



UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE  
*Making a World of Difference*

# CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

 @UILCIANDE  
**2019 • STATE**



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**Mayor Jackie Biskupski speaks at the Women's March on Utah at the capitol in Salt Lake City, Jan. 19, 2019. ■ In Washington, D.C., the Associated Press put the attendance at the march at around 100,000. The original march in 2017, the day after Trump's inauguration, flooded the city with pink-hatted protesters. The exact size of the turnout remains subject to a politically charged debate, but it's generally regarded as the largest Washington protest since the Vietnam era. This year was a more modest affair for multiple reasons.**

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# **CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS**

## **STATE • 2019**

1. **A local elected official said fires that consumed three historically black churches in 10 days are believed to have been intentionally set. Where were these churches?**
  - a. Charlotte, North Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Warrentonville, South Carolina
  - b. Charleston, South Carolina
  - c. near Jasper, Texas
  - d. St. Landry Parish, Louisiana
2. **By Dec. 27, Republican leaders had given up hope of reopening the government before the new year. What was the sticking point?**
  - a. anticorruption legislation
  - b. voting rights legislation
  - c. funding for a “wall” between the U.S. and Mexico
  - d. U.S. military forces in Syria
3. **House Bill 3 was yet another attempt at reforming pieces of the Texas educational system. Which of the following was NOT contained in the legislation?**
  - a. an increase in base funding for each student by \$890
  - b. funding for full-day pre-K for low-income 4-year-olds in most school districts
  - c. an across-the-board teacher pay raise of \$5,000 with additional funds each district can allocate based on merit, up to \$1,388 per teacher
  - d. compression of tax rates for all districts and a reduction of the amount of money wealthier districts pay the state in recapture payments to shore up poorer districts
4. **In November, special counsel Robert Mueller accused him of lying to federal officials. He was convicted in August of financial crimes stemming from his work as a political consultant in Ukraine and sentenced to 47 months in prison, the longest to date for a Trump associate ensnared in the special counsel’s investigation. Who?**
  - a. Michael Cohen
  - b. Paul Manafort
  - c. George Papadopoulos
  - d. Michael Flynn
5. **The NRA is suing Pittsburgh, following the Tree of Life synagogue massacre in 2018, for attempting to ban what?**
  - a. the purchase or ownership of assault-style weapons
  - b. the possession of any semi-automatic weapon or bump stock
  - c. the use of assault-style weapons
  - d. bump stocks similar to the 73,000 destroyed in Texas
6. **With 50.2 million likes, what became the most liked Instagram post on Jan. 4, 2019?**
  - a. Cristiano Ronaldo’s photo of himself, @cristiano
  - b. Justin Bieber’s kiss with Selena Gomez, @justinbieber
  - c. a photo of an egg, @world\_record\_egg
  - d. Kylie Jenner’s first photo of her daughter, @kyliejenner

- 7. What is a unimoon?**
- a single-piece suit worn at night — under the moon
  - a rising K-pop star who has sold 19 million albums and counting
  - a honeymoon without the new spouse
  - a celestial event that only occurs once per century involving a full moon on the same day as the winter solstice
- 8. Which of the following people has NOT served as the White House chief of staff during Donald Trump's administration?**
- Reince Priebus
  - John F. Kelly
  - Mick Mulvaney
  - Nick Ayers
- 9. He was San Antonio's youngest city councilman in 2001 and later served as mayor, winning re-election in 2011 and 2013. He worked as secretary for Housing and Urban Development. He supports a free press and universal health care and believes in climate change. In January, Julián Castro took what he hopes is the next step in his career. What?**
- He announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for president.
  - He formed a private, non-profit organization to build a wall at the Texas-Mexico border so taxpayers wouldn't have to pay.
  - He joined the faculty at San Antonio College as a professor of Spanish and the Spanish heritage.
  - He became commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.
- 10. Rising temperatures in the world's oceans will change the mixture of phytoplankton which absorb and reflect light. With less of these phytoplankton, what will happen to the world's oceans according to an MIT study?**
- They will be less salty.
  - Life based on silicon will evolve in deep pockets without oxygen.
  - They will be less able to support carnivorous life.
  - They will be more blue or more green.
- 11. A fierce critic of past presidents and a person who favors technology, not traditional media, Nayib Armando Bukele Ortiz was elected president of what country by citizens who were dissatisfied with the country's traditional political parties?**
- Venezuela
  - Guatemala
  - El Salvador
  - Honduras
- 12. Although it failed and crashed, a spacecraft, Beresheet, blasted off to the moon in an attempt to make what country's first lunar landing?**
- Indonesia
  - China
  - Russia
  - Israel

- 13. The hole is big enough to have contained 14 billion tons of ice, and most of that ice melted over the last three years. The hole is gigantic, two-thirds the area of Manhattan, and almost 1,000 feet tall. Where is it?**
- ice cap on the island of Nordaustlandet, in Norway's Svalbard archipelago
  - the bottom of the Thwaites Glacier in West Antarctica
  - Sperry Glacier in Glacier National Park, Montana
  - Garhwal Himalaya in India
- 14. The U.S. government's public debt is the highest it has ever been. Given that the U.S. population is about 330 million, how much debt is there for each person?**
- about \$67,000
  - about \$6,700
  - about \$67 million
  - about \$6.70
- 15. The college admissions scheme was the largest of its kind ever prosecuted. Some 50 people were charged in the case, at least initially. Members of which group were NOT taken into custody in March?**
- SAT/ACT administrators and exam proctors
  - students
  - nine coaches
  - parents
- 16. A derivative of the recreational drug ketamine has been approved as a nasal spray in the U.S. for people with what?**
- need for a fast-acting anesthetic
  - opioid addiction
  - confusion or hallucinations
  - severe depression
- 17. After 200 hours of testimony from 56 witnesses, El Chapo was found guilty of what?**
- engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise and distribution of cocaine, heroin and other drugs
  - assault of two women, Meredith Watson and Vanessa Tyson
  - making false statements to the FBI
  - financial crimes including subscribing to false income tax returns, failing to report foreign accounts and bank fraud
- 18. For nearly two decades at the Grand Canyon in Arizona, tourists, employees, and children on tours passed by three paint buckets stored in the national park's museum. What did they contain?**
- evidence of an asteroid striking the earth
  - radioactive uranium ore
  - the oldest known fossils of a mammal unearthed in 2000
  - bones of a relative to Lucy, about 3.2 million years old
- 19. In a proposal that would require a constitutional amendment, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and House Speaker Dennis Bonnen, in April, endorsed a proposal to raise the state sales tax by how much?**
- from 8.25% to 9.25%
  - from 6.25% to 7.25%
  - to a maximum of 2.5%
  - by 0.5% to fund education

- 20. Less than a week after Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam and Attorney General Mark Herring said they wore blackface decades ago, Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax came under intense pressure to resign or face impeachment. Why?**
- Fairfax also wore blackface as a college student.
  - According to the FBI, Fairfax gave top secret information about the Democrats to the Russians during the 2016 campaign.
  - Two women made allegations that Fairfax sexually assaulted them.
  - He hired two men to attack him yelling racist, homophobic and pro-Trump language.
- 21. Although doctors said the cure might be worse than the disease which is generally manageable now, a second patient was cured using stem-cell surgery of what disease?**
- lung cancer
  - pancreatic cancer
  - HIV
  - ebola
- 22. Amazon (AMZN) posted \$11.2 billion in profits in 2018. Due to a new Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, how much will Amazon pay in federal taxes according to corporate filings?**
- none or about \$0
  - 21 percent or about \$2.4 billion, the new corporate tax rate
  - 35 percent or about \$3.92 billion
  - 55 percent or about \$6.16 billion
- 23. Two Sacramento police officers shot and killed an unarmed black man, Stephon Clark, in his grandmother's backyard last year. What charges did the officers face?**
- federal hate crime charges
  - voluntary manslaughter
  - second-degree murder
  - none
- 24. Ohio became the sixth state to pass such a law earlier this month. It was the third state to pass such a law this year alone. At what point in the development of the fetus did such legislation prohibit abortion?**
- after six weeks of pregnancy
  - when a heartbeat can be detected
  - until viability, usually at 22 to 24 weeks
  - only in cases of rape or incest
- 25. Not one has been seen since 2009. And in February, it was officially recognized by Australia as eradicated, the first mammal to have been made extinct by man-made climate change. What kind of animal?**
- Bramble Cay melomys, a rodent
  - Black leopard, a large cat
  - Ocelot, a small, wild cat
  - Florida manatee, a "sea cow"
- 26. For the second year in a row, what honor did Finland take?**
- It became part of the European Union.
  - It was named the world's happiest country.
  - It contributed the least to global climate change of all the industrialized nations.
  - Its citizens had the longest life expectancy, 84.46 years.

- 27. Congressman Devin Nunes has filed a \$250 million lawsuit against Twitter and against one account, an account with more than 600,000 followers, for defaming him. Who is supposedly behind the Twitter account?**
- his cow (@DevinCow)
  - his wife Elizabeth (@ENunes)
  - former political opponent and Fresno Mayor Jim Patterson (@NoToNunes)
  - Jared Polis (D-Colorado), co-chair of U.S.-Mexico Friendship Caucus (@NotFriendsToMexico)
- 28. Disney completed its \$71 billion acquisition of what company?**
- Comcast
  - Viacom
  - Alphabet
  - 21st Century Fox
- 29. Which former Texas congressman reportedly raised more than \$6 million within 24 hours after announcing his bid for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination?**
- DeDe Alexander
  - Beto O'Rourke
  - Ted Cruz
  - Julian Castro
- 30. Which states most recently joined 11 other states in passing a law that said it would award all of its electoral college votes to whichever presidential candidate wins the national popular vote as part of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact?**
- Delaware and New Mexico
  - Texas and Montana
  - Maine and Nebraska
  - Maryland and New Jersey
- 31. Although it costs an average of \$34,000 per patient and requires a 60-hour stay in a medical facility, the FDA approved the first drug to treat what?**
- HIV
  - postpartum depression
  - breast cancer
  - attention deficit disorder
- 32. When Robert Mueller submitted his report, the U.S. attorney general's summary said the investigation did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities. However, the attorney general said the report drew no conclusions about what?**
- whether Russian government officials themselves interfered in election activities
  - whether Trump and members of his family acted as agents of a foreign government and lied to the FBI
  - whether Trump himself authorized the leak of hacked emails from the Hillary Clinton campaign to WikiLeaks
  - whether Trump illegally obstructed justice
- 33. The maker of the opioid OxyContin, Purdue Pharma, agreed to a \$270 million settlement with which state as part of the first of a torrent of lawsuits?**
- Oklahoma
  - Texas
  - Mississippi
  - New York



- 34. Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and his lieutenants have struggled to pass Senate Bill 2, a sweeping reform measure that would require cities, counties and school districts to seek voter approval for any tax levy increases of more than 2.5 percent in a given year, not including new growth. What did Patrick threaten to do to get the bill to the floor?**
- a. bypass the Calendar Committee that traditionally has control over all legislation that reaches the floor
  - b. use the “nuclear option” and override the 60-vote rule to close debate, by a simple majority of 51 votes, rather than the two-thirds supermajority normally required
  - c. ignore the “blocker bill” and allow the bill to the floor with a simple majority, not three-fifths
  - d. take the vote straight to the citizens of Texas bypassing the legislature entirely; “The public doesn’t care about our procedural rules. They want tax relief and they deserve it.”
- 35. The election victory for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continues a long-winning streak for Israel’s right wing. Netanyahu promised that he would annex illegal Jewish settlements that were where?**
- a. East Jerusalem
  - b. Golan Heights
  - c. Gaza Strip
  - d. West Bank
- 36. Demonstrators have demanded an immediate move to civilian rule. Long-time leader Omar al-Bashir was removed in a military coup. And Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman Burhan dissolved all provincial governments and pledged respect for human rights during a two-year transition period after the coup. Where?**
- a. Venezuela
  - b. Sudan
  - c. Gabon
  - d. Yemen
- 37. U.S. President Donald Trump’s attorney, Michael Cohen, pleaded guilty to lying to Congress about the dates of Trump’s efforts to build a skyscraper in what city?**
- a. Moscow, Russia
  - b. Washington, D.C.
  - c. Panama City, Panama
  - d. Havana, Cuba
- 38. For decades, public health experts have warned that the overuse of antibiotics was reducing the effectiveness of drugs. More recently, there has been an explosion of resistant fungi, including which fungus that preys on people with a weakened immune system, a fungus labeled by the Centers for Disease Control as a “serious global health threat”?**
- a. *Clostridioides difficile* (“C. diff”)
  - b. *Escherichia coli*
  - c. *Measles morbillivirus*
  - d. *Candida auris*

- 39. Socialist leader Nicolás Maduro said he would give U.S. diplomatic personnel 72 hours to leave Venezuela in late January. Why?**
- Maduro said the U.S. wasn't helping his country, which was suffering from a hyperinflationary economic crisis.
  - With the government shutdown, embassy officials could not pay for anything in Venezuela.
  - The U.S. recognized opposition leader Juan Guaidó as the interim president.
  - State Department officials disclosed that Russia gave the Maduro regime two bombers that could carry nuclear weapons to the United States.
- 40. The parents of a 13-year-old Wichita Falls girl shot and killed while walking home from school in 2016 are urging lawmakers in Austin to pass Lauren's Law. What is Lauren's Law, Texas House Bill 261?**
- Now, adults can face the death penalty or life in prison without parole if they kill a child younger than 10 years old. Lauren's Law would change that to any child under 15 years old.
  - A law that will require school districts to teach students about consent and how to recognize and prevent relationship violence, including physical and emotional relationship abuse.
  - Legislation that would hold law-abiding gun owners liable for any felonious criminal action taken by others with their firearms.
  - Called the Cupcake Amendment, it is legislation that requires school districts to allow parents or grandparents to bring any food they like to school for a child's birthday celebration or to a school-designated function.

### ESSAY PROMPT

NOTE: *Contestants who do not write an essay will be disqualified.* Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and demonstrates a sincere effort to discuss the assigned topic. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, social and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.

**The year 1992 might have been the first to get the label “Year of the Woman” after the election of a number of female senators and the hotly contested Senate confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas when Anita Hill raised concern about the dominance of men in the Senate. However, when historians look back, they’ll unquestionably view the academic year 2018-2019 as a year of the woman as well.**

**Using substantial, relevant information and varying national and international perspectives (political, social, cultural, economic) with at least three specific examples, analyze the idea that 2018-2019 was another “Year of the Woman.”**



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# ANSWER KEY

## ESSAY PROMPT

The year 1992 might have been the first to get the label “Year of the Woman” after the election of a number of female senators and the hotly contested Senate confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas when Anita Hill raised concern about the dominance of men in the Senate. However, when historians look back, they’ll unquestionably view the academic year 2018-2019 as a year of the woman as well.

Using substantial, relevant information and varying national and international perspectives (political, social, cultural, economic) with at least three specific examples, analyze the idea that 2018-2019 was another “Year of the Woman.”

## POTENTIAL DISCUSSION POINTS

might include, but should not be limited to...

- |       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 1. D  | 21. C |
| 2. C  | 22. A |
| 3. C  | 23. D |
| 4. B  | 24. B |
| 5. C  | 25. A |
| 6. C  | 26. B |
| 7. C  | 27. A |
| 8. D  | 28. D |
| 9. A  | 29. B |
| 10. D | 30. A |
| 11. C | 31. B |
| 12. D | 32. D |
| 13. B | 33. A |
| 14. A | 34. C |
| 15. B | 35. D |
| 16. D | 36. B |
| 17. A | 37. A |
| 18. B | 38. D |
| 19. B | 39. C |
| 20. C | 40. A |

- *Local politics.* Chicago became the largest American city to elect a black woman as its mayor as voters chose Lori Lightfoot, a former prosecutor, to replace Rahm Emanuel. As of February 2019, per the U.S. Conference of Mayors, of the 1,412 mayors of U.S. cities with populations of more than 30,000, 295, or 20.9 percent, were women.
- *Elected to congress.* In 1971, 3 percent of those elected to the U.S. Congress were female. In 2018, 20.6 percent of people elected to Congress were female and more than one-fourth of state legislatures were female.
  - 117 women were elected or appointed to Congress.
  - 102 women were elected to the House.
  - 15 women were elected or appointed to the Senate.
  - 36 women are new members.
- *Around the world.* Worldwide, women lead some 26 countries as elected heads of state, including Germany, Bangladesh and Lithuania. Angela Merkel, for example, has been described as the de facto leader of the European Union, the most powerful woman in the world, and as the leader of the Free World. Merkel announced in December that she would not seek reelection as her party’s leader nor would she continue as chancellor after 2021. She was the country’s first female chancellor.
- *Brexit.* Serving as Britain’s prime minister, Theresa May, has been thrust into leading Britain’s efforts to leave the European Union. She has not been able to get parliament to agree on a plan but has gotten the EU to extend the deadline until Oct. 31. There will be a concerted attempt by her own party to force her to resign if a deal can’t be reached.
- *Slovakia.* Voters, many appalled by corruption and mainstream politics, elected Zuzana Caputova as president of Slovakia, the country’s first female president. She became known for leading a successful fight against a toxic waste dump in her hometown of Pezinok, for which she received the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2016.
- *Referees.* Sarah Thomas was the first female official to work in NFL postseason history. It was only last summer when two black women became the first time two women to officiate an NBA game together. The NBA got its first female referee in 1997. And last fall, the NBA promoted five referees to full-time status, including the fourth and fifth women in league history to achieve full-time status.
- *Space.* NASA astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch were set to make history on March 29 as the first all-female crew to perform a spacewalk at the International Space Station. NASA said the spacewalk was delayed, “due in part to spacesuit availability.”
- *National guard.* Since last fall, Maryland is the only one of the 54 state guards where women make up the entire leadership team — including the two-star general who leads the Maryland Guard, a pair of one-star generals in command of ground and air troops and the senior enlisted non-commissioned officer.
- *Climate change.* Greta Thunberg, 16, hasn’t graduated high school, but she’s already a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize. The Swedish activist is being considered for the honor in recognition of her work in the fight against climate change.
- *Academia.* University of Texas Professor Karen Uhlenbeck became the first woman to win the prestigious Abel Prize, for her pioneering work in math. It comes with a \$700,000 prize. Uhlenbeck was cited “for her pioneering achievements in geometric partial differential equations, gauge theory and integrable systems, and for the fundamental impact of her work on analysis, geometry and mathematical physics.” Her work has been described as some of the most important in 20th century mathematics, constituting revolutionary advances in geometry.