

## Week ending 08/20/2017 - 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 rotated between three topics this week. His attention to health care has not wavered, and he continued to share articles and thoughts about how the subsidy system needs to be addressed. He shared several pictures and articles that covered his statewide road trip, visiting businesses and volunteer organizations. And he has had several responses to Trump's press conference and ensuing tweets, which included not just calling out the President, but urging his fellow legislators to speak out against the President's endorsement of hate.

Casey tweet of the week: 08/18/17 "Rejecting Steve Bannon is just one step, @POTUS must unequivocally condemn and reject the so-called 'alt-right' and their hateful ideology."

#### Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:

The Representative was fairly quiet on Twitter, as is typical for him lately. He devoted most of his output to responding to Charlottesville and to the President's press conference.

Fitzpatrick tweet of the week: 08/17/17 "@POTUS, those who stand with or associate with white-supremacist hate groups are not 'fine people.' They are aiders and abettors of hate."

#### Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:

The Senator thanked his crew of departing summer interns, but put most of his social media efforts towards responding to reports of violence and terrorism in the news. He sent his condolences to Barcelona, and expressed his regret and outrage about the attacks on police officers here in Pennsylvania and in Florida.

Toomey tweet of the week: 08/18/17 "First Scaramucci, now Bannon. Two great personnel decisions by John Kelly."

### Our Legislators' responses to the President's 08/15/17 press conference on Charlottesville

President Trump's defense of racists and bigots, and his attack on the so called "alt-left" has spurred a flood of responses from legislators. Some, like Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, are ready to denounce hate and racism, but are unwilling to directly address the President. Others have called out Trump. Below you will find how our three Members of Congress responded.

Senator Casey: 08/15/17 "@realDonaldTrump There are not 'many sides' to a terrorist attack. White nationalists fueled this attack and they must be held accountable."

Representative Fitzpatrick: 08/16/17 “@POTUS, there is no moral equivalence of those who advance hate and those who oppose it. They are morally different universes. Period.”

Senator Toomey: 08/16/17 “There is no moral equivalency between neo-Nazis, bigots, and white supremacists, and those who oppose them. Our country has no room for corrupt ideology or violent acts.”

## **Casey in the News**

Topic One: Reactions to the events of Charlottesville

CBS KDKA out of Pittsburgh created a compilation of tweets from Pennsylvania politicians and other community leaders. Senator Casey was quoted as having tweeted “Those marching to promote ‘white nationalism’ are promoting a blatantly racist ideology” in a television news report from 08/13/17.

Topic Two: Casey’s response to President Trump’s Tuesday press conference on Charlottesville  
In the wake of Trump’s press conference, Casey was one of the first Senators to publicly condemn the President’s speech and sentiments. CBS News (national) quoted his tweets in coverage on 08/15/17. On 08/16/17 this was followed by coverage of the Senator’s remarks in the Pittsburgh City Paper, the Beaver Times, and the New Castle News, amongst others. The 08/18/17 edition of the Johnstown Tribune-Democrat has quotes from a local event attended by the Senator who said “What [the President] said was offensive and what he didn’t say was, I think, an insult to the country. He’s got to lead the country in a direction where we’re saying we categorically reject white supremacy, neo-Nazism, the KKK, any of that hate speech or activity that leads to violence. It has to be a total rejection of that. And by his words the other day he seemed to be papering over, excusing some of the conduct.”

Topic Three: The Senator’s statewide road trip

A number of publications tracked the Senator’s visits to facilities and organizations as he spends the Congressional recess reaching out to communities across the state. On 08/14/17 the Wilkes Barre area Citizens Voice covered a conference on aging where Casey was the keynote speaker. Over 200 attendees listened as he spoke about the danger of looming cuts to programs like Meals on Wheels in the budget and the potential for investments in Alzheimer’s disease research. The Wilkes Barre Times Leader covered the aging event on 08/15/17 and also wrote up his trip to the Wilkes-Barre Scranton International Airport where he was given a tour of how the federal funding to improve the airport was being spent. The Senator’s other stops this week included a meeting with executives and workers at AK Steel in Butler (covered by the Butler Eagle), and a round table in Armstrong County to discuss the opioid epidemic (covered by the The Kittanning Paper and the Tribune-Review).

Topic Four: NAFTA

The Trump administration has begun negotiations with Canada and Mexico to rework NAFTA. The Pittsburgh NPR station 90.5 reported on a meeting of a meeting of the United Steelworkers in Pittsburgh, where Senator Casey made remarks. The article reports that “U.S. Senator Bob Casey agrees that the current NAFTA agreement should be scrapped. He said that trade has historically been an issue that Republicans and Democrats could agree on in the interest of U.S. workers” and quotes the Senator as saying “We need a transformative process that will lead to the kinds of wage and environmental protections that will help workers in our country.” The Butler Eagle also reported on this event.

## **Fitzpatrick in the News**

Intelligencer, 08/14/17 news article by James Boyle, “Brian Fitzpatrick pushes for federal investigation of Charlottesville.” Fitzpatrick’s office has released a copy of the letter sent to Attorney General Jeff Sessions urging him to investigate the violence in Charlottesville last weekend as domestic terrorism. The same article also ran in the 08/14/17 issue of the Bucks County Courier Times. The online news publication, Newtown Patch, 08/14/17, carried a similar article written by Kara Seymour, “Bucks Congressman Calls For Domestic Terrorism Investigation Into Charlottesville Violence.”

Intelligencer, 08/15/17 unsigned editorial, "A Fitzpatrick first: in person town hall." The editorial observed that Fitzpatrick has been under fire for his reluctance to meet with citizens at a "long overdue" face-to-face public gathering, preferring instead to hold "telephone town halls" with pre-screened questions. It noted that the town hall scheduled for August 22 will be limited in attendance, but in today's partisan political climate "town halls can become battlegrounds of competing emotions,...getting completely out of hand." The editorial asserted that it is the duty of elected officials at every level of government to engage constituents consistently, but that anyone disrupting the event should be subject to "public ridicule."

Intelligencer, 08/15/17, news article by James Boyle, "Brian Fitzpatrick schedules Saturday open office hours Aug. 26 in Middletown." It notes the place and schedule for Saturday office hours and references Town Hall meeting to be held August 22. A similar article ran in Bucks County Courier Times, 08/15/17, "Plans in place for town hall with Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick."

Bucks County Courier Times, 08/17/17 news article by James Boyle, "Fitzpatrick, Boyle, speak out against Trump on social media." It reports on Twitter comments by Representatives Fitzpatrick and Brendan Boyle, one day after Trump's Tuesday news conference. Fitzpatrick tweeted that white supremacists are "aiders and abettors of hate." Boyle tweeted that bigotry and hate deserve condemnation. "Our President failed to do so." Boyle has co-sponsored a resolution by Democratic Congresswoman from Washington State, Pramila Jayapal, that that condemns hate groups and calls on Trump to fire administration figures that have supported such groups. The same article ran in the Intelligencer.

Intelligencer, 08/18/17, letter to the editor by Paul Kozel of Doylestown, "Some questions for Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick's upcoming town hall." The questions are about Fitzpatrick's vote to let the president withhold tax returns, and about his opposition to repeal of the estate tax. The writer challenges Fitzpatrick to answer the questions "in this newspaper," as well as at a town hall meeting.

Levittown Now.com online newspaper, 08/19/17, "Democrats want Fitzpatrick to Support Jayapal Resolution," Fitzpatrick's tweet condemning white supremacist hatemongers was addressed directly to POTUS but the congressman's critics want him to sign on to the Jayapal resolution calling for the ouster of those who support hate groups.

## **Toomey in the News**

Topic One: Reactions to the events of Charlottesville

CBS KDKA out of Pittsburgh included the Senator in a 08/14/17 compilation of politicians' responses to Charlottesville. They closed out the politician portion of TV segment with his quote "The racism, hate and violence seen in Charlottesville are vile and unacceptable." The English language version of the Israeli news site Haaretz.com assessed each Republican Senator's response as of 08/14/17, breaking them down by whether they directly addressed white supremacists and similar organizations by name, or went for the weaker 'hate and bigotry' script. Toomey was included in the latter group. On 08/15/17 the Philadelphia Magazine ran an opinion piece titled "Charlottesville Reactions: What took Trump and Toomey so long?" It noted that the Senator waited until after President Trump's Monday teleprompter speech event before he specifically named the groups responsible for the violence.

Topic Two: Toomey's response to President Trump's Tuesday press conference on Charlottesville

On 08/16/17 a number of local papers covered Senator Toomey's statement that was released after the President's Tuesday press conference. The York Dispatch, WFMZ Allentown PennLive.com and the Timesonline.com all contrasted Toomey's statements, which addressed the lack of moral equivalency of named hate groups and those who opposed them, with that of other lawmakers who directly addressed the president for his remarks (which the Senator did not do). On 08/17/17 the Pittsburgh Post Gazette published a compilation of Western PA politicians' responses to Trump's remarks.

Topic Three: Steve Bannon's ouster from the White House

The online political website TheHill.com has a 08/18/17 article titled "GOP senator: Bannon's removal a 'great personnel decision.'" It quotes Senator Toomey's tweet (see above, Toomey's tweet of the week), but has no additional comment from the Senator on the topic. An 08/19/17 Philly Voice piece titled "Social media rips Toomey's tweet on Bannon, Scaramucci firings" notes that many people were vocally unhappy with Toomey's comments on Bannon's departure. They compiled over a dozen responses to the Senator's tweet, most of which asked why the Senator had not spoken out to condemn Mr. Bannon in the previous nine months.

## **Town Hall ALERT!**

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick is holding an event on Tuesday, 08/22/17 at 7:00 PM. As of last week, many had concerns about the details that had been released:

- \* it was at a small venue
- \* it was not open to the public, but only to registered, approved invitees
- \* questions and topics had to be submitted in advance at the time of registration

We have learned more about the planned Fitzpatrick event, and these new details continue to add to our concerns. The wonderful Joe Sundeen, a frequent participant of the Fridays with(out) Fitzpatrick weekly gathering, went up to the Congressman's office and asked some questions about Tuesday night's event. He learned that the 120 invitees will NOT be allowed to interact directly with the Congressman. There will be a moderator who chooses and asks questions to the Congressman. What he learned from a Fitzpatrick staffer makes it sound as if the 120 invitees are merely present to be props, to make it appear that the Congressman is having a public town hall. In reality, this sounds like it is scarcely different from Fitzpatrick's phone events - screened questions, scripted answers, and no chance for true interaction with our elected representative.

Are you troubled by this? Did you want to attend, but did not receive an invitation? Do you want to let Mr. Fitzpatrick know that this event is not a substitute for a real town hall with interaction between our representative and his constituents? Then **JOIN US!** A rally has been scheduled...

**Fitzpatrick "Town Hall" Rally  
Tuesday, 08/22/17  
5:30 PM  
Bensalem Municipal Building  
2400 Byberry Road in Bensalem**

There will be speakers from POWER Metro (the suburban offshoot of Philadelphians Organized to Witness Empower and Rebuild), Planned Parenthood, Act on Climate, and others are being confirmed as I write this. There will be an empty chair town hall for those who did not get invitations. The focus of this gathering - in addition to showing our Representative that more than 120 constituents wanted to be a part of his event - is preserving social safety net programs. All Americans deserve a robust, expansive social safety net, but a number of programs are in danger of having funding cut when the budget is voted on in Congress this September. Let's make sure Representative Fitzpatrick knows where we stand on Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, CHIP and all of the programs that provide support to our fellow Americans... and let's also let him know that we realize he cannot possibly vote for cutting these programs without seriously damaging his primary legislative advocacy focus, the fight against the opioid crisis.

If you can make it, please come out. There will be press present. I cannot think of a more effective visual than to have a massive crowd that far outnumbers the scant few who are permitted to attend the official

indoor event. And if you can't make it, we intend to show the event as a Facebook Live stream on the Fridays with(out) Fitzpatrick Facebook page. Check in on Tuesday afternoon after 5:30 PM to see what's going on at the Bensalem Municipal Complex prior to Fitzpatrick's event.

I am one of the lucky few who got invited to the actual "town hall" and it is my hope to get out a mid-week recap of the official event. Keep your eyes peeled for a mid-week MocTrack, town hall edition.

## Legislation updates

Since we are deep into Congressional recess, there not have been any votes taken. Very few bills of note have been introduced. And last week we reviewed some of the long-pending legislation that deserved to be kept on our radar. What to do this week? Let's take a deep dive into H. Con. Res. 77 and learn all the reasons why we need to push this resolution (or maybe one similar to it hopefully being composed by moderate Republicans?) when we call into our Representative's office. And we might also want to ask Pennsylvania's Junior Senator, Mr. Toomey, why the Republican Senators are not writing a senate version of their own.

### **H.Con.Res. 77 - Condemning fear-mongering, racism, anti-Semitism, bigotry, and violence perpetrated by hate groups**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hconres77/text>

This resolution was introduced by Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) early last week. It was composed before Trump's Tuesday travesty of a press conference, but it still covers all the ground we could want. As of Sunday, 8/20 there were 67 co-sponsors, all Democrats, including Pennsylvania's own Rep. Dwight Evans (PA-020 and Rep. Brendan Boyle (PA-13).

The format of resolutions are that they lay out a selection of facts, and then conclude with a series of actions or statements. This resolution details the events of August 11th and 12th in Charlottesville, including the detail that "the White supremacist march turned violent, culminating in the death of peaceful, counter-demonstrators Heather Heyer and injuries sustained by 19 others after a car driven by a neo-Nazi sympathizer deliberately struck the counter-demonstrators." It also includes a quote from President Trump's "many sides" statement and notes "White supremacist hate websites praised the President's incomplete statements, with a member of one such White supremacist group saying, 'Trump comments were good. He didn't attack us... Nothing specific against us... Also refused to answer a question about White nationalists supporting him. No condemnation at all. When asked to condemn, he just walked out of the room. Really, really good...'" And it concludes the facts portion of the resolution by saying that the President waited two full days before he made his teleprompter speech, and that white supremacists were already planning new events in cities across the nation.

The portion the the resolution that details what the co-sponsors want includes:

- \* a condemnation of the role the white supremacist groups played in inciting violence
- \* a denunciation of the increase in organizing of these groups (which they list by name)
- \* an offer of condolences to the families of Heather Heyer and the two police killed in the helicopter accident
- \* a list of actions that the Congress "urges" the President to accomplish - disavowing a list of white supremacist groups, terminating the employment of white supremacist supporters from White House jobs, and using the resources of the President to combat the growing prevalence of these groups.

The resolution closes with a request that would have been obvious to every other person who ever sat behind the Resolute Desk, that President Trump "use the office of the President to unite the country against hate."

We must urge our legislators to take some form of official action to censure the President. It is not enough to tweet at him, and it is not enough to speak in platitudes about tolerance and unity into thin air.

If the legislative branch refuses to put the president on notice, it means that the GOP leaders value President Trump's signing pen more than they the safety of millions of constituents. Our messaging to our Republican Representatives should be that we want them to either sign on to the Jayapal Resolution as a co-sponsor, or get together in the Problem Solvers caucus and write their own version of this. The message to Senator Casey is a polite request that he introduce a similar resolution in the Senate. And to Senator Toomey, you might ask why he has not called out the President by name in his comments, and let him know you support having the houses of Congress officially censure the President over his inflammatory and unpresidential remarks.

And a preview for next week: barring anything insane occurring in the world of legislation, we're going to look at all of those abbreviated prefixes at the start of bills. What's the difference between H.R., H. Res., H. Con. Res., H.J. Res. and all of the other prefixes? We'll fill you in next week so you never find yourself struggling to find the right bill again!

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, 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

We are seeking additional assistance. Our Congresspeople are 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!