

Week ending 08/27/17 - PA-08 MoCTrack Report

Tracking Congress in the Age of Trump

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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 devoted a good deal of his output to responding to the President's 08/21/17 speech on Afghanistan. He also shared some tweets made by others with images of his 'road trip' stops at events in Lancaster and Shippensburg.

Casey tweet(s) of the week: "This is an abuse of the pardon process & an endorsement of racial profiling. It is wrong. @realDonaldTrump thought he could do this during a hurricane & nobody would notice. We did & must hold him accountable." 08/25/17, linked with an AP article related to the Presidential pardon of Sheriff Joe. Arpaio of Arizona.

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:

The Representative linked to an op-ed he had published in the Intelligencer about a memorial for veterans and casualties in the War on Terror. He visited a local Wawa and Home Depot, with a shot posted of the Representative in Wawa gear, serving a customer. He also retweeted an image from a Charlottesville solidarity event at the local school that was the site of hate-speech graffiti.

Fitzpatrick tweet of the week: "Twenty-six years ago, the people of #Ukraine broke free from the chains of Soviet rule & took up the mantle of a free and independent nation." 08/24/17, shared with an image that reads "Standing strong with our time-tested allies in freedom's cause is liberty's best defense."

Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:

The Senator did not focus on any one issue this week, but responded to a lot of individual pieces of news. He linked to an article about Treasury department sanctions against North Korea and used it as an opportunity to promote his own BRINK Act. He retweeted a news reporter's note about Secretary Tillerson calling out the Russians for supplying arms to the Taliban. And he announced his own town hall in Bethlehem.

Toomey tweet of the week: "Taking part in a town hall next Thursday night in Bethlehem. Full details are available in the article below." 08/25/17, with link to

<http://www.mcall.com/news/nationworld/pennsylvania/capitol-ideas/mc-nws-pat-toomey-town-hall-20170825-story.html>

Casey in the News

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Several local papers had reports on Mr. Casey's stops in their towns as a part of his month-long road trip effort, but many are behind paywalls. For example, the Cameron County Endeavor has a 08/25/17 article titled "Sen. Casey calls for 'common ground'" and the Wellsboro Gazette offered a piece called "Senator Casey visits Oswayo Valley senior center" on 08/26/17 are just not accessible for review..

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WJAC, the NBC affiliate out of Johnstown, has a 08/26/17 article about the Trump pardon of Joe Arpaio titled "Sen. Casey calls Trump's pardon of Arpaio an abuse of the pardon process." The piece quotes Mr. Casey's tweets (which you can read above in our tweet of the week section). The short article offers little in the way of analysis.

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Fitzpatrick in the News

Fitzpatrick news, week ending 8/26/17

Intelligencer, 08/25/17, The Vent, letter to the editor, "Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick's so-called town hall meeting is nothing more than an invitation only, pre-screened ruse...."

CBS Philly3 website, 08/24/17, video with news article, "Town Hall Meeting Addresses Racist Graffiti Found Outside of Bucks County School." The article is about the community meeting organized by the Peace Center about the graffiti at the Herbert Hoover Elementary School. "Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick returned to his home to address an issue that continues to be discussed after the deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville two weeks ago." "This is sickening," he said on the video. "The tone's got to change."

The New American (a publication by a subsidiary of the right-wing John Birch Society), "Republicans Still Seeking Casino Cronyism," 08/24/17, opinion article by Veronique de Rugy, copyright by Creators Syndicate, regarding activities to undermine state efforts to legalize regulate online gambling within their borders. "Brian Fitzpatrick R-Pa, is working on a letter that calls for the Department of Justice to allow (Sheldon) Adelson's army to sidestep the pesky legislative process altogether and unilaterally declare state efforts illegal." The article also said Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA 15th) is trying to attach language to an appropriations bill to accomplish a similar purpose. "The issue is a fixation of GOP megadonor Adelson, whose bricks-and-mortar casinos are threatened by competition from online gambling." The author, a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, a free-market think tank that receives substantive funding from the Koch Brothers, asserted that such "corporate handouts" run counter to conservative principle of noninterference in state affairs.

Roll Call, online political news magazine published in Washington, D.C., 08/25/17, article by Bridget Bowman, "GPO Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick Can't Escape Trump Back Home." The subtitle is, "What happens when a Republican in a swing district faces his constituents." The article included a picture of the town hall and one of the counter-protest. It focused on Fitzpatrick's "measured criticism" of President Trump when pressed about his fitness to serve, and on his embrace of civility as an issue. It mentioned the Fridays Without Fitzpatrick gatherings, and extensively quoted one town hall attendee, Tim Pipe, a computer analyst and Democrat from Middletown Township, who perceived Fitzpatrick as a centrist because of his vote against the GOP health care plan. The district is rated, "leans Republican," the article said.

LevittownNow.com website, 08/24/17, "Pennsbury Launches Opioid & Mental Health Task Force," news article by Tom Sofield. The school district formed the task force at the urging of family members of a Pennsbury alumnus who died of heroin-related causes in 2016. Fitzpatrick applauded Pennsbury's efforts, calling the schools "ground zero" for opioid and mental health problems, and said other districts should follow Pennsbury's lead.

Bucks County Courier Times, 08/23/17, "Pennsbury forms task force to explore ways to better fight drug abuse," news article by Chris English. Fitzpatrick was among the speakers at the press conference announcing the task force.

Newsworks (WHYY) website, 08/23/17, news article by Rob Zawatski with photo, "U.S. Rep. Fitzpatrick emphasizes civil discourse at Bucks County town hall meeting." "Fitzpatrick was frequently met with applause by the largely respectful crowd. However, when asked if he felt President Trump was fit to serve, many people were not satisfied with his response."

LevittownNow.com website, 08/23/17, news article by Tom Sofield, "Congressman Fitzpatrick Covers Wide Range Of Topics." This account was the most comprehensive summary of the content of the town hall, e.g., "Fitzpatrick called for civility, said health care was a universal right but there were multiple solutions, discussed the need for tax reform and talked about President Donald Trump's actions in office." The article contained photos of the meeting and of demonstrators outside. It also noted police presence in the hall, including one Capitol police officer, and cited some critical reaction to the circumscribed nature of the event.

Bucks County Courier Times, 08/23/17, news article by James Boyle, "Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick calls for more civility during town hall." At his first live town hall meeting, Fitzpatrick answered questions posed by Bucks County Community College professor Bill Pezza before an audience of 125 in Bensalem. Other topics included President Trump's fitness for office, his rhetoric on North Korea, health care, and infrastructure. About 30 people held a demonstration outside the gathering. A collection of photos of the meeting accompanied the article. Same article carried by the Intelligencer.

Allentown Morning Call, 08/22/17, news article by Laura Olson, "At town hall, Bucks County Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick talks Trump, health care, future town halls." This is another account of the town hall gathering, emphasizing Fitzpatrick's responses on health care and including a range of listeners' responses.

Benzinga market news website, 08/21/17, news article sourced to PRWEB, "EarthRes Hosts Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick at its Bucks County, PA Facility." Fitzpatrick toured the LEED-certified building occupied by EarthRes, a 75-person engineering and consulting firm that is a member of the International Bottled Water Association. He and company officials discussed issues facing small business, groundwater supply, and the bottled water industry, and went outside to view the eclipse.

Intelligencer, 08/20/17, op-ed by Ryan Manion and Brian Fitzpatrick, "War on Terrorism Memorial will honor veterans of America's longest conflict." The editorial cites bipartisan legislation passed to exempt the global war on terrorism from a 10-year waiting period after the conflict's end before a monument can be authorized. "America needs a reminder that we are still a country at war....(T)he GWOT Memorial is a fitting way to support our Veterans and their families." Manion chairs the Travis Manion Foundation in Doylestown, which honors her late brother, a Marine killed in Iraq in 2007, and is a member of the advisory board for the Global War on Terrorism Foundation, a nonprofit that seeks to build the memorial in Washington, DC.

Intelligencer, 08/20/17 Quote of the Day, cites Fitzpatrick's tweet: "There is no moral equivalency between those who advance hate and those who support it...."

New Hope Free Press, 08/20/17 news article, unsigned, "New Hope Community Urged to Attend Substance Abuse Prevention Meeting Aug. 31." New Hope Solebury Cares is sponsoring a "call to action" substance abuse prevention meeting to be held in conjunction with International Overdose Awareness Day August 31. Featured speakers include Congressman Fitzpatrick and Bucks County District Attorney Matt Weintraub. The sponsor is a nonprofit focused on youth substance abuse prevention.

Legal US Pokersites.com, online newspaper, 08/28/17, article by Jen Newall, "RAWA Supporters Working Behind the Scenes." RAWA is the acronym for Restoration of America's Wire Act, which would weaken state's rights to regulate online gaming. It reports on efforts by two Pennsylvania Congressmen, Brian Fitzpatrick and Charlie Dent (R-15th) to help casino magnate Sheldon Adelson outlaw online gaming, although the state in general wants to legalize online gambling. Fitzpatrick is reportedly writing a letter to the Department of Justice that would restore a ban on online gambling, continuing a legislative effort undertaken by his brother, Michael, who previously represented the district. The article stated that Brian Fitzpatrick will be targeted by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in 2018, which could put his seat at risk, "and he will need donations from the likes of Adelson to make his race a competitive one." Charlie Dent, who has been working "to sneak anti-online gaming language into must-pass legislation" represents a district that includes Adelson's sole casino in Pennsylvania.

Toomey in the News

On 08/22/17, the IP Patent Watchdog (www.ipwatchdog.com) reported on an interesting situation where Senator Toomey has reversed a position related to intellectual property and patent rights. There is a lawsuit that is ongoing between Comcast (a large Toomey constituent and campaign contributor) and Tivo. Comcast used to pay licensing fees to Tivo for using TiVo's intellectual property, but they just stopped paying those fees, and TiVo sued. The article reports that in 2014 Toomey held one position in favor of the patent holder in another case, quoting the Senator as saying that patent-holders "had made considerable financial investments into developing these technologies and without adequate remedies for imported goods that use their patents without paying for them, our de facto policy will be one that encourages this type of activity." But now Toomey has changed his position and is siding with Comcast, according to a letter he addressed to the US International Trade Commission. In that 07/11/17 letter Mr.

Toomey asked the ITC to not harm Comcast and to “not block all importation of the set-top boxes and preclude the boxes from being used legitimately in the US.” He further notes that “Limiting Comcast’s ability to provide cable service will harm a major competitor in the cable market and hinder competition.” The IP Watchdog article notes that “it is all too predictable that a politician would in one case support strong patent rights and the issuance of an exclusion order, but then when a constituent is involved change tune and decry the overreach of the very same exclusion order previously supported as necessary to protect American innovation and job creation.”

On 08/23/17 Bretibart.com published an article titled “Trump Has Opportunity to Protect Steel Industry” where they lay out the steps that need to be taken to protect American markets from cheap steel imports. The article notes that “[Democrat Ohio Representative] Kaptur and Toomey show that this is not a partisan issue, and it is an issue that the American people care about. America First is an idea that seeks to protect American workers and President Trump made American jobs a centerpiece of his campaign for the White House.” It further notes that Senator Toomey previously criticized the Obama Administration “for subsidizing Russian steel mining.”

On 08/25/17 and 08/26/17 a number of media outlets published articles announcing Senator Toomey’s 54 person town hall. The Philadelphia Inquirer noted that Mr. Toomey scheduled the event “after months of pressure from liberals who have regularly protested outside his offices across the state.” The Pittsburgh Post Gazette observed that constituents are likely to “have tough questions about the senator’s efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and his reluctance to criticize more forcefully President Donald Trump.” The Allentown Morning Call, a co-host of the event, stuck mostly to reporting the logistics of the town hall, though they did quote a representative their other co-host, David Willard, chairman of PBS 39’s board of directors as saying “Objective, unbiased and fact-based journalism is a hallmark of our brand promise. That is why we are so pleased that Senator Toomey asked the community’s public broadcasting station to host this event.” The Philly Voice had the pithiest note on the announcement, with “Pennsylvania residents calling for U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey to give more face time to his constituents have gotten their wish. Well, sort of.” The Philly voice also shared a number of tweets from PA residents responding to the Senator’s town hall announcement. One read “Cool when’s the Philly date?” and another noted “54 people? Sure seems like you’re afraid to talk to the residents of PA.” For more info on the town hall, read below...

Town Hall ALERT!

Senator Toomey will be holding a town hall event on 08/31/17 in Bethlehem. Don’t get ready to head up north just yet, though! Much like Representative Fitzpatrick’s event last week, this one has a set number of attendees who must pre-register. In this case, only 30 (yeah, thirty) seats were being made available to the public. Another 24 total seats were being distributed to the Democratic and Republican organizations in Lehigh and Northampton counties, for a grand total of 54 participants.

The event is being co-hosted by the Morning Call and PBS 39. A live feed of the event will be available on themorningcall.com and on PBS 39’s Facebook page. Local PBS stations may also broadcast the event - check your local listings as we get closer to the date of the event. As of today (8/27), WHYI PBS 12 out of Philadelphia did not show that they were going to be airing the event.

The Fitzpatrick town hall was held this past week, on 08/22/17. I provided a full recap on the Fridays with(out) Fitzpatrick facebook group, and it has also been shared with several other area Indivisible groups, including PA-Buxmont and Upper Bucks County. It will soon be posted to the MoCTrack page on the Lower Indivisible website.

And for a video clip of the most awkward and interesting moment of the evening, regarding President Trump’s fitness to serve, please follow this link - <http://www.mcall.com/news/local/94407159-132.html>

President Trump's Afghanistan speech: Our Senators respond

Senator Casey, 08/21/17 via Twitter: “[President Trump’s] proposal deserves a thorough review. I’m pleased military leaders were consulted, but concerned that such a significant decision was made at a time when state department lacks Senate-confirmed leaders in many critical roles. Afghanistan’s future must be decided by the Afghan people, not the U.S. military. The Afghan government must continue to develop the capability and willingness for their own country’s security. I urge @POTUS to engage Congress to enact a new authorization for the use of military force in Afghanistan and Iraq. The truth is that conflicts in Afghanistan & Iraq have changed significantly since 2001/2002. We owe our servicemembers a rigorous debate on a new authorization for the use of force in Afghanistan and Iraq.” A more detailed version of the Senator’s remarks on the President’s speech can be found on Medium, at this link: <https://medium.com/@SenBobCasey/the-presidents-proposal-on-afghanistan-93d82c7b08fd>

Senator Toomey, 08/21/17 via his website: “I commend President Trump on his unequivocal commitment to defeat the terrorists in Afghanistan. Our generals have made clear that they need additional troops and latitude to win this war. President Trump is right to make this commitment. It is also necessary to put Pakistan on notice that we will no longer tolerate terrorist havens in Pakistan. The strategy the President outlined tonight will allow the Afghan people, with support from the United States, to chart a future for themselves while ensuring that their country doesn’t revert back to a terrorist sanctuary from which attacks against the United States can be launched.”

Learning about Legislation: What are those initials in front of bill numbers?

With Congress on recess, there is little to talk about in terms of legislative updates, new bills or votes. So, having spent the last few weeks reviewing old pieces of legislation that merit continued support, now let us turn to broadening our education.

The Legislative branch is confusing, and one of the more confusing aspects is the way they name their actions. There have been many times when I have listened to a well meaning activist speak out against legislation, but give the wrong prefix for a bill, which would send any interested person to search for some other random bill on a totally different topic. I’ve also had people come back to me after I have cited a bill while talking and say they couldn’t find it - and it was because they had only recorded the number and not the prefix. These problems are avoidable if you use the right language and can distinguish between the different types of legislative action. There are four different kinds of legislation one might see, and each house gives it a different name, for a grand total of eight possible prefixes.

Type One: Bills

Bills are the most common type of legislation that moves through Congress. As we all know from Schoolhouse Rock, bills are what can eventually become a plain, old, run-of-the-mill law. In the House of Representatives, bill get a prefix of “H.R.” which stands for “House of Representatives.” In the Senate, the prefix is a simple “S.” That bill called the COVFEFE Act from earlier this year that would make sure that a president’s social media feed is archived like any other presidential output was a House of Representatives bill, and would be cited as “H.R. 2884”

Type Two: Simple Resolutions

A resolution is a statement coming out of the Congress that does not have the force of law. Govtrack describes them thusly: “Simple resolutions are usually used for each chamber to set their own rules, like how much time is used for debate, things like that, or to express the sentiment of a chamber, like congratulating a football team or denouncing violence. They are voted on only in their originating chamber only and don’t have the force of law.” In the House, a simple resolution is cited as “H. Res.” which stands for “House Resolution” in the Senate they are called “S. Res.” which (as you have probably guessed) stands for “Senate Resolution.” Earlier this year we talked about a simple resolution that our own Senator

Casey penned praising the role of the free press in supporting the freedom and democracy in the face of President Trump's unending attacks on the media, and that item would be cited as "S. Res. 150"

Type Three: Concurrent Resolutions

Govtrack states that "Concurrent resolutions are used for rules that affect both chambers of Congress, such as when Congress will adjourn at the end of their two-year sessions, or to express the sentiments of both chambers. Concurrent resolutions are voted on by both chambers, but are not signed by the President and do not carry the force of law." In the House, a concurrent resolution is cited as "H. Con. Res." which stands for "House Concurrent Resolution;" in the Senate they are called "S. Con. Res." which stands for "Senate Concurrent Resolution." The last few weeks there has been a lot of space on progressive social media spent praising the Jayapal Resolution, which is a response to Charlottesville and President Trump's sluggish reaction and divisive speeches about that horrifying event.

Representative Jayapal's resolution is actually a concurrent resolution, and would be cited as "H. Con. Res. 77"

Type Four: Joint Resolutions

We have seen more Joint Resolutions than is normal in this 115th Congress. When Govtrack wrote the article that is my main source

<https://govtracknews.wordpress.com/2009/11/11/what-are-the-different-types-of-bills/>

in 2009, they noted "Joint resolutions... have two uses, and why they have these uses is a matter of history. First, joint resolutions can be used to enact law in exactly the same manner as a bill. This is rare. Even more rare is their second use. Joint resolutions are how Congress begins the process of a constitutional amendment. These types of joint resolutions must be passed by both chambers and then ratified by 3/4ths of the states, but, as the Constitution says, they need not be approved by the President, in order to amend the Constitution." When they composed this, they had not counted on the use of the Congressional Review Act (CRA) and how much that would raise the number of Joint Resolutions. The CRA allows the Congress to look back at new rules passed by agencies and with the passage of a Joint Resolution, overturn them. They have only 60 days at the start of a new Congress to use this maneuver. It requires a perfect storm to be of any use - and we are amidst such a storm. It would only happen if the Presidency changes party and the new Congress is of the same party of the President, which is exactly how 2017 started off. Prior to this year, the CRA had only been used once before. In this term, there were 14 successfully passed CRA attempts, and thus 14 Joint Resolutions passed. In the House, a joint resolution is cited as "H.J. Res." which stands for "House Joint Resolution;" in the Senate they are called "S.J. Res." which stands for "Senate Joint Resolution." Earlier this year, Full Frontal with Samantha Bee (which you should be watching if you are not already) spent time discussing a piece of legislation that would remove a bunch of wildlife protections, including allowing hunters to shoot bear cubs and wolf pups in their dens. This was a CRA attempt and it used the Joint Resolution process. It would be cited as "H.J. Res. 69"... and FYI, it was signed into law by President Trump.

I hope you find this "Learning about Legislation" segment useful. I would welcome your feedback about whether or not I should continue the practice of doing an educational segment when our legislators are on recess... Because I really don't want to bore you all if this is not your cup of tea. If you have feelings about this topic one way or the other, please either respond in the comments section (if you get this via Facebook) or email me at KierstynPZ@gmail.com and put "LAL Feedback" in the subject line. Thanks!

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 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 - 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 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 and put "MoCTrack Help" in the subject. Thanks!**Week ending**

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Fitzpatrick news, week ending 8/26/17

Intelligencer, 08/25/17, The Vent, letter to the editor, "Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick's so-called town hall meeting is nothing more than an invitation only, pre-screened ruse...."

CBS Philly3 website, 08/24/17, video with news article, "Town Hall Meeting Addresses Racist Graffiti Found Outside of Bucks County School." The article is about the community meeting organized by the Peace Center about the graffiti at the Herbert Hoover Elementary School. "Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick returned to his home to address an issue that continues to be discussed after the deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville two weeks ago." "This is sickening," he said on the video. "The tone's got to change."

The New American (a publication by a subsidiary of the right-wing John Birch Society), "Republicans Still Seeking Casino Cronyism," 08/24/17, opinion article by Veronique de Rugy, copyright by Creators Syndicate, regarding activities to undermine state efforts to legalize regulate online gambling within their borders. "Brian Fitzpatrick R-Pa, is working on a letter that calls for the Department of Justice to allow (Sheldon) Adelson's army to sidestep the pesky legislative process altogether and unilaterally declare state efforts illegal." The article also said Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA 15th) is trying to attach language to an appropriations bill to accomplish a similar purpose. "The issue is a fixation of GOP megadonor Adelson, whose bricks-and-mortar casinos are threatened by competition from online gambling." The author, a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, a free-market think tank that receives substantive funding from the Koch Brothers, asserted that such "corporate handouts" run counter to conservative principle of noninterference in state affairs.

Roll Call, online political news magazine published in Washington, D.C., 08/25/17, article by Bridget Bowman, "GPO Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick Can't Escape Trump Back Home." The subtitle is, "What happens when a Republican in a swing district faces his constituents." The article included a picture of the town hall and one of the counter-protest. It focused on Fitzpatrick's "measured criticism" of President Trump when pressed about his fitness to serve, and on his embrace of civility as an issue. It mentioned the Fridays Without Fitzpatrick gatherings, and extensively quoted one town hall attendee, Tim Pipe, a computer analyst and Democrat from Middletown Township, who perceived Fitzpatrick as a centrist because of his vote against the GOP health care plan. The district is rated, "leans Republican," the article said.

LevittownNow.com website, 08/24/17, "Pennsbury Launches Opioid & Mental Health Task Force," news article by Tom Sofield. The school district formed the task force at the urging of family members of a Pennsbury alumnus who died of heroin-related causes in 2016. Fitzpatrick applauded Pennsbury's efforts, calling the schools "ground zero" for opioid and mental health problems, and said other districts should follow Pennsbury's lead.

Bucks County Courier Times, 08/23/17, "Pennsbury forms task force to explore ways to better fight drug abuse," news article by Chris English. Fitzpatrick was among the speakers at the press conference announcing the task force.

Newsworks (WHYY) website, 08/23/17, news article by Rob Zawatski with photo, "U.S. Rep. Fitzpatrick emphasizes civil discourse at Bucks County town hall meeting." "Fitzpatrick was frequently met with applause by the largely respectful crowd. However, when asked if he felt President Trump was fit to serve, many people were not satisfied with his response."

LevittownNow.com website, 08/23/17, news article by Tom Sofield, "Congressman Fitzpatrick Covers Wide Range Of Topics." This account was the most comprehensive summary of the content of the town hall, e.g., "Fitzpatrick called for civility, said health care was a universal right but there were multiple solutions, discussed the need for tax reform and talked about President Donald Trump's actions in office." The article contained photos of the meeting and of demonstrators outside. It also noted police presence in

the hall, including one Capitol police officer, and cited some critical reaction to the circumscribed nature of the event.

Bucks County Courier Times, 08/23/17, news article by James Boyle, "Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick calls for more civility during town hall." At his first live town hall meeting, Fitzpatrick answered questions posed by Bucks County Community College professor Bill Pezza before an audience of 125 in Bensalem. Other topics included President Trump's fitness for office, his rhetoric on North Korea, health care, and infrastructure. About 30 people held a demonstration outside the gathering. A collection of photos of the meeting accompanied the article. Same article carried by the Intelligencer.

Allentown Morning Call, 08/22/17, news article by Laura Olson, "At town hall, Bucks County Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick talks Trump, health care, future town halls." This is another account of the town hall gathering, emphasizing Fitzpatrick's responses on health care and including a range of listeners' responses.

Benzinga market news website, 08/21/17, news article sourced to PRWEB, "EarthRes Hosts Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick at its Bucks County, PA Facility." Fitzpatrick toured the LEED-certified building occupied by EarthRes, a 75-person engineering and consulting firm that is a member of the International Bottled Water Association. He and company officials discussed issues facing small business, groundwater supply, and the bottled water industry, and went outside to view the eclipse.

Intelligencer, 08/20/17, op-ed by Ryan Manion and Brian Fitzpatrick, "War on Terrorism Memorial will honor veterans of America's longest conflict." The editorial cites bipartisan legislation passed to exempt the global war on terrorism from a 10-year waiting period after the conflict's end before a monument can be authorized. "America needs a reminder that we are still a country at war....(T)he GWOT Memorial is a fitting way to support our Veterans and their families." Manion chairs the Travis Manion Foundation in Doylestown, which honors her late brother, a Marine killed in Iraq in 2007, and is a member of the advisory board for the Global War on Terrorism Foundation, a nonprofit that seeks to build the memorial in Washington, DC.

Intelligencer, 08/20/17 Quote of the Day, cites Fitzpatrick's tweet: "There is no moral equivalency between those who advance hate and those who support it...."

New Hope Free Press, 08/20/17 news article, unsigned, "New Hope Community Urged to Attend Substance Abuse Prevention Meeting Aug. 31." New Hope Solebury Cares is sponsoring a "call to action" substance abuse prevention meeting to be held in conjunction with International Overdose Awareness Day August 31. Featured speakers include Congressman Fitzpatrick and Bucks County District Attorney Matt Weintraub. The sponsor is a nonprofit focused on youth substance abuse prevention.

Legal US Pokersites.com, online newspaper, 08/28/17, article by Jen Newall, "RAWA Supporters Working Behind the Scenes." RAWA is the acronym for Restoration of America's Wire Act, which would weaken state's rights to regulate online gaming. It reports on efforts by two Pennsylvania Congressmen, Brian Fitzpatrick and Charlie Dent (R-15th) to help casino magnate Sheldon Adelson outlaw online gaming, although the state in general wants to legalize online gambling. Fitzpatrick is reportedly writing a letter to the Department of Justice that would restore a ban on online gambling, continuing a legislative effort undertaken by his brother, Michael, who previously represented the district. The article stated that Brian Fitzpatrick will be targeted by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in 2018, which could put his seat at risk, "and he will need donations from the likes of Adelson to make his race a competitive one." Charlie Dent, who has been working "to sneak anti-online gaming language into must-pass legislation" represents a district that includes Adelson's sole casino in Pennsylvania.

Toomey in the News

On 08/22/17, the IP Patent Watchdog (www.ipwatchdog.com) reported on an interesting situation where Senator Toomey has reversed a position related to intellectual property and patent rights. There is a lawsuit that is ongoing between Comcast (a large Toomey constituent and campaign contributor) and TiVo. Comcast used to pay licensing fees to TiVo for using TiVo's intellectual property, but they just stopped paying those fees, and TiVo sued. The article reports that in 2014 Toomey held one position in favor of the patent holder in another case, quoting the Senator as saying that patent-holders "had made considerable financial investments into developing these technologies and without adequate remedies for imported goods that use their patents without paying for them, our de facto policy will be one that encourages this type of activity." But now Toomey has changed his position and is siding with Comcast, according to a letter he addressed to the US International Trade Commission. In that 07/11/17 letter Mr. Toomey asked the ITC to not harm Comcast and to "not block all importation of the set-top boxes and preclude the boxes from being used legitimately in the US." He further notes that "Limiting Comcast's ability to provide cable service will harm a major competitor in the cable market and hinder competition." The IP Watchdog article notes that "it is all too predictable that a politician would in one case support strong patent rights and the issuance of an exclusion order, but then when a constituent is involved change tune and decry the overreach of the very same exclusion order previously supported as necessary to protect American innovation and job creation."

On 08/23/17 Bretibart.com published an article titled "Trump Has Opportunity to Protect Steel Industry" where they lay out the steps that need to be taken to protect American markets from cheap steel imports. The article notes that "[Democrat Ohio Representative] Kaptur and Toomey show that this is not a partisan issue, and it is an issue that the American people care about. America First is an idea that seeks to protect American workers and President Trump made American jobs a centerpiece of his campaign for the White House." It further notes that Senator Toomey previously criticized the Obama Administration "for subsidizing Russian steel mining."

On 08/25/17 and 08/26/17 a number of media outlets published articles announcing Senator Toomey's 54 person town hall. The Philadelphia Inquirer noted that Mr. Toomey scheduled the event "after months of pressure from liberals who have regularly protested outside his offices across the state." The Pittsburgh Post Gazette observed that constituents are likely to "have tough questions about the senator's efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and his reluctance to criticize more forcefully President Donald Trump." The Allentown Morning Call, a co-host of the event, stuck mostly to reporting the logistics of the town hall, though they did quote a representative their other co-host, David Willard, chairman of PBS 39's board of directors as saying "Objective, unbiased and fact-based journalism is a hallmark of our brand promise. That is why we are so pleased that Senator Toomey asked the community's public broadcasting station to host this event." The Philly Voice had the pithiest note on the announcement, with "Pennsylvania residents calling for U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey to give more face time to his constituents have gotten their wish. Well, sort of." The Philly voice also shared a number of tweets from PA residents responding to the Senator's town hall announcement. One read "Cool when's the Philly date?" and another noted "54 people? Sure seems like you're afraid to talk to the residents of PA." For more info on the town hall, read below...

Town Hall ALERT!

Senator Toomey will be holding a town hall event on 08/31/17 in Bethlehem. Don't get ready to head up north just yet, though! Much like Representative Fitzpatrick's event last week, this one has a set number of attendees who must pre-register. In this case, only 30 (yeah, thirty) seats were being made available to the public. Another 24 total seats were being distributed to the Democratic and Republican organizations in Lehigh and Northampton counties, for a grand total of 54 participants.

The event is being co-hosted by the Morning Call and PBS 39. A live feed of the event will be available on themorningcall.com and on PBS 39's Facebook page. Local PBS stations may also broadcast the event - check your local listings as we get closer to the date of the event. As of today (8/27), WHY PBS

12 out of Philadelphia did not show that they were going to be airing the event.

The Fitzpatrick town hall was held this past week, on 08/22/17. I provided a full recap on the Fridays with(out) Fitzpatrick facebook group, and it has also been shared with several other area Indivisible groups, including PA-Buxmont and Upper Bucks County. It will soon be posted to the MoCTrack page on the Lower Indivisible website.

And for a video clip of the most awkward and interesting moment of the evening, regarding President Trump's fitness to serve, please follow this link - <http://www.mcall.com/news/local/94407159-132.html>

President Trump's Afghanistan speech: Our Senators respond

Senator Casey, 08/21/17 via Twitter: "[President Trump's] proposal deserves a thorough review. I'm pleased military leaders were consulted, but concerned that such a significant decision was made at a time when state department lacks Senate-confirmed leaders in many critical roles. Afghanistan's future must be decided by the Afghan people, not the U.S. military. The Afghan government must continue to develop the capability and willingness for their own country's security. I urge @POTUS to engage Congress to enact a new authorization for the use of military force in Afghanistan and Iraq. The truth is that conflicts in Afghanistan & Iraq have changed significantly since 2001/2002. We owe our servicemembers a rigorous debate on a new authorization for the use of force in Afghanistan and Iraq." A more detailed version of the Senator's remarks on the President's speech can be found on Medium, at this link: <https://medium.com/@SenBobCasey/the-presidents-proposal-on-afghanistan-93d82c7b08fd>

Senator Toomey, 08/21/17 via his website: "I commend President Trump on his unequivocal commitment to defeat the terrorists in Afghanistan. Our generals have made clear that they need additional troops and latitude to win this war. President Trump is right to make this commitment. It is also necessary to put Pakistan on notice that we will no longer tolerate terrorist havens in Pakistan. The strategy the President outlined tonight will allow the Afghan people, with support from the United States, to chart a future for themselves while ensuring that their country doesn't revert back to a terrorist sanctuary from which attacks against the United States can be launched."

Learning about Legislation: What are those initials in front of bill numbers?

With Congress on recess, there is little to talk about in terms of legislative updates, new bills or votes. So, having spent the last few weeks reviewing old pieces of legislation that merit continued support, now let us turn to broadening our education.

The Legislative branch is confusing, and one of the more confusing aspects is the way they name their actions. There have been many times when I have listened to a well meaning activist speak out against legislation, but give the wrong prefix for a bill, which would send any interested person to search for some other random bill on a totally different topic. I've also had people come back to me after I have cited a bill while talking and say they couldn't find it - and it was because they had only recorded the number and not the prefix. These problems are avoidable if you use the right language and can distinguish between the different types of legislative action. There are four different kinds of legislation one might see, and each house gives it a different name, for a grand total of eight possible prefixes.

Type One: Bills

Bills are the most common type of legislation that moves through Congress. As we all know from Schoolhouse Rock, bills are what can eventually become a plain, old, run-of-the-mill law. In the House of Representatives, bill get a prefix of "H.R." which stands for "House of Representatives." In the Senate, the prefix is a simple "S." That bill called the COVFEFE Act from earlier this year that would make sure that a president's social media feed is archived like any other presidential output was a House of Representatives bill, and would be cited as "H.R. 2884"

Type Two: Simple Resolutions

A resolution is a statement coming out of the Congress that does not have the force of law. Govtrack describes them thusly: "Simple resolutions are usually used for each chamber to set their own rules, like how much time is used for debate, things like that, or to express the sentiment of a chamber, like congratulating a football team or denouncing violence. They are voted on only in their originating chamber only and don't have the force of law." In the House, a simple resolution is cited as "H. Res." which stands for "House Resolution" in the Senate they are called "S. Res." which (as you have probably guessed) stands for "Senate Resolution." Earlier this year we talked about a simple resolution that our own Senator Casey penned praising the role of the free press in supporting the freedom and democracy in the face of President Trump's unending attacks on the media, and that item would be cited as "S. Res. 150"

Type Three: Concurrent Resolutions

Govtrack states that "Concurrent resolutions are used for rules that affect both chambers of Congress, such as when Congress will adjourn at the end of their two-year sessions, or to express the sentiments of both chambers. Concurrent resolutions are voted on by both chambers, but are not signed by the President and do not carry the force of law." In the House, a concurrent resolution is cited as "H. Con. Res." which stands for "House Concurrent Resolution;" in the Senate they are called "S. Con. Res." which stands for "Senate Concurrent Resolution." The last few weeks there has been a lot of space on progressive social media spent praising the Jayapal Resolution, which is a response to Charlottesville and President Trump's sluggish reaction and divisive speeches about that horrifying event. Representative Jayapal's resolution is actually a concurrent resolution, and would be cited as "H. Con. Res. 77"

Type Four: Joint Resolutions

We have seen more Joint Resolutions than is normal in this 115th Congress. When Govtrack wrote the article that is my main source

<https://govtracknews.wordpress.com/2009/11/11/what-are-the-different-types-of-bills/>

in 2009, they noted "Joint resolutions... have two uses, and why they have these uses is a matter of history. First, joint resolutions can be used to enact law in exactly the same manner as a bill. This is rare. Even more rare is their second use. Joint resolutions are how Congress begins the process of a constitutional amendment. These types of joint resolutions must be passed by both chambers and then ratified by 3/4ths of the states, but, as the Constitution says, they need not be approved by the President, in order to amend the Constitution." When they composed this, they had not counted on the use of the Congressional Review Act (CRA) and how much that would raise the number of Joint Resolutions. The CRA allows the Congress to look back at new rules passed by agencies and with the passage of a Joint Resolution, overturn them. They have only 60 days at the start of a new Congress to use this maneuver. It requires a perfect storm to be of any use - and we are amidst such a storm. It would only happen if the Presidency changes party and the new Congress is of the same party of the President, which is exactly how 2017 started off. Prior to this year, the CRA had only been used once before. In this term, there were 14 successfully passed CRA attempts, and thus 14 Joint Resolutions passed. In the House, a joint resolution is cited as "H.J. Res." which stands for "House Joint Resolution;" in the Senate they are called "S.J. Res." which stands for "Senate Joint Resolution." Earlier this year, Full Frontal with Samantha Bee (which you should be watching if you are not already) spent time discussing a piece of legislation that would remove a bunch of wildlife protections, including allowing hunters to shoot bear cubs and wolf pups in their dens. This was a CRA attempt and it used the Joint Resolution process. It would be cited as "H.J. Res. 69"... and FYI, it was signed into law by President Trump.

I hope you find this "Learning about Legislation" segment useful. I would welcome your feedback about whether or not I should continue the practice of doing an educational segment when our legislators are on recess... Because I really don't want to bore you all if this is not your cup of tea. If you have feelings about this topic one way or the other, please either respond in the comments section (if you get this via Facebook) or email me at KierstynPZ@gmail.com and put "LAL Feedback" in the subject line. Thanks!

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 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 - 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 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 and put "MoCTrack Help" in the subject. Thanks!