

Week ending 07/23/2017 - PA-08 MoCTrack Report

Tracking Congress in the Age of Trump - 07/23/17

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

Senator Bob Casey - **27.9%** (no change from last week)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick - **78.9%** (-2.2% from last week)

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

There were no Senate votes scored this week on the FiveThirtyEight website's tracker. One House vote was scored. It was an environmental issue, and Rep. Fitzpatrick voted against the Trump position. See the Votes of Interest section below for more information.

MoC Twitter Action

Senator Bob Casey hot topics:

- 1) BRCA/AHCA - The Senator continues to pound on the failures of the current Republican health care plans. On Thursday he released an excellent essay-via-tweet where he recounted all of the Trump Administration promises about their health care plans, and then a refutation of each and every one. (63 tweets)
- 2) Town Halls - He held a live town hall in Erie on Saturday. He made several announcements about it on Twitter, shared some images and quotes from the event, and then retweeted some articles reporting on the content of the discussion. (10 tweets)
- 3) Opioid epidemic - He noted that the treatment funds in senate bill falls short of needs. (1 tweet)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:

The Representative has greatly reduced his twitter presence. This week his only tweet were in response to local issues - the travelling Vietnam Memorial in our area and a retweet of thanks from a childrens' advocacy group.

Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:

- 1) BRCA/AHCA - The Senator created several new "myth/fact" memes about the now-defunct (?) health care bill, and he issued a statement about the failure of the BRCA. (3 tweets)
- 2) Law enforcement - He was disturbed by an activist tweet celebrating a woman who killed a police officer in the 1970s, and issued a retort. (1 tweet)
- 3) Sanctuary cities - He feels that sanctuary city policies "put children at risk." (1 tweet)

Healthcare Repeal without a Replacement - How do our Senators feel about it?

"What's worse than the @SenateGOP replacement plan? Undermining our health care system without one. The @SenateGOP played this game in 2015 so we already have the numbers on what this would look like. 956,000 Pennsylvanians would lose their insurance. That's 135% increase in the number of uninsured. Between 2019 and 2028, PA would lose \$13.3 billion in premium tax credits and subsidies. Between 2019 and 2028, Pennsylvania would lose \$22.7 billion in federal Medicaid spending. With more uninsured, local providers and hospitals will have to take care of more people who can't afford their care. This will push more of the cost on to those who can, resulting in HIGHER premiums and less coverage for those with insurance. Rural hospitals in Pennsylvania will be devastated by the @SenateGOP health care scheme. It must be stopped." - Senator Bob Casey, 07/18/17 via Twitter

"I intend to vote to proceed to a full Obamacare repeal bill that would take effect in two years so that Congress can use this time to craft a legislative replacement and move toward a consumer-driven health care system. I am disappointed with the failure of the draft Senate bill. History will look back on this moment and harshly judge this Congress for not beginning the process of replacing Obamacare and for failing to put Medicaid on a sustainable trajectory when we had the opportunity to do so." - Senator Pat Toomey, 07/18/17 via his website

Votes of Interest

Ozone Standards Implementation Act of 2017

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/115-2017/h391>

This is a bill that seeks to delay the implementation of air quality standards by the EPA. In 2015 a bill was passed that established a timeframe for implementing National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). It was supposed to go into effect this year. This bill pushes off the EPA's oversight of these new regulations to 2025. The bill passed 229-199. **Rep. Fitzpatrick voted NO**. He was one of only 11 Republicans to vote against this measure.

John Kenneth Bush nomination to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/115-2017/s164>

John Kenneth Bush was nominated to the seat on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. He is a deeply conservative and controversial nominee. Among the things that have caused progressives distress is the time he wrote that slavery and abortion are the "two greatest tragedies in our country." Mark Joseph Stern at Slate also notes that Bush has "a long history of making homophobic and sexist comments during his years as an anonymous blogger." In his legal career, he wrote an amicus brief in support of keeping women out of a military academy. In the vote held in the Senate this week to confirm his nomination, **Senator Casey voted NO** and **Senator Toomey voted YES**. Judge Bush was confirmed, 51-47.

Legislation of Interest

H. Res. 456 - Objecting to the conduct of the President of the United States

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hres456/text>

This resolution was introduced by Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN) and it has 28 co-sponsors (all D). It is an extraordinary document. Many resolutions are brief, but this is a voluminous accounting of the un-presidential actions (and omissions) of Donald Trump. It recounts his failure to divest himself of his business interests, his refusal to release his taxes, emoluments clause issues along the lines of foreign governments granting copyrights to his businesses, the worst of his tweets, his release of ally-provided classified information to our Russian adversaries, his firing of Director Comey, his MANY lies... and I could just keep going. It is tremendous. It then calls upon the President to release his taxes, divest himself from his business interests, and do a bunch of stuff that you would have thought (prior to 2016) you'd never have to tell a President - like "promote democracy, freedom of the press, and human rights in foreign policy" and "respect the independence of our Nation's judicial branch" and "respect Members of Congress and refrain from using derogatory nicknames for them." This could have been written by any one of us. I think that Rep. Fitzpatrick needs to hear from us, in force, that we support the aims of this resolution.

H.J. Res 112 - Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Islamist Extremism

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hjres112/text>

This joint resolution was introduced by Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA). It currently has no co-sponsors, and is pending in the Foreign Affairs Committee, where Rep. Fitzpatrick is a member. Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMFs) are Congress's way of saying "declaration of war." Currently, the President's use of military force is covered by the AUMFs from 2001 (War against Terror) and in 2003 (war in Iraq). As many people noted at the time, when President Trump bombed Syria, he was attacking a sovereign nation for which there was no current AUMF - which only Congress has the right to enact. This AUMF would give broad war-making powers to the president - in Syria, in the Philippines, and anywhere else Islamic extremists might emerge.

H. Res. 447 - Directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to Department of Homeland Security policies and activities relating to businesses owned or controlled by President Donald J. Trump

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hres447/text>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ) and it has 6 Democratic co-sponsors. It is pending in the House Committee on Homeland Security, where Rep. Fitzpatrick is a member. The resolution would direct the DHS to provide information related to government expenses incurred via travel by the Trump family (including children). It would also direct the DHS to provide information related to government expenditures that profit Trump-owned businesses. A resolution like this would allow information to be made public that pertains to self-dealing by the President.

H.R. 3253 - To provide for the health coverage of Members of Congress to be affected if the rate of individuals without health insurance increases

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr3253/text>

This bill was introduced by Rep. David Loebsack (D-IA), and it does not yet have any co-sponsors. It is pending in several committees, including the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, but Rep. Fitzpatrick is not in any of the applicable groups. The healthcare legislation currently pending in the Senate is amongst the most unpopular bills of all time, with less than a quarter of the population in counties that Trump won in 2016 supporting the Republican-led efforts. Part of this ill-will can be attributed to the feeling that members of Congress get a robust and generous health care package for themselves and are not subject to the changes that they would impose upon the rest of Americans. This bill would address that issue, and cause ramifications to their personal coverage if Congress's decision-making causes a portion of Americans to lose health insurance.

H.R. 3295 - To require the President, the Vice President, and certain high-level officials to file a report with the Office of Government Ethics, when selling real property, disclosing each natural person who is a beneficial owner of the real property upon completion of the sale

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr3295>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) and it has 2 co-sponsors (both D). The head of the government ethics office resigned earlier this month, and one of his comments in his resignation letter noted "it has become clear to me that we need improvements to the existing ethics program." This bill is one of those improvements. As we have all discovered this past year, many of our ethics expectations are simply norms, and not enforceable laws. This bill seeks to create a law showing who is engaging in monetary relationships with high officials, and would show who benefits from these transactions. It is pending in a committee (Oversight and Government Reform) where we do not have a representative, but it is worth monitoring in case it makes it to the floor.

S. 1585 - A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to provide for additional disclosure requirements for corporations, labor organizations, Super PACs and other entities

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s1585>

This bill was introduced by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and already has 43 co-sponsors (39D, 2I). In the world of election finance after the Citizens United SCOTUS decision, one of the greatest concerns is related to "dark money" - how people can donate funds to Super PACs, and there is very little information about who is doing it, and just how much influence they might be buying with those donations. This bill would require organizations who donate to campaigns to provide additional information about their donors. If you support such an aim, you might want to thank Senator Casey for co-sponsoring this effort.