

Week ending 07/02/2017 - PA-08 MoCTrack Report

Tracking Congress in the Age of Trump - 07/02/2017

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

Senator Bob Casey - **28.2%** (no change from last week)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick - **75.9%** (+1.7% from last week)

Senator Pat Toomey - **97.4%** (no change from last week)

No Senate votes were counted towards the index number from the www.FiveThirtyEight.com numbers, which accounts for no movement from either Senator. Three House of Representative votes were scored (see the Votes of Interest section below). Representative Fitzpatrick voted in line with the Trump agenda on all three bills.

MoC Twitter Action

Senator Bob Casey hot topics:

- 1) the AHCA/Better Care Reconciliation Act (BRCA) - The Senator was relentless in his multi-pronged attack on the Senate's draft bill. He had several consecutive days of tweetstorms, one with retweets on constituent videos discussing how the bill would affect their lives, the other with a mark-up and explanation of passages from the CBO scoring of the BRCA draft. (104 tweets)
 - 2) Water Safety - He has started looking into a situation that Representative Fitzpatrick has been working on for some months, the department of Defense usage of PFOA-based firefighting foams, the the residual chemicals that are tainting water supplies in our area. (2 tweets)
- The Senator only tackled two topics this week, though his AHCA/BRCA tweets touched upon other areas, including employment, Medicaid, state budgets, people with disabilities and the opioid crisis.

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:

- 1) the Opioid Crisis - The Representative is the vice-chair of the House Bipartisan Heroin Task Force , and they introduces a slate of legislation designed to address the situation. Two of the bills were composed and submitted by the representative, and he linked to several articles about the event. (5 tweets)
- 2) Tax Reform - He composed an op-ed with his plan, as a CPA, for tax reform. He linked to the piece twice, and pinned it to the top of his feed. (2 tweets)
- 3) Foreign Affairs - He met with the UN Secretary General and the US Ambassador to the UN. They discussed the sanctions on Russia, support for Israel, and how to address the nuclear threat from North Korea. (1 tweet)

Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:

- 1) the AHCA/BRCA - The Senator was outspoken in his support of the Senate's discussion draft revisions to the House AHCA legislation. He linked to several of his press appearances on the topic, from both CNN and several Fox outlets. He continued to insist that this new draft will save the Medicaid program, and is necessary because "ObamaCare is failing." (13 tweets)
- 2) Sanctuary Cities - He applauded the House for passing a bill that will penalize sanctuary cities. (1 tweet)
- 3) Environment - He applauded the EPA's repeal of a "harmful" clean water regulation. (1 tweet)

A study in contrasts: Statements from our Senators on the CBO scoring of the Senate's health care draft, 06/26/17

Senator Pat Toomey - "The Congressional Budget Office's coverage estimates are based on dubious assumptions, such as millions of Americans foregoing free Medicaid because they are not forced to enroll by Obamacare's individual mandate. Numerous independent experts, including the nonpartisan CMS Office of the Actuary, have reached significantly different conclusions. As the discussion draft moves forward, the Senate should proceed carefully, avoid overreacting to questionable predictions, and stay focused on delivering on our promise to move health care in a more consumer-driven, sustainable direction on behalf of the millions of Americans who have been harmed by Obamacare's broken promises."

Senator Bob Casey - "Obscene. Unconscionable. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has just confirmed that Pennsylvania families will pay higher costs for less care with fewer protections under the Senate Republican health care scheme in order to lavish the wealthiest with tax cuts. Many wealthy people who would receive these tax cuts don't want them if it means a child loses Medicaid protections. Despite the deliberately misleading statements from the backers of this legislation, it is now clearer than ever that this proposed plan would decimate Medicaid, impose an age tax and hike premiums, while risking job loss at rural hospitals. And for those families struggling with the opioid crisis, this bill pulls the rug right out from under them. The CBO has exposed this shameful piece of legislation for what it is: an unprecedented selling out of our middle class families, children, seniors and individual with disabilities. It's time for the Administration and congressional Republicans to reverse course and work in a bipartisan way to make health care more affordable."

Votes of Interest

H.R. 1215 - Protecting Access to Care Act of 2017: To improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr3004/text>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Steve King (R-IA) and it has 3 Republican co-sponsors. The bill places significant limits on medical-related lawsuits, when it involves insurance coverage provided or subsidized by the federal government (like ACA's marketplaces, or Medicare and Medicaid). It limits a certain type of damages to \$250,000 but juries are not allowed to be made aware of that limitation. Significantly, 19 Republicans voted against this bill, including PA's own Rep. Meehan (PA-07) and Rep. Costello (PA-06). This bill passed 218-210, and **Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

H.R. 3003 - No Sanctuary for Criminals Act: To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify provisions relating to assistance by States, and political subdivision of States, in the enforcement of Federal immigration laws

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr3003/text>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and it has 15 Republican co-sponsors. It came to the House floor last week as part of a group of 'tough on immigration' bills that were heavily touted by President Trump. This piece of legislation is an attack on the concept of "sanctuary cities." The crux of the bill is that if states or municipalities do not comply with ICE and/or Border Enforcement queries and rules about detaining people, they can have grant money related to law enforcement stripped. This bill passed 228-195, and **Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

H.R. 3004 - Kate's Law: To amend section 276 of the Immigration and Nationality Act relating to reentry of removed aliens

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr3004/text>

This bill was also introduced by Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and it has 17 Republican co-sponsors. It also came to the House floor as a part of the 'tough on immigration' bill package promoted by President Trump. From early in his campaign Mr. Trump highlighted the plight of families who lost loved ones to crimes committed by undocumented people in the US, and this bill would provide much stiffer prison sentences for people who were deported, but then returned to the US and committed crimes. This bill passed 257-167, and **Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

Legislation of Interest

H.R. 3020 - Border Enforcement Accountability, Oversight, and Community Engagement Act of 2017

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr3020/text>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX) and it has 1 Republican co-sponsor. This seems to be a moderate response to the raft of immigration-related bills that passed through the House this past week. The text of this bill establishes an oversight commission that would recommend policy and procedure improvements. It would also establish the office of a Border Ombudsman to act as a centralized point for people to bring grievances related to any border-related actions. If you have concerns about the bills that Rep. Fitzpatrick votes for last week, you may wish to ask him to support this one, as it may mitigate some of the excesses of Border Enforcement that have been making the news lately.

S. 106 - Obamacare Repeal Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s106/text>

This bill was introduced by Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and it has 3 co-sponsors, all Republicans. This bill is pending in the Senate Finance Committee, where both of our senators are members. In the wake of President Trump's recent comments about taking the route of "repeal, then replace later" this bill has received attention at the end of the last week. Two of the co-sponsors of this bill, Senators Lee and Paul have joined Senator Cruz as a portion of the rightmost Republicans who oppose the current repeal AND replace efforts (AHCA/BCRA/H.R. 1628) because it does not go far enough in removing the government from the realm of healthcare. Presumably, this is the bill those uber-conservative legislators want to see passed.

S. 1499 - A bill to increase from \$10,000,000,000 to \$50,000,000,000 the threshold figure at which regulated depository institutions are subject to direct examination and reporting requirements of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s1499>

This bill was introduced by our own Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA) and it has one Democrat co-sponsor. It is pending in the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, where Sen. Toomey is the co-chair of the sub-committee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Protections. That seems almost ironic as this bill, which seems to have been composed in the spirit of the recently passed H.R. 10, will strip the most stringent of consumer protections from all but the very largest banks. The text of this bill has yet to be released, so I will update this at some point in the future. But it would appear that Senator Toomey needs to hear from his constituents that as the subcommittee chair in charge of Consumer Protections, we expect him to stop trying to strip those protections from us.

S. 1412 - A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for a percentage of student loan forgiveness for public service employment

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s1412>

This bill was introduced by Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and it has 9 co-sponsors, all Democrats. It is pending in the Health, Education Labor and Pension (HELP) committee, where Senator Casey is a member. There have been stories in the news recently about changes at the Department of Education, under Secretary DeVos, that have drastically amended policies about writing off education debts for people who have gone into public services. (To read more about this unbelievable situation, follow this link - <http://money.cnn.com/2017/05/22/pf/college/public-service-loan-forgiveness->

[program/index.htm](#)) These changes have been retroactive - people have made decisions about their education, worked at certain employers for years with the understanding that after a set time any remaining debts would be forgiven... and suddenly they are hit with massive and unexpected bills due to an indiscriminate change of policy. This bill would remedy that situation.

That's it from here. Expect a quiet week, with the legislators home for the holiday through July 10th.
· **Enjoy your Independence Day**, and remember that the Declaration we all cherish speaks of government “**deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.**” As the governed, we do NOT consent to many of the actions taken by the Trump Administration in our name. It is our right and our responsibility to speak out against what we perceive as outrages, because ***together our voices will carry!***