is there's just not a lot of work in those states. Um, most of the national organizations don't invest in polling so you have local organizations, local media, local colleges who often don't have the resources to poll on a regular basis to conduct the same kind of rigorous kind of sampling as we would



on a national basis. And what we found was a variety of different factors, but the biggest factor was that a major part of the Trump voter of voting base which to not typically vote in previous elections was missing from those samples. Those, as we know, kind of less educated, ah, white, males. Um, and they were missed, ah, misrepresented in those surveys and that's one of the reasons that they were, they, they were inaccurate. And I would argue that if you had, um, you know, ah, honest conversations with the Clinton Campaign and the Trump Campaign everyone had those states –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – wrong. So, not a lot of polling; not a lot of investment in polling, and, um, a changing electorate that no one was really kind of prepared for. So, I'm not defending the industry. I think we constantly need to innovate and, and talk to more people, not fewer people. But, um, those are just a couple of the reasons, I think, why we saw a disconnect.

DR. HOFFMAN: Can, can you give us an idea of like how much those types of state polls cost because I think some people don't realize that polling costs so much.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Ah, I don't think it costs enough –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – um, frankly so I may as well say that right?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um, but, yeah, they cost tens of thousands of dollars. You know, tens of thousands of dollars, um, to do a poll well and, um, and you want to do multiple before you really have an understanding of, of the state.



There was a, a, a fascinating, um, ah, you know, a podcast, um, recently which talked about polling in, in, um, in some of those states including Michigan and, and some, sometimes it takes hundreds of phone calls. Hundreds, hundreds of attempts to find one voter who is willing to take a poll. Right? So, um, so it's incredibly expensive and, um, and again I think that folks think its kind of, it's easier than it is or that it does things that it should do which is really, social science has never really designed it to, to, to be like that right?

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: So that's, I think, a big part of, um, of the success of the Harvard Poll which I, um, have been directing and other similar polls, is not just to predict. It's helpful to know what people's political preferences are for sure, and you know, we broke some news a few weeks ago too in terms of, of opinions of younger people and to make sure that those are accurately reflected when we look at those compared to the, ah, ah, official results. I think it's more important to understand why. Right? What's happening? Who's getting the, who's, what, what are the demographic composition of the people who are supporting certain candidates. What are the values of those people? How have they changed over time? Who's likely to participate; who's not likely to participate? Those sorts of things to help us understand the electorate, the country, um, better so we can begin to deal with some of the challenges and address the anger, um, that so many folks feel about the country these days.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, so, I'm one of those social scientists. I, I am a professor of communication and political science and I have to admit I'm a little, even though I love surveys and I love polling I'm a little exhausted by it.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Hum.



DR. HOFFMAN: I even posited a few weeks ago on our podcast – if anyone’s listening to the podcast – to just, let’s just take a break from the [chuckle] polling. Do you ever worry that these polls, ah, particularly election polls like in the primary have negative affects?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yeah. I, I, I, we mentioned in class today, I don’t know if it’s that important, you know, who’s, who’s winning in South Carolina at this particular moment.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: I mean, it’s, it’s interesting, it’s helpful, it’s, it’s helpful for a university, right, to, to get their brand out into the media and that’s a big part of what is driving the polling industry frankly. You know, in media is it’s a great way to brand, you know, a company, an organization, that media outlet, a university, um, etcetera. But, I don’t know how particularly kind of relevant it is, and I do think that, um, it does, it can affect turnout and it can affect attitudes. I was having a conversation an hour ago and I was just – I’m always asking questions – I asked who, you know, who do you like? And someone said they like one particular candidate, um, but they're voting for another one. And I said, well, why aren’t you voting for the one that you actually like? And they said, well, I’m not sure they can win because the person was lower in the polls.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Right? So, again, you know, um, that way it’s a, a, I think having potentially it could have a, a, a negative effect. That’s the dynamic. It is what it is. Um, but I don’t think; I do think honestly we spend too much time on the horserace polls. We treat all of them the same. Like they all have the same amount of rigor which they don’t, and, not enough on the attitudes; the values;



what it's like; anger; what you're looking for; um, why you want to vote; why you don't want to vote. Those are, I think, far more important questions for the country, for democracy, and for the candidates to listen to so they can inspire more people.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, your polls are much more about issues and taking the temperature of, ah, what young people are thinking about.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: In terms of these election polls how can students, of the same generation that you are polling, how can they make sense of what to believe, what to follow because they all come up with different results a lot of times. My students are always like who do I trust; how, who do I follow?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Good question. So, I would, I would, um, look at them from your own personal perspective. And, and what's interesting about the work that we've done is, and even having these kinds of conversations, is now I have a, a little bit of an understanding and a frame of what young people care about.

Right? And, now I can take that, ah, view and watch the debate tonight through the eyes of different groups of, of, ah, important cohorts of voters. And then, look at the debate through the eyes of, of, um, comments like that or through the polls. So, trying to kind of understand why, you know, why is Pete Buttigieg doing so well in Iowa right now, right? And, try to kind of understand that. Right? Well, first of all, don't take it for granted based on one poll that he is. Look at the real clear average –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – and you'll look at the last two or three polls and he's clearly moving. What is it around that dynamic, around Iowa, around his



message, around other messages and kind of understand what is resonating?

That's the way I would argue that you would, you would want to look at that. To like think through about who's resonating, who's not resonating, why, why, and, um, and see how it reflects upon kind of your own values, right?

DR. HOFFMAN: So, look for consistency?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Look for consistency and try to, try to understand if you can why you think something is happening. Um, and, whether it comports to your own personal point of view or not. And if it is, fine; if it's not, try to understand why and, and, um, and ask yourself some of those kinds of, some of those kinds of questions. If you really want to connect into it, now every poll essentially, um, you can look at the, the, the crosstabs and the data behind it and, ah, that's what I constantly do and I'm always looking at younger versus older since that's what's been a big focus.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I'll follow up with a question before I –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Sure.

DR. HOFFMAN: – move onto the next slide. A question my students ask is like, okay, margin of error, what should I be looking for? What is good and what is bad? Because, margin of error is one of those important things you should look for when you're looking at public opinion polls around elections.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: So, ah, I think a couple of things. For a statewide poll I would argue that you look for a margin of error of five percent or less which is not a very high bar. That means you have 400 interviews on a statewide basis. So, that is not a very high bar. Look for that. Um, that's about 400 interviews. On a national basis, again, ah, you need to take the national polls with a little bit of a grain of salt but there are some things that there is value in that. You look



for a margin of error of around three percent, you know, three, three and a half percent. That means they'll have about 1,000 or so interviews. The benefit of that is when you have, ah, 1,000 interviews that is typically 500 men, 500 women, you can take a look at the differences based upon gender, who had differences based on party, based on those other things. So, margin of error is, is important to look at the top line but you want to get as many, um, people represented in a survey as possible so you can look at some of the, some of the important subgroups. Um, easier said, the easier done on, on polls that have an online component because its much easier to collect large numbers of folks. So, for example, CBS News and YouGov, they have a variety of different polling programs one of which, and they just released I think 18 polls over this weekend, they have very large sample sizes. So, that's a great, um, resource to look at some of the, ah, questions that we're dealing with today around generation and race and ethnicity, etcetera. Um, that's a good source. Ah, but, um, most statewide polls would probably be, be less than 1,000.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, look at sample size, look at how they divide by subgroups, and just be cognizant of those things. All right. Um, I'm going to move one. You tweeted this, ah, recently, ah, from the *Economist* –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, "Societies Change Their Minds Faster Than People Do." So, ah, there are lots of charts up here, but the article notes that as recently as the 1980's most Americans thought gay sex was not only immoral but also should be illegal. Yet, by 2015 when the Supreme Court legalized same sex marriage there were only faint murmurs of protest. Today, two-thirds of Americans support it, um, and even those who oppose it don't, aren't engaging in



any kind of like active action against it. Public opinion can shift fast, quickly.

This is the result of people who have changed their minds of course, but, as you noted, um – I'm going to pull this next tweet up – ah, where you appropriately used the hashtag #okayboomer –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Trying to be relevant in some way.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Trying to get some followers.

DR. HOFFMAN: Yeah.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: By the way, you see my, my Twitter handle up there? I need some followers too, right –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – @dellavolpe.

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Hopefully we got some more tonight.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: [Indiscernible.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: – [laughter] –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Thank you. [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, #okayboomer is this kind of like, yeah, like we get it old people. Um, but many, many socially conservative old people have died. This is the, what the article is pointing out is that like why does change happen? Is it because conservative old people have died, and liberal millennials have taken their place? Or, as you say, what changes public opinion? Answer: young



people with the hashtag du jour #okayboomer. Is this why you said young people? Do they represent future public opinion, or can we also expect them to change their opinions as they grow older?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um, there has been no indicate – so, I think it's; ah, I'm happy to debunk the theory that when you get older you, ah, become more conservative because there is no indication that millennial generation has become more conservative. They are consistently 10 to 20 points more progressive. When you look at PEW has great data in terms of self-described are you mostly or somewhat liberal, um, over, over the years, um and I think 59 percent, ah, are in those top two sort (sic) of boxes, right? So, um, there's been no indication that, um, this generation has become more conservative. By the way, as they age they move to the suburbs. So, when we talk, we have had so much political conversation about the suburbs in Kentucky, the suburbs, in Louisiana. Well, who lives in the suburbs now? Young families, right, 30-year olds; 35-year olds. People who are, um, you know, have career, a couple of careers, a house, children can't afford to live in the city and they move to the suburbs and they're changing the dynamic, um, of those, ah, environments in the state and politics. But before we go through that, um, let's talk about why and these values, they are different. And, as I indicated, in 2000 their values weren't, in terms of how they were exhibited through their voting, were not different. They were the same. Right? As many liked, you know, ah, Bush as, as Gore but, ah, you know, being a young person in your teens or twenties, um, you know, um, is, is very –understand kind of the dynamic and the, and the society in which you've grown up can really kind of teach us a lot. Right? So, if you are, ah, an older millennial, right, like our former student Pete Buttigieg – who worked on the, on



the survey, oldest millennial – his first day of college, I think, was, ah, the day after 9/11 or that week. Okay? Um –

DR. HOFFMAN: And he was a student of yours?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: He was a student, um, of ours at, ah, at IOP and worked specifically on developing some of the questions for this poll. But, you know, he and his generation kind of grew up, ah, came of age right after 9/11, um, and then we saw Katrina and then we saw a long war for weapons of mass destruction that I don't think exists. And then, um, settling in they were hit with a great recession and they saw their parents and their, and their neighbors and their friends and their family lose important like homes, cars, opportunities, etcetera. Think about, you know, the, the, the generation, you know, younger than him as well and then, um, it's not surprising then that, ah, they, um, have different, ah, a set of values than the administration that was in office when those things happened. Right? Um, and they are holding on to those things. And they had an opportunity, um, I think, other parties – Republicans and, you know, had opportunities to kind of connect and try to, um, and try to develop a relationship and they really, really didn't. And so, what you have is you had Bernie Sanders, um, who took advantage of that opportunity in 2015 and 2016 and has kind of empowered and, um, um, you know, ah, you know, inspired so many more people. Right? So, I think it's, understandable because of the kind of the values of this generation, how they are unique and different and what their, um, you know, what their early lives were like to understand how they're voting today.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um. Interesting. Ah, so let's – I want to move to another topic that's kind of related to this generation. Another one of your polls out of SocialSphere, your company that you do polling through, ah, concluded that, this



is the quote: “School shootings are this generation’s 9/11.” Ah, you found that young Americans found that school shootings are the most concerning issue when thinking about the future of America and that voting-age respondents are likely to carry these concerns into voting booths. How do you predict this particular issue impacting the race for the Democratic nomination?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: It’s already, I think, um; so that was a question; again, again, that, that’s an interesting because we didn’t ask what the number issue is today. We didn’t ask, um, what do you think of gun control, right, because, ah, that’s the way older people think about those issues. Ah, we ask a young person what, um, what we might not understand about your generation and they said the way in which you guys think about your taxes, your finances, your bills, that’s the we think about living and dying. Right? Ah, we come into an auditorium like this we’re seeing where the exits are in case God forbid there should be a shooter. Right? And, you see people nodding their heads across the room when we’re having –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – this conversation. If you’re an African American, ah, male, you know two-thirds know someone who’s been shot and it’s just a little bit less than that if you’re a female and, and, um, it is real when you talk to, ah, younger people. So, rather than asking about gun control, which we do, we ask about thinking about the future, what’s the number one issue? We had 17 different issues, 17 different issues, I think, everything from, you know, um, what older people think younger people care about which is, you know, marijuana or weed –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]



MR. DELLA VOLPE: You know, to the climate, to healthcare, to every single thing you can ask, um, privacy. School shootings number one, um, healthcare I think was number two, economy was three, um, so school shootings were number one. Not only was it number one when you think about the future of America, because if you can't be safe or you can't feel safe regardless of whether there's a chance or not if you don't feel safe you don't feel safe. Um, but when we looked at the younger people who were most likely to participate they were, ah, by far much more likely to cite school shootings, um, as a driver and there was a statistical correlation around that. So, that was kind of one way we got into that. But, I really, um, I learned a lot, I think, about our country after, after Parkland. And, and I think that was a, a, a major milestone and especially in, in kind of Gen Z generation because what those students said immediately is if you look back – I, I, I often look back at like the first Fox interview with young David Hogg when Laura Ingram at the end of this interview was asking him like what lunch table – she was literally asking him what lunch table the shooter used to sit at and was he sitting with this group or this group and he says listen, my message is that I need every single person who can hear me now, if you're not registered register to vote and you know we need to change this etcetera. She was talking about gossip and he was talking about inspiring people and that's what happened. Right? And, um, and, and a week or two later Emma Gonzalez had the famous, ah, quote which is "we call BS." And she didn't just call BS on gun manufacturers, she called BS on all of us who weren't doing more to, to fight for the things that we care about. And that, um, was incredibly inspirational and we could see where they held their marches. There was, ah, a report in the *New York Times* by Mike Tackett who saw the increase in levels of voter participation,



of voter registration and participation already having kind of an impact. So, I think kind of school shootings around empowering people felt that they could make a difference. That was one of the reasons that they voted. And, um, I think frankly, um, once you start voting early, you know, that's a great sign that you'll continue to vote. So, that's why I'm optimistic that the share of voters – not just the participation but the share increased in '18 and I think it will also increase in 2020 next year as well.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I, I'm curious, you've also done polling in, ah, of youth in other countries –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – namely Asia. Um, one of my students, Dana, wants to know, how did those millennials and young people compare with their counterparts in the United States?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Ah, it, it's a great question. So, it kind of depends upon where you go. I, I, I guess a couple of observations. Things that – I think there are, there are some things that I think kind of connect everybody one of which is conserve the climate, um, as a domestic policy concern and a leading foreign policy concern is something we see in this country but also in Asia especially in the countries that are most affected by climate – Indonesia, Vietnam, um, Japan, ah and other places. So, we see overall concern for climate from the East to the West. I think that's one thing. But the other thing that I was, ah, struck by is, is the, um, is when I, when I spent some time, ah, ah, in China, I was expecting to meet other students, ah, in colleges and, and expecting them to share with me in their own kind of private way kind of this, this yearning for like political speech and discourse and using their voice. And, in fact what I learned was that a



political voice was really, um, a luxury, um, and that it was far more important, in their view, to study, to, ah, to graduate at the top of their class, to get a job, ah, so you could afford an incredibly high cost of living in Beijing or almost anywhere in China because they not only had to pay for kind of, ah, to take care of themselves and their own, you know, um, situation but also their parents, two sets of grandparents being so many were members of a kind of a single family policy. So, the economic stress and anxiety that I think many people might feel today because of the burdens of, of student loans and, and, ah, income inequality and some of those things were certainly felt, ah, in China. Um, and those, so, I think, so there, those are the kind of similarities, I think the anxiety and the stress –

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – concerned about economics but also concerned about, ah, climate.

DR. HOFFMAN: Very interesting. Well, okay. So, I'm a bit of a polling nerd, um, and an academic. So, I'm going to put my professor hat on and I'm going to get a little academic here –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Are you going to grade me?

DR. HOFFMAN: – for a moment –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Ah, maybe.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: [Indiscernible.]

DR. HOFFMAN: We'll see.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yeah.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, Walter Lipman, who wrote a book in 1922 called



Public Opinion – is anyone, are any public opinion students in here? Do you remember reading Walter Lippmann? Yes, I see you.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, he said that there is the world outside and the pictures in our heads. When you measure young people's beliefs and attitudes are you really getting at public opinion or is it merely a reflection of what people think they see around them; that respondents are just referring to a secondhand version of what they believe to be true. In other words, can we really measure public opinion? This is my nerdy side coming out. I get it. But like, can we ever actually gauge public opinion?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Well, I think we can and I think the way I would try to measure that is, is to say, okay, um, a poll we conducted in, you know, released in April indicated that X percent say they're likely to vote and this is likely kind of where they're headed and six months from now – again, it's not predicted – but if six months from now that actually happens, okay, that is proof in some way that we are measuring opinion because people believe that they're going to vote – you know a third of the people said they were going to vote and a third of the people voted. Right? So, in that respect I think we can, can measure that one way, right? Another way is if we asked people what they care about and we're, you know, we're intelligent in the way we ask it and we try to draw out the, the unique aspects and put things into the right context, if we ask them and then if we're, ah, debating, ah, and we're creating communications to speak to those messages, if we're able to shift opinions from one side to the other side I think that's another indication that I would use as a practitioner not an academic that we're measuring public opinion properly and then, um, using communications



methods to influence in some way. And the job of a pollster I would always argue is to, is to really help focus people, is to often take words out of your mouth, you know, rather than put words kind of in your mouth. Right? Because there's a limited amount of time especially in the, in the news cycle that we have today you get 90 seconds to, to talk about all of the things that you care about. Um, so we need to be really careful that you're, you're, you're talking about the things that are most impactful to the people who you want to kind of communicate to. So, I would argue that there are plenty of, of examples that I can, um, measure, ah, and prove that we're measuring a public opinion.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Well, I could go down that –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: You disagree.

DR. HOFFMAN: I could go down –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: [Indiscernible.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – that wormhole in like many degrees but let's look ahead to the Democratic primary. I think this is what people are interested in. Here's a chart, ah, looking at education by, ah, Democratic candidate preference.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: So, first of all before we even get into that. What do you make of Warren going up 18 points since your Spring poll?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: So, so these results, um – just for kind of setting the context because things are moving quickly, okay – so these are the results that we released back on November 5th I think and this was a, a poll of 18 to 29-year-olds, 2,075 of them – which is a margin of error of, ah, ah, 3.1 percent – um, and we saw that, um, that ah, Elizabeth Warren had gone from four percent to 22 percent since the, ah, poll that we released in April and she was a strong second



position; 28, ah, from Sanders; 22 for Warren. So, um, and everyone else essentially stayed flat, um, or maybe kind of decreased a little bit. So that was the news and it reminded me of the way in which Bernie Sanders, his was more dramatic but in 2015 he was at two percent and by the Fall poll of '15 he was like at 44 percent. Right? So, not as dramatic but clearly kind of caught the, ah, attention of young people. Yeah, you know, and, and young people, um, certainly half of young people care about the things that she cares about, right, which is significant structural change to the way in which our democracy and economy operate. Um, she was very clear in, um, her, ah, ah, you know, her platform around those issues and did a brilliant job of, of, ah, of communicating the message. You can see that reflected in those results again on a national basis not on a national primary, but on a national basis. So yeah, we're going to pay attention to what she's doing around young people for sure.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, um, I'm going to ask, ah, my two, ah, Catchbox, um, attendees, ah we're going to do a question and answer with this microphone that we can pass around the audience, um, to get that Catchbox. But, in the meantime, I, I want to know what you think about the education, ah, levels playing a role in this? Like, why did you think this is an important chart to put out? Why does education level matter in terms of support for these different candidates?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: So, a good question. We put that out because that's what our students wanted to put out. That's what they were interested in. And, oh, we always give them that opportunity, um, not to say I wouldn't have put it out. But there's a couple of important things, right? So younger people, ah, in this cycle look a lot like older people which is that, ah, ah, Elizabeth Warren has a



significant advantage among young, um, students who are in college and young people who are, um, have a college degree. Right?

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yes, she does. I can't read that. Ah, and, ah, Joe Biden, I believe, um, has, ah –

DR. HOFFMAN: Delaware's own.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – has – Delaware's own – is doing less well on college campuses and better with those, ah –

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – without a four-year degree as he is in the national polling. So, this is a reflection. Sometimes it's a reflection and sometimes it is not. So that's one of the reasons we do that. The other reason and, um – I'm not sure if you have this chart – but we also had another interesting one with race. So, again, the way in which I'm thinking about this is we're seeing other candidates – um, you know, competing in Iowa, you know, in the early states – I'm thinking, okay, if Andrew Yang or Kamala Harris or Pete Buttigieg are going to, are going to increase their share of the electorate, you know, how are they going to kind of get there, right? And, what we found, you know, a lot of people talking about, about Buttigieg and he shares, he's got, he shares, ah, the, the college educated cohort with Warren. Okay? He also shares the kind of a center moderate lane with Biden. Right? So, there are two opportunities when you look at kind of his – even though his numbers are relatively very low in this national polling, but we can still see a little bit of overlap into those two constituencies. So, that's a kind of another reason that I think those kinds of, of numbers are important. And also, to remind people that not all young people are in college. Right? Um, we think



about 18 to 29-year olds, well, there are more 18 to 29-year olds not in college than in college –

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – and many more who are working, in community colleges, and those sorts of things. So, that’s just another helpful reminder.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right. Well, before we get to Q and A, who do you think is going to be the contender?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um, who’s going to be the contender? I think that –

AUDIENCE: [Chuckling.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Pause –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: No, I’m going to –

DR. HOFFMAN: – for a drink –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – I’m going to say –

DR. HOFFMAN: – of water.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – this is what I’m –

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – thinking about, all right, that, um, I think that the party from a youth’s perspective and in, a, a non-youth perspective is closer to the center left than the far left. That, um, a couple of different; there’s plenty of examples I could offer on that, right? In particular, in this last poll that we did; even among young people there’s essentially a split, um, between roughly, roughly the same number of people think we ought to have like reform or pragmatic reform than like progressive revolution. It’s about split.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.



MR. DELLA VOLPE: And, among Democrats it's a little bit more for like the progressive elements and a little bit less for pragmatism but its much closer than I would have thought. Right? So, um, there seems to be two strong candidates right now on the progressive flank, um, Sanders and Warren. There are two other candidates who are not fully developed yet on the, on the pragmatic side, you know, Biden, Buttigieg, I think, you know, Klobuchar, I think, you know, and we've got some new contestants as well. Duval Patrick I still think will play a significant role in this. So, I think at the end of the day it's going to be someone from the pragmatic kind of center area, um, rather than Warren or Sanders although their vote is very strong. And, what's interesting I think is if you look late in this process, in April, you know, um, there are a lot of states, you know, kind of in this neck of the woods who would be voting in late April and those are, those are states, um, where, um, Delaware's own Joe Biden, right, has a, I think, a, a, an advantage and a stronghold. So, I think it's going to be someone from that lane; it could be him, it could be Buttigieg. I put my money on one of those two compared to the other two.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, when you ask about, and I, I keep interrupting – I'm like so geeking out on polls right now – but when you ask about pragmatic versus progressive approaches do you know –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – do you talk to the respondents about what do they know what the, that means?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um, yes and no. So, what we said was, in this particular; this is; what we did we, we start every semester with a bunch of white boards around the room. We have 25 undergraduates and we essentially have them,



um, start with like all of the questions that they have, and they want to know.

And then we try to organize them, etcetera. And one of the themes was this: is our generation; like how progressive are we?

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um, so, the question; and it was a, a, a bipartisan effort and they essentially wrote a question which is like which statement is closest to your own view? Right? I don't remember all of the language but its essentially: I prefer policies that stand a good chance of, um, of happening even though they may fall short in some ways, or, I prefer policies that are, represent a big strategic, um, big significant reform, ah, structural reform even if they might take a long time.

DR. HOFFMAN: Hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Okay? So, that's like the, my, my shorthand is [indiscernible] –

DR. HOFFMAN: So, it's kind of immediate action versus long-term?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: That was the choice, okay? But when we looked at those who preferred the immediate action, okay, you have pluralities, um, who support, you know, dismantling the electoral college –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – okay; significant numbers who support banning assault weapons and significant numbers who support even, ah, you know, ah, um, dismantling, um, the health insurance system for Medicare for all. I mean, so, the definition of pragmatism for this generation they may not be as pragmatic as other generations.

DR. HOFFMAN: Interesting. Okay. All right. Well, let's open it up to



questions. Ah, where; I think Justin has the Catchbox. So, what you need to do is just raise your hand and we will, you know, throw a box at you, [laughter] –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – and, you can ask your question into the box and throw it back to one of our teaching assistants. Do we have a question from the audience? You can do it, Justin.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

Q: John, thanks for coming.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Thanks for having me.

Q: I have a question about the difference between, ah, political polling and corporate, um, PR agency polling. So, if you're talking about sentiment, what do you think is the main difference between the skillset, the, um, the interest, and the analysis between say Edelman's Trust Barometer and, um, what any politician would be doing in internal polling or what you're doing at a, you know, a, a public policy institute? Because it seems like, like when Obama was elected people freaked out, they couldn't understand what was happening, like this, you know, they're just understanding trend, ah, behavioral trends. You know, Google's been doing that for 10 years before that. I don't know why people couldn't figure out, you know, if you're looking at Netflix, if you like this movie you'll probably like this. People couldn't figure out those things. Curious your point of view on that.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: So, um –

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.



MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yeah, so there are, um, I guess two, two or three, two or three different, um, ah, points there. So, I think the big, the big difference between – so, you mentioned the, you said Edelman, ah, Trust Barometer, right? So, what that is, is a, kind of a barometer, is it, I don't know if it's, remember if it's a 0 to 100 scale but its essentially kind of how trust-worthy are these institutions and these companies.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um, and they use it for their own public relations so they can use it to, to report to the media that we understand the attributes that are responsible for, ah, generating and garnering more trust within certain things. And they can work with organizations. Um, a lot of the polls that you see on social media that are sponsored by a bank, you know, or some other company are designed for public relations purposes only and I would, um, be, ah, I'd be wary of how you, um, how you, how you use those, right? And it's, it's the easiest thing to do to generate press often times is to have a, have a, have a poll and have people talk about it, right? So, so polling for PR purposes, um, is kind of, is one thing and that's pretty accessible now; it doesn't cost a lot of money to do polls like that. You can do a national poll using Google or Survey Monkey for a thousand dollars or a couple of thousand dollars and create a conversation on Twitter. Um, that's one thing. Um, um, candidate polling is, is a second kind of polling and that is where you try to kind of game out, ah, an election. Right? So, we might start with, with, you know, are you, how likely are you to vote; who are you going to vote for; if I told you five things about this campaign how likely would you be to vote, support this campaign, yes or no. Um, and the same thing on the opposition. So, a campaign can understand what their strengths are, what their



weaknesses are, and they can spend their money in the appropriate way or even decide whether to run or not to run. That's an important part, um, of, ah, of survey research. Um, that's the second part. And the third part is really kind of a, a, a blend of what I think we would do which is blending an academic and a, ah, a, a kind of practical political methodology. So, we do understand a lot about the values and the issues and the arguments that are moving, ah, candidate, ah, people between candidates. Um, but we're also using it, we're also doing it in a much larger, more rigorous kind of environment over time so we can kind of add value to the overall kind of academy. It's important that we, I think, we ask questions that are relevant to the media because the objective of the survey at the very, very beginning of this was to give voice to young people so candidates, parties, you know, um, other organizations can kind of relate better to them so they can encourage them to vote and to participate. So, all of those polls have different kind of strategic purposes but, um, um, those are among the three most popular kinds. Thank you.

DR. HOFFMAN: All right, let's take another question.

Q: Is there an organization or anything that we could look at that rates polls to give you an idea that, of what we, you know, I guess rates them as –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yeah, um—

Q: – credible?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – that's a great question. So, um, so there's an organization that, um, pollsters like myself belong to, it's called AAPOR –

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – the American Association of Public Opinion Researchers



(sic). So, again, a little nerdy but, um, it's really helpful if you [indiscernible] –

DR. HOFFMAN: I'm a member.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Right?

DR. HOFFMAN: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Ah, we're members, right?

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um, but, um, it's particularly helpful to get the kind of the basic understanding of how to interpret a media poll. And, what it will offer is, um, it will give you some guidelines in terms of what's important, in terms of transparency. Um, and for example, you need to release the entire questionnaire; you know, you need to talk about the methodology,; who paid for it; etcetera, etcetera. So that's a, that's one place to just to understand that aspect of the kinds of questions that you should ask. It's often a good tool for reporters. I find that not a lot of reporters understand even what questions to ask before they report on polls. That's one. Um, you know, ah, again, I think, I think that Real Clear Average (sic) is a good, is a good poll. You can look at who the outliers are. Um, you can dig deeper into that data, you can click on that and see the, ah, top lines in the crosstabs. You know, Nate Silver, you know, grades pollsters with some sort of A through whatever average, um, and I think that's [indiscernible], I think it's very misleading because he is rating only on one element which is, you know, do they get within a point or two points of calling an election properly within a couple of weeks. That's an incredibly important part of, of polling to get that right but, um, I'd rather spend my time, which I often do, looking at Pew Research which not only, it's not going to do a lot of horse race but it's going to talk about the values on religion and race and technology and



those sorts of things. It'll share all of our data. So, the answer is yes, you can go to Nate Silver if you want to see who the best election pollsters are. You can go to AAPOR if you want to see kind of what the guidelines of our industry are. Um, or you can find, um, you know, through Real Clear you can kind of play around yourself and see which ones seem to be more consistent over time on a state or a national basis.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I think something that you pointed out earlier today is look for the outlier.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yes.

DR. HOFFMAN: If there's a polling firm that is totally different from what everybody else has found, like, pay attention to that.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: They could be right but pay attention. Right? They could be right because there is a herding affect.

DR. HOFFMAN: Um-hum.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: There is a herding affect, right, because we can, we can, um, manipulate polls, um, based upon, oh, you know, ah, we're expecting, you know, in Iowa, okay, we're expecting, you know, two polls, three polls in a row I have Buttigieg leading. Well, if the poll has Warren leading again, hum, maybe we have, you know, ah, too many of this group, or too many of that group. We could change the weights, so it looks like the other ones. Right?

DR. HOFFMAN: Wow.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: So herding affect is a problem in polling.

DR. HOFFMAN: Wow.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: So, sometimes an outlier is right. So, don't just discount the outlier just because they are an outlier.



DR. HOFFMAN: Wow.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Okay? So, because sometimes, you know, electorates change.

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, and I think a point you made earlier today when we were talking is that polling is both a, an art and a science and there isn't really any [chuckle] one method for doing it. I think it's important to be skeptical of them –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – but also to not discount them entirely. I think that that's –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yeah, and, and use them as they are designed. To again, understand what's happening and then try to like challenge yourself to understand kind of why it's happening. But there is no book, um, I guess, you know, that, I don't know what the right answer is in terms of Michigan. You know, what percent of polls should be conducted on landline versus cell phone. No one has that information. No one knows who is going to show up in Michigan, you know? Do we call off a, a registered voter file? Do we call off a – which is fine once you get people who already registered – or we might miss younger people, right? Or, do we call off a different sample and ask people are they going to register. And so, there are so many questions that kind of go in to the, that's, that's both art as well as science. So –

DR. HOFFMAN: Right.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – and every pollster has a different point of view on that and, um, again –

DR. HOFFMAN: Well, I mean –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – it takes investment.



DR. HOFFMAN: – in the history of this democracy we’ve only had about a hundred years of public opinion polling, um, so, it’s, it’s still very new, um, given the experience of this democracy. Okay. All right, let’s take another question? Charlotte has the box. Who has got a question?

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Oh, my good – is that –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

Q: Hey John.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Hello, Greg.

Q: Long time, no see.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: It’s good to see you.

Q: So, when I was young, ah, Watergate was on TV. There was three major networks, strong newspapers, and the American public got a consistent narrative as to the fact pattern and, ah, it moved people’s perceptions as to what was happening and their name in the White House and whether or not a President should be held accountable for, ah, making false statements. Forty, fifty years later, ah, young people are watching Watergate-like hearings again on impeachment and the information environment is completely different. Ah, you don’t have three major TV networks wall-to-wall coverage. We have a vulcanized information ecosystem. And, and I’m interested if you could probably tell the audience a little bit on, um, what your polling has shown over these last 20 years on where they’re getting, where young people are getting their information and how it impacts their perceptions and opinions because, ah, silent generation folks are getting their information from probably broadcast news and cable, ah –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Right.



Q: – baby boomers are, ah, ah, grazing in between traditional media and, and digital media, and millennials and Generation Z folk are probably getting a lot of information just from their phone. So, I was wondering if you could touch on that a little bit because, ah, 50 years ago people got motivated to get involved in government service after Watergate, trust was very high in the media and in government, and now both are very low. Low trust in media and low trust in government.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Yes, and, um, I think you're absolutely right –

DR. HOFFMAN: Thank you.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – Greg. It's great to see you. And, um, and one of the reasons that I am confident that opinions haven't changed from like progressive to conservative because, ah, media patterns keep us in these silos where we're being reinforced with the same information. So, where, where, where, um, if you're conservative you're seeing typically reinforced with those points of view; if you're a liberal or progressive similar sorts of things which is around, um, the, the silos I think in, in media. But, um, yes, young, and that's a big part of the stress is and what the challenge, I think, is for young people I hear is to make sense of it all and to be able to recognize what is spin, what's propaganda, which is real news, which is opinion, which is analysis and it's really challenging. And so, to go back to an issue that I know we both care about is like civics education, honestly, right? There's just a lack of, of critical thinking in civics education in, in, in grade schools and in high schools and, and young people like aren't prepared to deal with this onslaught of, of 24/7 information. And again, we asked 3,000 people in the Spring survey, um, a variety, 12 different emotions and, ah, and we had more people say they had stress than joy in the day before they took the



survey. And, among those who looked at the phone, um, for political news it was off, off the charts. It doesn't matter if you're Democrat or Republican, the, the connection you have to the phone, not just generally but on, on political, ah, information is a key predictor of stress and overall makes all of us less healthy, not just our democracy but physically less healthy, right? So, figuring this news out is so important. I mentioned to some students earlier, one of my favorite things to do is on a day like this where you've got such important breaking news I always turn on the other channel, right, and I, I don't know but, um, um, you know, um, typically, you know, you've got completely different perspectives, right? You have, like, on Fox it would not be a surprise if they're talking about the messy streets in San Francisco and the homeless problem, right, um, or, something happened in South America. On MSNBC they'll be talking about the opposite thing even when we might have great job numbers, right? So, they're completely different narratives and I think we should all, um, do the best we can to at least, nothing's perfect but at least try to get different perspectives to understand our neighbors and our family better if nothing else.

Q: [Indiscernible] Thanksgiving.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Exactly. It's a good time to –

DR. HOFFMAN: It's –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: – a good time to [chuckle] start talking politics, huh?

DR. HOFFMAN: We talked about that earlier, how Thanksgiving is a good time to –

MR. DELLA VOLPE: [Chuckle.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – to do this. Well, you know, ah, if you don't mind I'm going to end a little bit early just because we have a Democratic debate to watch



but I know a lot of people have asked “can we end a little bit early so we can watch this?” So, I’m going to skip ahead to my, ah, political Doc Hoff Quick Take. Um, and tonight I’m going to end with the message that I gave my students this week, um, on our last class meeting before our end of the semester projects. So, this is Fred Rogers. On May 1st of 1969 Fred Rogers stepped before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on communication. Nixon, President Nixon had proposed slashing funding for public television programming as the Vietnam War had heated up. He sat in front of Senator John O. Pastore, the chairman of the subcommittee, after the senator had widely disparaged such programming and seemed certain to approve the cut. Mr. Rogers, in a suit and tie, not his signature cardigan, quietly made his case. He said, “I give an expression of care every day to each child to help him or her realize that he or she is unique. I end the program by saying you’ve made this day a special day by just your being you. There’s no person in the whole world like you and I like you just the way you are. I feel like if we in public television can only make it clear that feelings are mentionable and manageable we will have done a great service for mental health.” Then he asked the senator, “could I tell you the words of one of the songs which I feel is very important? This has to do with that good feeling of control which I feel that children need to know is there and it starts out: “What do you do with the mad that you feel?” He then recited its words: “What do you do with the made that you feel when you feel so mad you could bite? When the whole side world seems oh so wrong and nothing you do seems very right? What do you do? Do you punch a bag? Do you pound some clay or dough? Do you round up friends for a game of tag or see how fast you go? It’s great to be able to stop when you’ve planned these things that, planned the



thing that's wrong and be able to do something instead and think this song. I can stop when I want to, can stop when I wish, can stop, stop, stop anytime and what a good feeling to feel like this and know that the feeling is really mine, know that there's something deep inside that helps me become what we can. For a girl can someday be a lady and a boy can someday be a man."

Pastore had said, "I'm supposed to be a pretty tough guy, and this is the first time I've had goosebumps for the last two days." He said, "it looks like you just earned the 20 million dollars." Sometimes its that simple, folks. A kind expression, an acknowledgement of another's feelings. I believe Mr. Rogers words are not just for children. Ah, he was a very big influence on me as a child, but I think that they are essential words for all of us. So, I end tonight in this series with some of his words that have impacted me in my own life. I have this mug which is Mr. Rogers. When you pour hot coffee into it or any hot liquid he changes from his suit to a cardigan –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – which is pretty

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: – awesome.

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Um-hum.

DR. HOFFMAN: But it has a number of sayings on this mug that really are meaningful to me so I'm going to end this, this year, this series with some inspiring words that I hope you will take with you to know that you can make a difference in this world and you can impact other people. "You, I'm looking at all of you, you are a very special person. There is only one like you in the whole world. There has never been anyone exactly like you before and there never will



be again. Only you and people can like you exactly as you are.” So, you can make change – you and you and you – just by being who you are. And, I look forward to seeing you here again in 2020. Ah, I do have some announcements before I wrap up but thank you for listening to my diatribe about my love for Mr. Rogers.

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: Um, I wanted to remind you that, ah, we have our Speak Up! audio essay contest where you can tell your story about your own perceptions, your own experiences in this democracy. There are cash prizes. Check out: cpc.udel.edu for more information. Keep an eye out for our students conducting Free Intelligent Conversations. You can see these folks up on the screen. Ah, we are now, this is now part of a registered student organization called Let, Let, Let’s Talk and it’s been so popular among my students that I’d like to bring it back for next year’s series which, drumroll –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.] [Applause.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – thank you, [chuckle] – I can always count on my students –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – will be about the Presidential Election. [Laughter.]

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.] [Cheering.]

DR. HOFFMAN: So, please join us next year for a, for Delaware Debates, for more speakers –

AUDIENCE: [Laughter.]

DR. HOFFMAN: – and for a place to watch the election returns on election night. We like to offer a place for students to watch those. So, ah, I have to say



that's a wrap. Um, please visit cpc.udel.edu to view all of our programs. Don't forget to check out our podcast which features these talks as well as other conversations with faculty at UD giving perspectives on issues of the day. Ah, you might have followed the impeachment inquiry today. Maybe you're watching the Democratic debates tonight. Our podcasts are designed to distill those issues for you and make sense of all that's going on. So, please, thank me (sic) in giving an early thank you, so we can go watch the debates, to John Della Volpe.

AUDIENCE: [Applause.]

MR. DELLA VOLPE: Thank you.

AUDIENCE: [Cheering.]

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