

## Week ending 04/23/2017 - PA-08 MoCTrack Report

### Tracking Congress in the Age of Trump - 04/23/17

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

Just like last week, the members of Congress were in their home districts. Each spent some bandwidth on photos and thanks to local groups for meetings. I have excluded those meeting acknowledgements from the hot topics below.

Senator Bob Casey hot topics:

- 1) Town Hall - the Senator participated in a televised town hall, and retweeted the tweet-coverage provided by a journalist, detailing the topics asked about and his answers in brief. (18 tweets)
- 2) #TheseCutsHurt - In Philadelphia, the Senator met with constituents to discuss issues related to hunger, SNAP and Medicaid. (13 tweets)
- 3) Infrastructure - He made a speech in Reading this week to promote infrastructure spending, which would bring good jobs to the area and provided needed repairs and improvements.(4 tweets)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:

- 1) Veterans benefits - The Representative opposes draft legislation recently revealed by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs that would change the post-9/11 GI Bill initiative offering veterans four years of free tuition at a public college. The draft would introduce a \$2,400 charge to veterans for tuition. (4 tweets)
- 2) 21st Century Skills Caucus - he has joined a bipartisan coalition of 13 lawmakers that has the goal of advancing discussion about effectively promoting 21st century skills in the nation's education system and fostering partnerships among education, business, community, and government leaders working to prepare Americans with the right knowledge and skills for learning and work in a global economy. (1 tweet)
- 3) Opioid Addiction and Treatment - Pennsylvania is to receive \$26 million in grant money to fight the opioid crisis. (1 tweet)

Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:

The Senator only tweeted on one policy related topic this week, but he participated in his very first 'tweetstorm'

- 1) Ten reasons why we need tax reform (11 tweets)

### Legislation of Interest

Since the Congress is still out of Washington, there was no new legislation. Last week I used this opportunity to focus on legislation with the potential to thwart the Trump agenda, or halt the erosion of democratic norms that the Trump Administration is promoting. In honor of Earth Day, I'd like to focus on two very disturbing pieces of anti-environmental legislation that have already passed in the House of Representatives, and are awaiting committee assignment in the Senate.

### H.R. 1430 - HONEST Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr1430/text>

The Library of Congress describes this bill in the following manner: "This bill amends the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978 to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating a covered action unless all scientific and technical information relied on to support such action is the best available science, specifically identified, and publicly available in a manner sufficient for independent analysis and substantial reproduction of research results." While this may not sound particularly bad, the League of Conservation Voters opposes the passing of this bill, explaining that "the HONEST Act would endanger public health by making it extremely difficult for the EPA to use the best available science. The bill contains favorable exemptions

for industry and would restrict the health studies that the EPA is able to use by requiring that data is shared with anyone willing to sign a vague confidentiality agreement. These provisions would severely limit the EPA's ability to use data that includes studies with confidential health information. These types of studies are the basis for the best research on pollution's effects on people, but include individual health records that are legally required to remain confidential. **H.R. 1430 would cripple the EPA's ability to develop effective public health safeguards** by forcing them to disregard the results of these studies, resulting in less protective standards."

#### **H.R. 1431 - EPA Science Advisory Board Reform act of 2017**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr1431/text>

This bill would create a new framework for "selecting members of the Science Advisory Board, guidelines for participation in board advisory activities, and terms of office. The board provides scientific advice to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)" per the Library of Congress. The League of Conservation Voters opposes this bill as well, noting that it "...would undermine the ability of the Science Advisory Board to provide independent, objective, and credible scientific advice to the EPA. **This bill would facilitate greater industry influence of the Scientific Advisory Board by weakening conflict-of-interest protections** while unnecessarily and arbitrarily limiting the participation of subject experts. Additionally, new burdens imposed on the Board and provisions that allow industry to significantly prolong the Board's scientific review process would delay key public health and environmental protections."