

Week ending 03/20/2017 - PA-08 MoCTrack Report

MoC Twitter Action

Senator Bob Casey continued his intensely active presence on Twitter. His hot topics are:

- 1) His continued opposition to the AHCA. Last week he did a county-by-county tweetstorm on how subsidies would be affected for ages 50-64; this week he county-by-county run-through of the subsidy decreases for younger families of four. He gets an amazing like/retweet response on these. He has also stressed the negative effect of using block grants to states for Medicaid (90 tweets)
- 2) His opposition to the Trump budget proposal. He did a series of tweets on 3/16 where he noted a particular cut in the Trump budget and directly asked Trump "How does <insert issue> put America first?" (15 tweets)
- 3) Trump's conflicts of interest (6 tweets)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick put most of his tweeting efforts this week towards local issues. Outside of promoting his presence at ham dinners and pancake breakfasts (seriously), his hot topics are:

- 1) He introduced a pro-Environment resolution with other Republican legislators (4 tweets)
- 2) He announced his intention to NOT support the AHCA (3 tweets, but 2 of them were broken links)
- 3) Opioid abuse and treatment, he congratulated local law enforcement for busting a drug ring in Upper Bucks (1 tweet)

Senator Pat Toomey tweeted more than average this week. His hot topics are:

- 1) The PACT Act, legislation he is sponsoring that would make illegal a certain type of animal abuse (crush video) that is not currently covered by statute (2 tweets)
- 2) The Vietnam Veteran Recognition Act (2 tweets)
- 3) March Madness!! (2 tweets)

Legislation of Interest

I know we are all focused on the AHCA. Last night Brian Fitzpatrick released a statement wherein he said he could not vote for the AHCA in its current state. Here is a quote taken from his statement on facebook.

" I have concluded that, although the American Health Care Act focuses on several much-needed reforms to our healthcare system, in its current form I cannot support this legislation. I have many concerns with this bill, and first among them is the impact on the single most important issue plaguing Bucks and Montgomery Counties, and the issue that I have made my priority in Congress: opioid abuse prevention, treatment and recovery."

Legislators have been busy outside of the AHCA, and here is some of what has been introduced or voted upon. I know this is a bit heavy on content (I usually try to keep it to 5 bills), but it seems like a lot of very important legislation has been introduced while everyone is focused on the AHCA...

H.R. 985 - Fairness in Class Action Litigation and Furthering Asbestos Claim Transparency Act of 2017
<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr985/summary>

It has passed the House (220-201) and is heading into the Senate. All the Democrats and 14 Republicans voted against this bill, but **Brian Fitzpatrick voted YES**. This bill is bad news for common people and brilliant news for corporations. The quickest way I can explain it is that it makes it very hard for individuals to band together and create a class, to file a class action lawsuit against big companies. Judges have to certify classes, and this would tighten up the rules for doing so. This bill literally benefits no one except big companies who would much rather deal with individuals, as opposed to more powerful united groups of people. I wrote up a longer explanation of this that I can provide to anyone who is interested in more info on this topic. We do not know for certain which committees would get this bill, but it might make for a good phone campaign targeted at Sen. Toomey.

S. 545 - The National Right-to-Work Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s545>

This was introduced by Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY). It would basically neuter, if not destroy, unions and organized labor around the entire country. Remember the Right to Work fracas a few years back in Wisconsin with Gov. Scott Walker? This is the national version of that legislation. This bill is in the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) and Sen. Casey is a member.

S. 586 - The Corporate Tax Dodging Prevention Act.

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s586>

This was introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). The bill is designed to close a number of so-called "corporate loopholes" in the 1986 Internal Revenue Code that let companies avoid taxes. It is going to the Senate Finance Committee, and both our Senators are members. Since Republicans often talk about finding funds by closing loopholes, it would be interesting to see how they feel about this bill designed to do just that.

H.R. 1468 - To authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of certain aliens who are long-term US residents and who entered the United States and children.

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr1468/text>

This was introduced by Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL) and it is in the Committee on Homeland Security, where Brian Fitzpatrick is a member. As best I can tell, this is the Republican answer to the issue of DACA, or "the Dreamers" (people brought into the US illegally as children). It's introduction *could* be a way for Trump to cancel the DACA program, which he did promise while campaigning, while having a back-up to allow some Dreamers to remain in the US. I have seen very little reporting on this bill. It is one that people who have concerns about Trump's immigration stance should be monitoring closely.

H. Res. 202 - Reaffirming the commitment of the United States to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hres202/summary>

This was introduced by Rep. John Delaney (D-MD), and it is in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, where Brian Fitzpatrick is a member. In light of the diplomatic nonsense that arose at the end of the week in regards to Trump's statements regarding both the UK and Germany, it seems a good time to support resolutions that are attempting to smooth over our relationships with strategic allies.

H.J. Res. 89 - Authorization for Use of Military Force against Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hjres89/text>

This was introduced by Rep. Jim Banks (R-IN), and it is in the Committee on Foreign Affairs, where Brian Fitzpatrick is a member. I know I highlight AUMFs almost every week, and you all might be getting tired of it (sorry). But one of the best ways to combat the Trumpist agenda is to address and hopefully reverse the trend of growing Executive power at the expense of the Legislative branch. Over the past decades, the Congress has all but excused themselves from their constitutionally mandated war-making powers. Any attempt by Congress to take back what is theirs, as defined by our nation's Founders, should be supported (in my opinion). This AUMF would mean that the President can't keep using war powers granted to his office more than 15 years ago. You don't have to support a war to support the Congress taking its war powers back from the president.

And lastly, in sort-of-good-news-if-only-in-comparison-to-everything-else-going-on...

Brian Fitzpatrick is a co-sponsor of **H. Res 195**, Expressing the Commitment of House Representatives to conservative environmental stewardship. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hres195>

This isn't a law, just a resolution. But it is a collection of 16 Republicans who are admitting that climate change is real, noting that pollution is bad for the health of everyone, recognizing that a future with a degraded environment would be bad for everything on the planet, and committing to take action to study and address these problems. Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad thing for us to encourage Environmentally-minded Indivisible members to thank him for this? The Indivisible guide does tell us that we need to be vocal in thanking our legislators when they do things that we approve of, right?