

Week ending 06/18/2017 - PA-08 MoCTrack Report

Tracking Congress in the Age of Trump - 06/18/17

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

Senator Bob Casey - **27.9%** (-1.4% from last week)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick - **79.4%** (+2.0 from last week)

Senator Pat Toomey - **85.2%** (-2.3% from last week)

This is as much change in the numbers as we have seen since this report began. Fitzpatrick moved more in line with the Trump agenda due to his votes in the realm of healthcare and veterans affairs. Toomey and Casey both voted for the Russian sanctions, which went against Trump's interests as defined by the FiveThirtyEight website.

MoC Twitter Action

Senator Bob Casey hot topics:

- 1) AHCA - The Senator continues his relentless assault on this bill, its potential negative effect on Pennsylvanians and the manner in which his Republican colleagues are handling the proceedings. (22 tweets)
- 2) Infrastructure - Despite their talk of Infrastructure Week, the Trump Administration has cancelled a major project on the Monogahela River. The Senator posted images from an event held there, and retweeted a number of articles on the topic. (9 tweets)
- 3) Aging Committee - The committee held a hearing on Military caregivers, and the Senator posted some thoughts from the meeting as well as feedback from participants, observers and interested constituents. (7 tweets)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:

- 1) Shooting/baseball game - The Representative sent kind words to the Capitol police and to his recovering colleague and other victims, but most of his tweets on this topic had to do with the baseball game itself. He and Democrat Rep. Dwight Evans attended the game together, and made a point of talking to several news outlets about restoring civility. This got picked up locally on NBC, and nationally on CNN. (12 tweets)
 - 2) Veterans' Issues - He expressed his support of a VA Accountability Act that passed this week, met with a local veterans group in conjunction with the bill passing, and sent out a message about a Medal of Honor Recipient. (3 tweets)
 - 3) Water safety - The Department of Defense and PFOA-laden firefighting foam is an ongoing issue. He retweeted an article about the situation. (2 tweets)
- I continue to have some difficulty reporting on Representative Fitzpatrick's tweets because someone in his office does not know how to use Twitter. That person regularly posts links that are broken (they go to error messages). I have advised his office of this problem.

Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:

- 1) Tax Reform - the Senator continues to push his "pro-growth" tax reform agenda. He promoted a link to a video of a conversation he had with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, and an article about how the Congress can have longer (25 years as opposed to 10) tax code changes. (3 tweets)
 - 2) the AHCA - He pointed in the direction of a study by nonpartisan actuaries that shows the inaccuracies in the CBO's numbers for the AHCA bill from the House. (2 tweets)
 - 3) Baseball practice shooting - After sending out thought and prayers, he retweeted Gabby Giffords' message to the Congress after this week's tragedy. (2 tweets)
- Senator Toomey must have a summer intern who knows their way around Twitter, because his Tweet sophistication just went through the roof - retweets, links, images, quotes, video... and about 10x more tweets than what we saw back in February.

Votes of Interest

First, a quick update... I first reported on H.R. 657, the Follow the Rules Act, back in early May. It extends whistleblower protections to government employees who report not just law breaking, but rule-breaking. I recently reported on the votes (all three MoCs were in favor) and it was signed into law last week. This is a truly wonderful change for bureaucrats in this environment, who now have protections should they be put into a difficult (but not illegal) situation in regards to existing rules.

H.R. 2581 - Verify First Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr2581/text>

After how many votes (41? 52?) to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the Republicans have shown that they are willing to make legislative tweaks to Obamacare... but not in a way designed to save the program. This bill was introduced by Rep. Lou Barletta (R-PA) and it had 14 co-sponsors, all Republican. The bill itself changes the procedure by which ACA credits are distributed, making sure that a number of departments (Treasury, Homeland Security, Social Security and Health and Human Services) have certified that the recipient of the credit is a citizen or legal resident of the US. A floor vote was held on this bill on 06/13/17 and **Fitzpatrick voted YES**. With all his conference call "town hall" talk on 06/07/17 about unnecessary red tape and over-regulation, I cannot be alone in finding a logical inconsistency here.

S. 722 - An Act to Provide Congressional Review and to Counter Iranian and Russian Governments' Aggression

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s722/text>

This vote was in the news quite a bit this week. In its original form it had to do with Iranian sanctions, but all one heard about from the legislators and the media was the amendment that turned it into a bill about Russian sanctions. This was introduced by Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN) and it had a whopping 63 co-sponsors. It ended up passing 98-2, with only Rand Paul and Bernie Sanders voting against the bill. **Senator Casey and Senator Toomey voted YES**.

Legislation of Interest

H. Res. 390 - Expressing Strong Disapproval of the President's announcement to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hres390/text>

This was introduced by Rep. Bradley Schneider (D-IL) and it has a whopping 170 co-sponsors, all Democrats. It is pending in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where Rep. Fitzpatrick is a member. The name pretty much says it all. In light of Rep. Fitzpatrick's statement in favor of staying in the Paris Agreement, I think it is an item worth pressing him on. He is part of a climate-conscious caucus, and it would be good to call and ask not just for his position on this resolution, but if the caucus was planning on supporting this item.

H.R. 2908 - To direct Federal departments and agencies to perform certain functions to ensure that climate change-related impacts are fully considered in the development of national security doctrine, policies, and plans

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr2908>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) and it has 28 co-sponsors, all Democrats. It is pending in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where Representative Fitzpatrick is a member. The text of this bill is not yet available, so I will update this once I have had a chance to read it in full. But what I found interesting from the title alone is there is a resolution from earlier this year (H. Res. 195) that was introduced by the Republican climate group, and Rep. Fitzpatrick cosponsored that item. If this bill ends up covering a lot of the same ground - but as a bill (which requires action) as opposed to a resolution (just words) - it is ripe for action with our self-described environmentalist representative.

S. 1376 - A bill to ensure that all fast-tracked reconciliation bills are subject to a committee hearing

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s1376>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and it has 39 co-sponsors (37D, 2I). It is pending in the Senate Budget Committee, where Senator Toomey is a member. This bill appears to have been introduced in response to the cabal of secrecy surrounding the Senate's efforts to modify the House version American Health Care Act (AHCA). Because of Senate rules, there are certain constraints upon content that would allow them to use the "reconciliation process," which means they could pass the bill with a simple majority. Mr. Schumer is introducing a change to that reconciliation process, so that this kind of super-secret, no amendment, no hearing nonsense that Senate Leader McConnell has pulled with the AHCA could never against be attempted.

S. 760 - the OPEN government Data Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s760/text>

This bill was introduced by Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI), with 4 co-sponsors (2D, 2R). There is an identical version of this bill in the House (H.R. 1770 with 12 co-sponsors, 10D, 2R) but I am focusing on the Senate version because it was just "ordered reported," which means it is actually moving along, as opposed to the stalled House item. It is in the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs committee, where there are no PA members. The key to this bill is that it creates an environment where pretty much all government produced data is available to the public. You may have read news pieces earlier this year that in the final days of the Obama Administration, climate scientists were having back-up parties, copying all of the government climate data onto private sites and servers, because they were afraid the Trump Administration would restrict access to this information. If this bill passes, we would not need to have such fears in the future. The key line in the bill was this "The Federal Government has the responsibility to be transparent and accountable to its citizens." GovTrack describes it like this: "it would establish a "presumption of openness," in which the default assumption is that any government data should be available to the public unless prohibited by an exemption in another law." When you consider the ways that the Trump Administration has rolled back openness and accountability measures (like no longer releasing who the President has meetings with), this bill warrant full support from the Indivisible community. Perhaps Senator Casey would be open to joining on as a co-sponsor?

H.R. 2884 - The COVFEFE (Communications Over Various Feeds Electronically For Engagement) Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr2884/text>

Some of you may have seen me posting about this earlier in the week, because I just couldn't wait until Sunday to put it in my report. There's nothing I like more than a clever, forward-thinking, necessary bill... but when you drop some humor and shade-throwing on top of it? I'm sold. My new favorite representative is Mike Quigley (D-IL) and he has found 16 Democrats to co-sponsor this bill. It is pending in the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. There is a law on the books that defines what materials a president's administration must keep - films, papers, recordings, etc. This new bill would amend that act and add social media content to the list of things that must be archived.

Have a great week and STAND INDIVISIBLE - together our voices will carry!