

Week ending 04/16/2017 - PA-08 MoCTrack Report

Tracking Congress in the Age of Trump - 04/16/17

The lower the number, the more the legislator is in opposition to the Trump agenda.

Senator Bob Casey - **25.7%** (no change from last week)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick - **80%** (no change from last week)

Senator Pat Toomey - **100%** (no change from last week)

MoC Twitter Action

The Congress is working in their home districts this week and next, and it was evident that the DC churn was giving way to local concerns by the many tweets and retweets of our three MoCs and their various meetings with local groups. I have excluded those meeting acknowledgements from the hot topics below.

Senator Bob Casey hot topics:

- 1) Mine workers and mine-related legislation - The senator recently introduced several pieces of legislation related to mine safety, working conditions, and black lung benefits. He promoted these bills, and also called out President Trump for not responding to a months old letter on this topic, or supporting this legislation, despite his marching out these workers as props when he gutted the Obama era Environmental regulations. (6 tweets)
- 2) Infrastructure - The senator called attention to the need to improve our area's infrastructure. (2 tweets)
- 3) Town Halls - The previous week the Senator held two town halls (Scranton and Pittsburgh) and he tweets out thanks, and a retweet of an article about the Pittsburgh gathering. (2 tweets)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:

- 1) Gerrymandering - the Representative is working across party lines with another representative to try and gain support for his government reform legislation, and he is particularly concerned about partisan redistricting. He has pinned this to the top of his feed (replacing a pinned tweet about promoting civility in government. (2 tweets)
- 2) Opioid addiction and treatment - the Representative retweeted a link to an article where he commended President Trump for his recent executive order on the topic of the opioid epidemic(1 tweet)
- 3) Ukraine Caucus - members of the Ukraine Caucus issued a joint statement in response to secretary of State Tillerson's recent comments on Ukraine. The Representative retweeted a link to that statement.(1 tweet)

Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:

While he did tweet more than normal, only one tweet was related to a topic other than holiday wishes, thanks to visitors, or condolences.

- 1) International LGBT rights - he retweeted an article from the Washington Post about honor killings of gay men in Chechnya, and noted his concern about human rights abuses. (1 tweet)

Legislation of Interest

Since the Congress is out of Washington for a bit, there was little action by way of new legislation. I thought to take that opportunity to highlight a few pieces of legislation that are languishing in committee that have the most potential to thwart the Trump agenda, or halt the erosion of democratic norms that the Trump Administration is promoting.

HR. 1711 - Making Access Records Available to Lead American Government Openness Act (Mar-A-Lago Act)

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr1711/text>

Under President Obama, the White House instituted a policy of releasing information about the people who meet with the President. This kind of information allows the public to know who has access, and who is influencing the decision making process of the Executive branch. The Trump administration has discontinued that policy. This legislation was introduced by Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL), and has 15 co-sponsors. It would make the kind of disclosure policy that the Obama administration followed a mandatory release of information by the white House. It is currently pending in the House Oversight and

Government Reform committee. Representative Fitzpatrick is not a part of that committee, but he has made government reform an area of legislative advocacy. We can ask if he would join the other 15 co-sponsors.

H.R. 804 - Protect the National Security Council From Political Interference Act of 2017

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr804/text>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL) and it has 182 co-sponsors. It is pending in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick is a member. This legislation was introduced in response to President Trump putting his chief strategist, Steve Bannon, on the National Security Council. Mr Bannon has since been removed, but that decision by President Trump doesn't preclude any future political appointees to this group. This legislation would ensure that any future members of the NSC are not there to influence national security decisions for political gain.

H.J. Res. 75 - War Powers Resolution

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hjres75/text>

The Constitution clearly states that it is the power of the Congress to declare war, while the President is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. In the last half century, the legislative branch has ceded that authority to the Executive branch, for the most part. This is evidenced by the recent military action undertaken under the sole authority of President Trump upon another sovereign nation, for which there is no current Congressional Authorization for Use of Military Force. This resolution was introduced by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), has 6 co-sponsors, and is currently pending in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick is a member. The text of the Resolution restates the Constitutional roles of the respective branches, and mandates consultation between the Executive and Legislative branches when military force is to be utilized.

H.R. 1608 - ICE and CBP Body Camera and Accountability Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr1608>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY) and is pending in the Committee on Homeland Security, where Rep. Fitzpatrick is a member. The bill text has been made available since I last reported on this legislation, and it is concise and clear - it mandates the use of body cameras by agents and officers of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection any time they are engaged in official operations. There are reports that the Executive Orders on immigration and Attorney General Jeff Sessions's recent directives to the Justice Department have newly emboldened ICE and CBP staff, and making them wear body cameras would be a way to cut down on potential abuses.

S. 26 - Presidential Tax Transparency Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s26/text>

This bill was introduced by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and has 21 co-sponsors. It is pending in the Senate Rules and Administration Committee. Pennsylvania does not have any senators in that committee, but we can ask our senators to join the list of co-sponsors. The bill would mandate that the President and presidential candidates provide their three most recent tax returns, that those returns would be made public, and that if the returns were not provided by the candidate, one of the government ethics organizations would have the right to acquire the returns from the IRS.

S. 408 - Presidential Trade Transparency Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s408/text>

This bill was also introduced by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and has 13 co-sponsors. It is pending in the Senate Finance Committee, where both Sen. Casey and Sen. Toomey are members. This bill expands upon S. 26 to add that a President would need to disclose income, assets, and liabilities in other countries when the US is going to negotiate trade agreements or enforcement actions in those countries.