

Week ending 09/10/17 - 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 - **28.6%** (+1.5% from last week)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick - **79.1%** (+1.1% from last week)

Senator Pat Toomey - **91.7%** (-1.9% from last week)

Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight website assesses the voting records of our MoCs to provide this index assessment. Two votes in the House and one vote in the Senate were scored this week. Representative Fitzpatrick voted for the hurricane relief package, and the three month budget and Debt ceiling lifting, which is in line with the Trump position. Senator Casey voted for the budget/debt ceiling extension, while Senator Toomey voted against it. For more detail on this, see the "Votes of Interest" section.

MoC Twitter Action

Senator Bob Casey hot topics:

The Senator was back to having a heavy Twitter presence. He discussed the ending of the DACA program at length, including the false assumptions it was based on and its potential ramifications. He devoted significant space to Education Secretary DeVos's press conference on Title IX and campus rape policy changes. He linked to a recap of his August road trip. And he provided a lot of links to resources related to Harvey, Irma and FEMA's effort in general.

Casey tweets of the week, 09/07/17: "Secretary DeVos' decision to revisit existing campus sexual assault protections is an insult to survivors of sexual assault. Today, Sec DeVos made the work of holding violent perpetrators accountable more difficult."

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:

The Representative focused heavily on gerrymandering this week, tweeting out a link to a Ripon Advance article on the topic that recounts his efforts. He also got into an exchange with his former Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, an activist on the topic (see the tweet of the week, below). He promoted some of his legislative achievements, including a bill to address the opioid crisis that has passed out of the Homeland Security Committee and is now heading to the floor.

Fitzpatrick tweet of the week, 09/08/17: In response to a thank you message from Schwarzenegger for backing anti-Gerrymandering efforts, Rep. Fitzpatrick responded "We're all in this together. Addressing #gerrymandering is about good government."

Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:

The Senator retweeted an update on animals displaced by Hurricane Harvey, commending the Brandywine SPCA for assisting in the relief efforts. He continues to push tax reform, and tweeted out his comments on the debt ceiling vote (more on that in Votes of Interest). And he continues to call on the Senate to take up his BRINK Act on North Korea.

Toomey tweet of the week, 09/08/17: "@RepCharlieDent served the 15th district and PA with honor and distinction. I wish him and his family the best in their future endeavors."

Casey in the News

Topic One: The DACA announcement

On 09/04/17 the CBS station in Pittsburgh had early commentary from Senator Casey, when Trump's DACA decision was simply a rumor. The Senator's response was "I think he's dead wrong if he does that. I hope he won't. That's not who we are as a country. We should protect those kids. They're following the law, they're going to school, they're helping our economy." When the rumor became a reality on 09/05/17 the Senator did not hold back. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette quoted the Senator, who said "It's

not only wrong and immoral and insulting, it's really bad for our economy. It'll cost us jobs, it'll hurt our security. It's a total betrayal of the trust of the federal government." The English-language version of *Al Dia* included most of Mr. Casey's online statement regarding the announcement, including the segment "...our government promised them that they would be protected if they came forward and now President Trump is breaking that promise." FOX 29 covered the rallies in support of the DACA program in the days after the announcement, and quoted Senator Casey, who said "the only good news here is I think there's mounting bipartisan opposition to what the president is doing."

Topic Two: Health Care

The Senator made an appearance at a Labor Day parade in Pittsburgh, where the *Post-Gazette* reported on his comments related to health care. They noted that "Sen. Bob Casey reaffirmed his support for a public option fix to Obamacare, but withheld judgment on Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders's proposed Medicare-for-all legislation until he sees the text of the bill." They quoted the Senator, who said "with the opportunity to fix some of the competition problems, I think for a Medicare-like public option, now, we've got potential to get things done."

Topic Three: Education Secretary DeVos' Campus Assault speech

Earlier this week Secretary DeVos made a speech wherein she announced a rescinding of Obama-era rules related to how college campuses must address campus assault and rape under Title IX, and indicated she will be rolling out a new plan that gives accused students additional rights. The UK outlet *The Independent* quoted Senator Casey in the title of their piece, as he referred to these changes as "an insult to survivors." An education periodical, *Study International*, also cited the Senator's opposition to DeVos' plan. They included a tweet with some of his more procedural objections, "The current regs under Title IX, & the law & regs under my own Campus SaVE Act, already ensure a fair & impartial process for all students."

Topic Four: Proposed Law Enforcement funding cuts

The upcoming budget vote (now pushed to December) has proposals for cutting funds to law enforcement. WITF, a local radio group in central PA, reported that "Casey is speaking out against plans by the Trump Administration and congressional Republicans to eliminate the nearly \$200 million dollar COPS Hiring Program, and cut funding for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) by \$43.5 million, or about 12 percent." WSKG news, which covered northern PA and southern parts of upstate New York, linked to that same article. *The York Dispatch* quoted the Senator, who said "what we don't want to have happen is that program be either underfunded or cut or eliminated."

Fitzpatrick in the News

Intelligencer, 09/04/17 op-ed by Ed Mooney, vice-president of the Communications Workers of America, mid-Atlantic region, "Working people are waiting for politicians go keep their promises," urging enactment of legislation sponsored by Sen. Casey designed to prevent large corporations from offshoring call center and other good jobs. Rep. Fitzpatrick is a co-sponsor and member of a bipartisan group in the House that also supports this legislation. The op-ed urges the president to sign an executive order to take "real action against offshoring."

Bucks County Courier Times, 09/05/17, news article by James Boyle, Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, "Pennsylvania lawmakers call for legislative DACA solution." Responding to President Trump's action to eliminate the DACA "Dreamers" program, and echoing Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Fitzpatrick blamed executive action by the Obama administration for "complicating" the immigration issue. In an e-mailed press statement, Fitzpatrick said congressional action is needed to address all immigration issues, including deportation of criminals, defunding sanctuary cities, and border control, as well as DACA. Among other officials cited in the article, Sen. Toomey praised Trump's action, Sen. Casey called the

ending of DACA unjust and immoral, and Attorney General Josh Shapiro said Pennsylvania will take legal action if the federal government “breaks the law as it ends its commitment” to DACA participants. PhillyVoice, 9/5/17, article by John Kopp, “After DACA decision protesters to ‘occupy’ offices of GOP congressmen across Pennsylvania.” The #PaResist coalition has organized protests against the Trump administration’s decision to end DACA at the offices of the state’s 13 Congressmen, among them Brian Fitzpatrick, Ryan Costello, Patrick Meehan, and Charlie Dent, and at the office of Sen. Pat Toomey.

Politico.com online political newspaper, 09/05/17, article by Edward Isaac Dove, “Bipartisan swath of lawmakers files Supreme Court briefs against gerrymandering.” Ohio Gov. John Kasich became the most recent Republican recruit to “Arnold Schwarzenegger’s push for nonpartisan redistricting” when he signed a friend-of-the-court brief in a case scheduled to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court in October. The article listed 36 current and former members of Congress who have signed on, including Rep. Fitzpatrick. Similarly, Bucks Local News, online newspaper, 9/6/17, unsigned article, “Bucks County Congressman urges U.S. Supreme Court to limit extreme partisan gerrymandering in landmark case.” Rep. Fitzpatrick “led dozens of current and former members of Congress” in urging the Supreme Court to limit gerrymandering in a case set to be heard Oct. 3. The Hill, online political blog, 9/7/17, op-ed by Brian Fitzpatrick, “Bipartisan, forward-looking solutions on redistricting.” Advocates bipartisan support to combat “extreme partisan redistricting,” i.e., gerrymandering, and references friend-of-the-court brief signed by 36 present and former members of Congress in connection with pending Supreme Court case. Ripon Advance online newspaper, sponsored by the Ripon Society, a think tank allied with the moderate wing of the Republican Party, “Fitzpatrick leads call for legal standard to curb excessive political gerrymandering.” Regarding the brief in the pending Supreme Court case.

Newsworks online newspaper, 09/06/17 blog by Dave Davies, “Area U.S. lawmakers hit moderate notes on DACA.” Roundup of comments by area lawmakers on the Trump Administrations scuttling of DACA. Rep. Fitzpatrick is quoted as saying Congress must “fix our immigration system by taking into all aspects of the issue...” (See also BCCT, 9/5/17.) Intelligencer, 9/6/17, “Photos: Rally to support DACA held outside Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick’s office in Middletown.” Photos of rallygoers, shoes, and signs, with accompanying text.

Intelligencer, 09/06/17, letter-to-the-editor by William Ross of Yardley, “Fitzpatrick’s silence speaks volumes,” regarding the representative’s silence on the Comey firing, neo-Nazis, immigrants and the Joe Arpaio pardon and his “acceptance of the President’s actions and hatreds.”

The Hill, online political blog, 09/06/17, article by Ben Kamisar, “House GOP group puts staff in six new districts.” House Speaker Paul Ryan’s super PAC staffs new field offices in six swing districts, including Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick’s, to get a jump on the 2018 midterm elections. Likewise, Roll Call, online political newspaper, 09/06/17, article by Simone Pathe, GOP Super PAC Expands Field Presence to 17 Districts.” Similarly, Washington Examiner, article by David M. Drucker, 09/07/17, “Paul Ryan’s super PAC boosts 2018 ground game with new field offices.” The six new field offices for House Speaker Paul Ryan’s super PAC and located in districts targeted by Democrats, “provide further clues to where Republicans believe the battle for Congress will be won and lost” in 2018. They include the Pennsylvania districts of Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick and Rep. Ryan Costello. Each field office has a full-time political operative and a “volunteer army to knock on doors.”

Westford Eagle (MA), Wicked Local online newspaper, 09/07/17, unsigned news article, “Tsongas, Fitzpatrick bipartisan anti-fentanyl bill passes House Committee.” The INTERDICT Act, H.R. 2142, which “provides U.S. Customs and Border Protection the latest in chemical screening devices and scientific support to detect fentanyl and intercept other synthetic opioids,” has unanimously passed the House Committee on Homeland Security Sept. 7 and been sent to the House floor for consideration. The bill was co-authored by Rep. Nikki Tsongas, a Massachusetts Democrat, and Rep. Fitzpatrick.

Intelligencer, 09/08/17, article by James Boyle, “Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick introduces apprenticeship bill.” Rep. Fitzpatrick has joined a bipartisan group of legislators to introduce the Apprenticeship and Jobs Training Act of 2017, which would create a \$5,000 tax credit for companies that hire individuals enrolled in an accredited apprenticeship program.

Online Casino Reports, 09/08/17, online specialty newspaper, article by Elana K, "Pennsylvania Politicians Split on Online Gambling Ban." Comparison on the pro-online-gambling-ban stance of Rep. Fitzpatrick with the anti—online-gambling-ban stance of former Libertarian Rep. Ron Paul, in a publication dedicated solely to reportage on online gambling.

Bucks County Courier Times, 09/09/17, article by Kyle Bagenstose and Jenny Wagner, "Pressure growing on feds to do PFC Health study." In the face of a potential lawsuit, Sen. Casey has been pushing for the annual military appropriations process to incorporate funding to enable an arm of the National Centers for Disease Control to conduct a national study of the harmful chemicals PFOA and PFOS, which have been found in the water in some Bucks and Montgomery county communities. This effort has been joined in the House by Rep. Fitzpatrick and other Philadelphia-area legislators.

NJ.com online newspaper, Advance Media, 09/09/17, article by Alison Pries, "New bill would allow freezing assets of suspected terrorists." The bipartisan FASTER (Freezing Assets of Suspected Terrorists and Enemy Recruits Act), co-sponsored by Rep. Fitzpatrick and fellow Republican Tom Reed of New York, is slated to be introduced in the House by Democratic Rep. Josh Gottheimer of NJ, who made the announcement in front of the 9/11 memorial in Oradell, NJ. The bill is intended to fill a gap in preventing domestic terrorism by allowing seizure of their assets.

Toomey in the News

Topic One: Tax Reform

On 09/04/17 the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette published an overview of the coming tax reform battle. The article notes that "Democrats say they're trying to withhold comment until Republicans put out a formal plan, but they don't like what they're hearing so far, which sounds to them a lot like Reagan-era trickle-down economics." It goes on to point out the role that Senator Toomey is playing in shaping the coming legislation, observing "...last week alone, he held at least seven events in Pennsylvania where he focused on the budget. The issue also came up Thursday both during and after a televised town hall meeting in Bethlehem." They quote the Senator as supporting two specific policies, "We should lower the business rate because 35 percent is uncompetitive... [and] I've not met a senator yet that thinks we ought to raise taxes on the middle class. There isn't one, so that's not going to happen."

Topic Two: The DACA announcement

On 09/05/17 and 09/06/17 many news outlets covered local politicians' reactions to the Attorney General's announcement that the DACA program would end in six months. Many of these pieces quote liberally from Senator Toomey's website statement. CBS Philadelphia had a video segment where Senator Toomey stated, "Children who were brought to the United States illegally, at a young age, are not at fault and deserve our support. However, President Obama did not have the legal authority to create the DACA program and to ignore enforcement of existing immigration law." The Philly Voice adds more to the statement that Toomey made, including the portion "President Trump's decision to end this program, while giving Congress six months to come up with a legislative solution, is the right step." It further adds that Senator Toomey wants to see a solution for the Dreamers included as a part of a larger immigration reform effort that includes "stopping dangerous sanctuary cities, strengthening border security, and cracking down on companies that hire people who are here illegally." The Allentown Morning Call reported on the Tuesdays with Toomey movement, who protest outside of Mr. Toomey's office, focused on DACA. It observed that "the Salisbury Township regulars, speaking over the traffic noise and supportive car horns along Cedar Crest Boulevard, weren't optimistic that a law will be passed."

Topic Three: The arrest of the Toomey town hall questioner

Many national news outlets have picked up on the story of the man ejected from Senator Toomey's town hall, and then later arrested, for asking a DACA related question that asked if Toomey was aware that his daughter was kidnapped. The New York Daily News referred the exchange as "bizarre" but noted that "the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) defended Radecki, saying that they'd speak with him should he need legal assistance." The Washington Free Beacon reported that "both PBS39 and Toomey's office

said that the decision to press charges was made by the Bethlehem Police Department and not by Toomey.” The Allentown Morning-Call looked at the legality of the question, saying that the local police chief “equated the disruption to someone standing up in a movie theater and yelling “fire,” and then after a pause yelling “ants.” While there is nothing threatening about yelling “fire ants,” he said the pause is intentional and designed to disrupt.” But they also interviewed several professors at Duquesne University, who noted that the charges were likely to be thrown out, since “It’s a public forum; you’re talking to an elected official.” The Russian-sponsored ‘news’ site Sputnik International stepped into the discussion, providing all the same details as other outlets, but calling the questioner “outspoken.” Salon closed their coverage with the most pertinent observation, “ the thought of it — charges for “disrupting a public meeting” — should send shivers down the spine of civil libertarians, no matter how bad the question may be.”

Topic Four: The Debt Ceiling/Harvey bill

Both local and national news reported on Senator Toomey’s decision to vote against the Harvey relief that was paired with a three month debt ceiling raise. Time Magazine’s online presence carried a 09/07/17 article called “Here Are All the Senators Who Voted ‘No’ on Hurricane Harvey Relief” and this was echoed by another list-like piece from The Daily Caller. Both articles noted that the Senator’s objections were not to the hurricane relief, but to the debt ceiling provisions made without tying any spending limits. The local paper, The Bradford Era noted that “Toomey said he hopes that the package would be put together in a way that would assist those affected by the storm and deemed as a stand-alone measure.”

Our MoCs on the DACA announcement - their official statements

Senator Casey, 09/05/17: “The ‘Dreamers’ are young people who have lived in our country since they were children. They have been law-abiding residents who have learned English, paid taxes and secured jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families. Our government promised them that they would be protected if they came forward and now President Trump is breaking that promise.

“President Trump’s action today is an insult to America and our values. This action is profoundly unjust, immoral and without regard for basic fairness. Tearing apart the lives of these young people will make our nation less safe, and harm our economy. According to the CATO Institute, deporting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients would cost more than \$60 billion and would result in a \$280 billion reduction in economic growth over the next decade. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy estimates that the 1.3 million young people enrolled in or eligible for DACA pay \$2 billion each year in state and local taxes.

“It’s clear that Republicans in Washington and the Trump Administration are not serious about fixing the problem of illegal immigration, securing our border and reforming our immigration system. Instead, their only plan is to deport 11 million individuals, including 790,000 Dreamers. Congress should move immediately to pass the bipartisan Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which would allow the Dreamers to become permanent residents if they meet the very stringent qualifications outlined in the bill.”

Representative Fitzpatrick provided a statement to the press, but it is not available on his website, Twitter or Facebook pages. Excerpts from the statement are quoted in an article from a 09/07/17 article in the Intelligencer that is posted on the Fitzpatrick website. Those quotes (in sequence from the article) are: "From dangerous ‘sanctuary city’ policies to the national security threat posed by our compromised borders, it is clear that our immigration system is broken and there is much that needs to be done to fix it. No sustainable fix, however, will be found through executive action only; in fact, it was the previous administration’s usurping of Congressional lawmaking authority which complicated this issue in the first place...

"Congress must reassert its authority and work to fix our immigration system by taking into account all aspects of the issue — from enacting ‘Kate’s Law’ to deport those who commit crimes while

here illegally, to defunding sanctuary cities, to securing operational control of our borders, to treating with compassion those children who were brought here due to no fault of their own, in a manner that is becoming of American ideals and values.”

Senator Toomey, 09/05/17: “Children who were brought to the United States illegally, at a young age, are not at fault and deserve our support. However, President Obama did not have the legal authority to create the DACA program and to ignore enforcement of existing immigration law. President Trump's decision to end this program, while giving Congress six months to come up with a legislative solution, is the right step.

“Congress needs to pass legislation to accommodate these young people while simultaneously addressing the other challenges within our deeply broken immigration system, including stopping dangerous sanctuary cities, strengthening border security, and cracking down on companies that hire people who are here illegally.”

Learning about Legislation - Budget buzzwords

This week the budget was all over the political news, because of President Trump's deal with the Democratic Congressional leaders. It funded the government through December, pushed off the debt ceiling for an equal period of time, and provided an initial \$15 billion for Hurricane Harvey relief. But voting on the budget is a vague description.

The Constitution gives the power of the purse to the House of Representatives. In Article I, Section 9, Clause 7 it says, “No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.” With that wording in our founding document, it is no surprise that one type of bill is an “Appropriation.” The other type is an “Authorization.”

Appropriations set spending limits for departments, agencies and programs. They are usually voted on for a single fiscal year. Right now the House is working its way through a bunch of amendments in [H.R. 3354](#), which is an Appropriations act. For more on that, go down to Votes of Interest.

Authorizations make rules about how appropriated funds can and cannot be spent. The Senate's glossary of terms says “A law that establishes or continues one or more Federal agencies or programs, establishes the terms and conditions under which they operate, authorizes the enactment of appropriations, and specifies how appropriated funds are to be used. Authorizations acts sometimes provide permanent appropriations.” Earlier this year Representative Fitzpatrick and some of his area colleagues in the House were triumphant about getting the Department of Defense to expend funds to deal with the water contamination issue from an old military base in the Warminster area. The Congress directed the DOD to spend that money via an Authorization bill ([H.R. 2810](#) - Section 1060).

Legislation updates

Since DACA is so much in the news, and likely will continue to be, we'll devote this week's legislation updates segment to learning about the various solutions that are being proposed to help the Dreamers. None of our MoCs want to look heartless and evil, and just deport the Dreamers when the program ends in March 2018. But there are a number of potential legislative solutions out there, and little agreement on which will move forward. Some programs just call for an extension of the DACA system, which allows the Dreamers to pay a fee and register with the government for a set period of time, subject to regular renewals - this allows them the ability to work in the US, but though they pay taxes, they do not get access to many federal programs (like welfare, Medicare, Social Security, etc.) Other solutions grant a “path to citizenship,” some mechanism by which a Dreamer may someday become a fully-fledged citizen with a right to vote and all of the other benefits thereof. And yet other legislation packages lump

the solution to the Dreamers' dilemma with other immigration provisions, which complicates the situation considerably.

Comprehensive immigration reform is a big task. Previous attempts at it have taken many months, and ended in failure. The 115th Congress has a lot on its plate. To expect them to draft, negotiate, vote in both houses, perform reconciliation and get a package to the President before March 5, 2018 is not something that history would deem feasible. When you add that spring 2018 is well into the mid-term election season, it makes the goal less achievable. Few moderate Republicans, facing primary challenges from the either (or both) the Freedom Caucus Right or Trump's supporters, would want to be seen collaborating and compromising with Democrats.

Below, please find a listing of the current legislation pending in Congress that deals with DACA.

S. 1615: Dream Act of 2017

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s1615/text>

This Senate bill is a variant on the one that has been around since 2001. It is sponsored by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and there are 9 co-sponsors (6D, 3R). It reinstates the DACA program, and it does allow for a path to citizenship, which would take a minimum of 13 years. An identical version of this bill is pending in the House ([H.R. 3440](#)) and that bill has 191 co-sponsors (189 D, 2R). None of our MoCs have sponsored this bill.

H.R. 1468: Recognizing America's Children Act

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr1468/text>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL) and he says of it, "The bill provides immigrants that have been vetted by the Department of Homeland Security with three pathways toward legalization: higher education, service in the armed forces or work authorization." It provides a path for citizenship, after 10 years of participation in the program. This bill has 29 Republican co-sponsors, including our own Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick and other area Republican Problem Solvers Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15) and Rep. Leonard Lance (NJ-07).

H.R. 3591: American Hope Act of 2017

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr3591/text>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-IL). This bill provides the quickest path to citizenship, five years, and the DACA-like portion of the bill does not require any education, military or work status for the participant to be eligible, though it does exclude people convicted of crimes. There are 151 Democratic sponsors of this bill, but no Republican buy-in.

S. 128: The BRIDGE Act (Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy Act)

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s128/text>

This bill was introduced by Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC). The New York Times says the bill "...would codify the current DACA program into law and extend it for three years, allowing Congress more time to come up with a comprehensive, long-term solution for overhauling the nation's immigration laws. Unlike the other bills in Congress, it does not include a path to citizenship." Like the other Senate offering this bill is co-sponsored by 6 Democrats and 3 Republicans, and the names on those two lists have some overlap. There is an identical version of this bill in the House ([H.R. 496](#)) and that bill has 29 co-sponsors (15D and 14R) including Rep. Fitzpatrick. Please note that this bill is not a long term solution - it simply extends the program so that the Congress can attempt to create a comprehensive immigration reform package.

Votes of Interest

H.R. 601: Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 and Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements Act, 2017

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr601/text>

Earlier this week, when the news came of President Trump making an agreement with Democrats Senate Minority Leader Schumer and House Minority Leader Pelosi, this was the bill that was under discussion.

It funds the government and pushes off another debt ceiling crisis through December, and gives \$15 billion in initial spending towards Harvey relief. Everyone expects that an additional relief package will be necessary, especially in light of the battering Florida is receiving from Irma as I type this up. The Republican leadership, along with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, wanted a much longer deal, because a government shutdown or credit downgrade never looks good for the majority party. The Freedom Caucus Republicans in Congress wanted spending cuts tied to the budget/debt ceiling accommodations. The Democrats wanted to avoid a shutdown, but they wanted a short term solution because it serves them to have this debate come up all over again (as it looks like Republicans can't govern) as we all head into the 2018 election season. As for President Trump, I don't think anyone can accurately explain why he did what he did here. Some people have claimed he wanted to be unpredictable, other laid this decision down to an expression of his personal antipathy towards Sen. McConnell and House Leader Ryan, and yet others say he wanted to reinforce his reputation as a "Dealmaker." You can decide which of those explanations makes the most sense to you.

The House had passed an original version of this bill back in January, as a voice vote. It went to the Senate on 09/07/17, and the changes related to the agreement with Trump were added. It passed the Senate 80-17. **Casey voted YES, Toomey voted NO.** It then went back to the House so that they could vote on the changes, where it passed 316-90, and **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

Senator Toomey issued a statement in regards to his NO vote. It says, "I'm disappointed that a bill intended to help people in need has been swept up into a bad deal for the American people. Legislation to help with the devastation of Hurricane Harvey is urgently needed, and I support that. Unfortunately, the agreement reached by Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer, and President Trump attaches hurricane relief funds to yet another suspension of the debt limit without any spending or budgetary reforms despite our national debt approaching \$20 trillion. A larger aid package for victims of Hurricane Harvey is likely necessary. Hopefully, it will be crafted in a manner that helps only those impacted by the storm and will be considered as a stand-alone measure."

H.R. 3354: Dept. of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr3354/text>

This is a budget appropriations bill that would lay out spending through September 2018. Apparently the House is looking ahead, and not leaving this to do at the last minute in December. Please note - THIS BILL HAS NOT PASSED YET. But as of this week, the House had already voted on 39 different amendments, and some of them have very interesting things to say about how Representative Fitzpatrick feels about a number of issues.

- [Amendment 290](#) dealt with cuts to a program called Neighborworks America, which provides grants related to affordable housing and foreclosure mitigation. The current bill cuts the program by \$47 million. This amendment would have reduced it to a \$4 million cut. This amendment failed, by a vote of 200-220. **Fitzpatrick voted NO** (so he wants the bigger cut).
- [Amendment 299](#) called for the Department of Housing and Urban Development to have its funding cut by 2%. This amendment failed, by a vote of 140-280. **Fitzpatrick voted NO** (so he wanted the higher budget for HUD)
- [Amendment 311](#) would have increased the funding to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) so that they could implement a body camera policy. This amendment failed, by a vote of 140-280. **Fitzpatrick voted YES** (in support of body cameras).
- [Amendment 317](#) would have forbidden a certain portion of the appropriated funds from being used to build or expand ICE detention centers. This amendment failed, by a vote of 180-230. **Fitzpatrick voted NO** (he is in favor of possible detention center expansion).
- [Amendment 338](#) dealt with redistributing EPA funds. It moved about \$32 million away from Environmental Programs and Management, and reassigned it to the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation pilot program. This amendment passed, by a vote of 207-205. **Fitzpatrick voted NO**, unlike most Republicans.
- [Amendment 347](#) concerned ozone standard implementation. Some new, tougher standards were to go into effect this year, and the House had previously voted to delay implementation until 2025 (H.R. 806). This amendment would have struck text from this bill that confirmed that delay. This

amendment failed, by a vote of 194-218. **Fitzpatrick voted YES** (in support of getting better environmental regulations about ozone in place sooner).

Legislation of Interest

Most of Congress's efforts this week were budget/hurricane relief related, but a few news bills were introduced. Presumably these were composed over recess. None were in areas that directly affect resistance to the Trump agenda, so there is nothing new to report.

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!