

## Week ending 08/13/2017 - PA-08 MoCTrack Report

### Tracking Congress in the Age of Trump

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

Senator Bob Casey - **27.1%** (no change from last week)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick - **78.0%** (no change from last week)

Senator Pat Toomey - **93.6%** (no change from last week)

Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight website assesses the voting records of our MoCs to provide this index assessment. With the Congress home for its summer recess we expect these numbers to be static for a few more weeks.

### MoC Twitter Action

#### Senator Bob Casey hot topics:

The Senator has started his state-wide road trip and posted images and content from multiple events, including (but not limited to) visits to an Erie GE plant, the Huntington County Fair, a GED/vocational skills program facility in Reading and an Allentown Meals on Wheels delivery run. He also retweeted a Morning Call article that covered press questions asked to him about North Korea.

Casey tweet of the week: 08/10/17 "I will continue to fight against cuts to Meals on Wheels and other programs that support senior nutrition and prevent senior isolation."

#### Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:

The Representative continued his trend of not composing a single tweet of his own, but only retweeting others contributions. He continues to leave a June tweet of a link to his tax reform op-ed pinned to the top of his page.

Fitzpatrick tweet of the week: 08/07/17 retweet of content from the Phillies, "He was a leader in the clubhouse and on the field, but more importantly, he was my friend." -Larry Bowa #RIPDutch

#### Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:

The Senator addressed the importance of the President taking action in regards to the opioid epidemic, and continues to promote the upcoming legislative efforts to revise our nation's tax code.

Toomey tweet of the week: 08/12/17 "I appreciate @SenateMajLdr's steadfast leadership & look forward to working with him to make the US tax code more competitive."

### Fitzpatrick in the News

Intelligencer, 08/10/17 news article by James Boyle. Representative Fitzpatrick calls on Trump to declare a state of emergency and follow the congressional drug addiction task force's recommendations to ameliorate the opioid crisis, has introduced (in June) the Road to Recovery Act to lift restrictions on Federal Medicaid funding for larger residential behavioral health treatment centers (more than 16 beds). The bill is still in committee.

Philly.com, 08/10/17 op-ed by Phyllis Chamberlain, director of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, a nonprofit affordable housing advocacy organization, regarding support from the PA congressional delegation for the Cantwell-Hatch Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2017, legislation proposed to increase the available amount of low-income housing tax credits, co-sponsored by a Democratic and a Republic senator. Representative Fitzpatrick is one of several listed supporters of the bill, from both parties.

Perkasie News-Herald, 08/11/17 news article. Representative Fitzpatrick gets Champion for Children award from PA Partnerships for Children for "his commitment to improving public policies and support for

investment that benefits children and Youth.” PPC is a statewide nonprofit that works to “improve health, education, well-being of children and youth.”

Bucks County Courier-Times, LTE, 08/10/17 from Joan Benson, who presented the PA Partnerships for Children award was “proud to present” the award to Representative Fitzpatrick for his vote against the AHCA.

The Morning Call (Allentown, PA) 08/11/17, news article, announces that Representative Fitzpatrick will hold a town hall meeting in Bensalem, 7 p.m. August 22, location unannounced, with ticketed admission, determined by lottery. Bucks County Courier-Times carried a similar article, 08/11/17.

CNN Op-Ed, 08/11/17, “Our Bipartisan Plan for Health Care,” cited in news release released by Representative Fitzpatrick’s office, bylined to Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-Long Island, Queens) and Brian Fitzpatrick. It lauds the 5-Point plan by the Problem Solvers’ Caucus to stabilize the individual insurance market. The plan includes mandatory funding of cost-sharing reduction payments, under Congressional authority; creation of a dedicated fund for states to bring down premiums and limit losses to insurers, particularly for covering those with pre-existing conditions; relaxing the employer mandate of businesses with fewer than 500 employees; removal of the individual mandate; repeal of the medical device tax; and guidance to state insurance exchanges. “Ramming through legislation with support from only one party is not how the legislative branch of government was meant to operate...and it just doesn’t work.”

PoliticsPA website, article undated, written by Paul Englekemeier, managing editor: “Conservative Group Launches Ads on Tax Reform.” The American Action Network is funding TV ads calling on Representative Fitzpatrick and Representative Ryan Costello (R-Chester) to support tax reform that “brings back the middle class.” The ad, featuring a white male hard-hatted worker, attributes a laid-off worker’s job loss to the complexity of the tax code. “The ad is more of a way to encourage the conservative base to unify behind tax reform, rather than attacking the Congressmen,” the article states. The article also references Representative Fitzpatrick’s June 6 op-ed in Medium, an online publication (“Home to unique ideas from the world’s smart minds”), in which he argues for a tax plan that will increase take-home pay for “hardworking Americans” by simplifying the tax code in an article titled, “A CPA’s advice for growing our economy.”

PoliticsPA website, 08/11/17, written by Paul Englekemeier, managing editor: “DCCC Launches Google Ads and Websites Against Fitzpatrick and Meehan.” The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) has launched microsites against Congressmen Brian Fitzpatrick and another area Republican over their unwillingness to hold public town hall events. The ads will display when users search the Congressman, town halls, health care, the district, or a wide variety of terms related to them. The DCCC spokesman said “If House Republicans are heartless enough to take away healthcare from their constituents but too scared to face them at public town halls, they don’t deserve to be in Congress.”

## **Town Hall ALERT!**

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick has announced a town hall at 7:00 PM on 08/22/17 in Bensalem (the exact location has not been officially announced yet). Before you get ready to go, you need to know some important details:

- \* This is not open to the public. You must register to be eligible to attend. Go [here](#) to register.
- \* You must register on or before 08/14/17 to be eligible.
- \* Write up the question or topic you want addressed before you go to register, as you must submit this to complete the registration process.
- \* We are told that there will be around 125-150 attendees chosen at random by the Bucks County Courier Times.
- \* People who do not make the invitee list can watch the event on Facebook Live.
- \* There will be a protest event outside the town hall venue that same evening. Details are still in the works. We will have more info in this report next week. To have access to details as soon as they are available, please join the [Fridays with\(out\) Fitzpatrick group](#) on Facebook.

This is the statement of the Fridays with(out) Fitzpatrick group in response to the announced town hall: “Mr. Fitzpatrick announced that he will be holding a town hall on 08/22/17 in Bensalem. We commend his decision to meet with his constituents in a forum where his responses will be covered by the media, and held to the level of scrutiny and accountability that only a free press can provide.

Our complaints about his previous phone call teleconference events were that the Congressman chose the participants in each call (excluding many people who requested to participate), the questions were heavily filtered if not outright planted, and the answers were clearly scripted. Unfortunately, the more we learn about this live event, the more similar it seems to his mass constituent calls.

Not everyone who wants to attend the Fitzpatrick town hall will be invited. Interested parties must register, and we are told that invitees will be chosen at random by the Bucks County Courier Times. At the time of event registration, people who want to participate must submit a question or a topic that they want the Representative to address. Providing these questions in advance offers Representative Fitzpatrick and his staff the opportunity to both filter out unwanted topics and craft scripted responses.

We hope Representative Fitzpatrick will use the opportunity created by this event to answer a wide array of difficult questions that until now he has not publicly addressed. However, what we know thus far about this town hall does not inspire confidence. For the health of our democracy, we hope that these fears are unfounded. Open and honest discourse is the cornerstone of our republic.”

## **Violence in Charlottesville**

Our elected officials each offered a response to the violence that occurred as white supremacists, Ku Klux Klan members and other alt-Right racist groups gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia this weekend.

Senator Casey via Twitter: “Those marching to promote ‘white nationalism’ are promoting a blatantly racist ideology. Our nation must stand together and condemn this racism and those who promote it.”

Representative Fitzpatrick via Facebook: “I am appalled by the violent domestic terrorism attacks in Charlottesville, Virginia, driven by pure hatred and bigotry. These domestic terrorists completely oppose our American ideals of tolerance and diversity. These despicable acts threaten all Americans, regardless of race, creed, or color. As we mourn the lives lost and pray for those in critical condition, we thank the first responders tasked with restoring order and delivering care. We must stand together as Americans, resolute in the pursuit of justice for all. We shall defy all those who seek to tear apart our nation with hatred and violence.”

Senator Toomey via Twitter: “The racism, hate and violence seen in #Charlottesville are vile and unacceptable.”

A number of events and vigils are being scheduled to provide a peaceful response to those who would promote violence and bigotry in our nation. Indivisible’s national organization has provided a useful tool for finding an event near you. To find out more, please go to: <http://act.indivisibleguide.com/event/stand-in-solidarity-with-charlottesville/search/>

## **Legislation of Interest**

With our Congress out on its August recess, there is little going on with legislation - no votes of interest, and nothing new landing on our MoCs’ desks. Since that is the case, here are a few pending bills that are integral to the effort to thwart the Trump agenda. Please keep them on your radar, and keep calling Our MoCs’ offices about them!

### **S. 582: Office of Special Counsel Reauthorization Act of 2017**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s582/text>

This bill would prevent stonewalling by agencies under investigation by the Special Counsel - it provides remedies if any parts of the government are delaying or refusing to provide data. This appears to be a move to provide legislative support for the Mueller Russia investigation. This bill passed the Senate by unanimous consent. If you support the Mueller investigation, then you should call Representative Fitzpatrick to let him know you support this bill.

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

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

I'm going to keep promoting this one until the end of this session of Congress or Trump is out of office, whichever comes first! 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.

#### **S. 1547 - A bill to nullify the effect of the recent Executive order that establishes an "election integrity" commission, which will be used and is designed to support policies that will suppress the vote in minority and poor communities across the United States.**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s1547>

The president's "Election Integrity" commission is a deeply disturbing political invention. It is packed with Trump supporters, including Vice President Pence and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, a man who made his career on making voting harder and pursuing mostly unsuccessful voter fraud cases in his state. There are many people who believe the unstated goal of this commission is to provide information to support Trump's outrageous claims that 3 to 5 million people voted illegally in the 2016 election. If you are opposed to this commission, support the legislator who feels the same way, call Sen. Casey and thank him for co-sponsoring this legislation. And let Sen. Toomey know you support it as well. This is more important today than it was when we first reported on this bill - in the time since, polling has shown that over half of Republicans would support delaying the 2020 election if Trump proposed it!

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-majority-of-gop-would-back-2020-election-delay-if-trump-proposed-it/>

#### **S. 760 - the OPEN government Data Act**

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

This bill 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 warrants full support from the Indivisible community. Perhaps Senator Casey would be open to joining on as a co-sponsor?

#### **H.R. 2494 - To amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to require the President to place any financial conflicts of interest into a blind trust**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr2494/text>

As we have all learned, the guidance for Presidents entering office in relation to avoiding conflicts of interest is only that - guidance, not law. This bill appears to address that deficiency. Representative

Fitzpatrick needs to hear that amongst his efforts aimed at government reform, we want this topic to be included.

**S. Res. 150 - A resolution recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/sres150/text>

This resolution was introduced by our own, clearly busy Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA) and it has bipartisan co-sponsors, including Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL). If you will please excuse my blatant cheerleading for this one... I can imagine no bigger legislative insult to the Donald Trump, Kellyanne Conway, Sarah Huckabee Sanders and their obnoxious "fake news" tweetings and blatherings than to have the Senate pass this resolution. That it managed to get a Republican co-sponsor with the name recognition of Marco Rubio on the day after its introduction lends me some hope that it might get some traction. We can call Senator Casey to thank him for this one. And maybe even call Senator Toomey and ask if he supports freedom of the press, and when his staffer says "of course," we can follow up with "then he should co-sponsor this resolution, Senator Marco Rubio already has!

If you are interested in following all of the voting action in Congress there are a number of phone apps that come in handy. One of our fearless leaders, Connie Gruen, recommends the Countable app. It is available for both Apple and Android phones. You can sign up at [Countable.us](http://Countable.us) to get instant notification when our legislators vote, as well as details on each measure, pros and cons, status, and links to take action.

For those of you who are more computer versus phone oriented, I recommend [Govtrack.us](http://Govtrack.us) - the website enables you to add individual bills that interest you to a docket, so you can easily see the status of all your items in one place. They can also provide daily or weekly digest emails (your choice) to track the action of any legislator, committee, bill or vote. If not for [Govtrack](http://Govtrack.us), I would not be able to compile this report.

This report brought to you by the PA-08 MoCTrack team...

Kierstyn Piotrowski Zolfo, Lower Bucks Indivisible and Fridays with(out) Fitzpatrick

Gail Friedman, Lower Bucks Indivisible

We are seeking additional assistance. Our Congresspeople are always busy and there is always more for us to cover - tasks big and small to fit any level of time commitment. Can you help us out? Please email [KierstynPZ@gmail.com](mailto:KierstynPZ@gmail.com) and put "MoCTrack Help" in the subject. Thanks!