

## Week ending 07/22/18 - PA-08 MoCTrack Report

### Tracking Congress in the Age of Trump

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

Senator Bob Casey — **29.3%** (no change from last report)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick — **82.8%** (-0.7% from last report)

Senator Pat Toomey — **90.3%** (no change from last report)

Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight website assesses the voting records of our MoCs to provide this index, by comparing any bills where President Trump has stated a position, and comparing the vote of the legislator to that opinion. There were no votes scored in the Senate this week. In the House there were two votes counted, related to carbon credits and ICE.

### Words From Our Founders

"Real firmness is good for every thing—Strut is good for nothing."

— [Alexander Hamilton](#), June 6, 1797

### Votes of Interest -

**S.Res. 583: A resolution commending the Department of Justice for its investigation into the interference by the Russian Federation in the 2016 United States presidential election, and maintaining that the Russian Federation must be held accountable for its actions**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/sres583>

This is actually a story of a vote that was called for and then averted by the majority party. This was a bipartisan response in the Senate to President Trump's shocking performance at the Helsinki summit with Russian President Putin. It was introduced by Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) and co-authored by Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) on July 19, 2018. This resolution had five pieces:

1. It commended the intelligence community for their thorough investigation
2. It affirmed their conclusions about Russian election interference
3. It stated that the Russian Federation "must be held accountable" for that interference
4. It calls upon the legislative branch to "to exercise congressional oversight" and hold hearings
5. It concludes by calling for previously passed sanctions to be implemented immediately

Sen. Flake attempted to get this resolution brought to the floor for a vote via unanimous consent (for more on this procedure, please see this week's Learning about legislation section).. But Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), the Majority Whip, objected to this maneuver. What follows is Sen. Cornyn's statement, as reported in the [Congressional Record](#):

Let me first thank the Senator from Arizona and the Senator from Delaware for expressing all of our concern about Russian interference in the 2016 election. It is absolutely clear they did, and the President has said as much on a number of occasions.

Now, I agree, in Helsinki he was less than clear about that, but he came back and said that he misspoke and reaffirmed his earlier position that, yes, the Russian Government had attempted to interfere in the election, although nobody disputes the fact that they were unsuccessful in changing a single vote or affecting the outcome. Ironically, the very same investigation which has made clear that the Russians did attempt to disrupt the election has also made clear there is no evidence of collusion that anybody has uncovered to date.

My concern with this resolution is that it is purely a symbolic act, and what we need to do is not just offer symbolic resolutions on the floor. We need to do the hard work Senators have to do through regular order. In other words, our committees that have jurisdiction over these issues ought to be permitted to call the witnesses and ask the hard questions and develop the record before we go on record as to a resolution like this...

...All I am asking for is a little bit of caution in the rush to issue a resolution. No. 1, I don't think we acknowledge the full picture, but we also don't commit our work to the committees that have jurisdiction over these matters to do it carefully, thoughtfully, and in a bipartisan way so we come up to the best solution to the problem.

I think this is the wrong way to go about it. I think our committees ought to continue to do their work--Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Armed Services Committee, the Foreign Relations Committee, and the Banking Committee. We ought to come up with the right kind of bipartisan answer, which I think could well include sanctions against the Russian Federation to deter them from meddling in our 2018 elections and beyond. I am confident they will continue until we stop them from doing so.

I object.

And with that objection, the GOP leadership of the Senate was able to avert a politically difficult vote. This resolution will go to several committees for a lengthy review process. And the Senate moved on to the next resolution... If you would like to read additional coverage of the wrangling related to these two resolutions, [CNN Politics](#) provided an excellent review.

**S.Res. 584: A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate against the making available of current and former diplomats, officials, and members of the Armed Forces of the United States for questioning by the government of Vladimir Putin**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/115-2018/s162>

At the Helsinki Summit, one of the more unbelievable moments was when Russian President Putin said he wanted several US citizens, including Michael McFaul, the former US ambassador to Russia, to be brought to Russia for questioning, and President Trump called this an “[incredible offer](#).” In response to this unacceptable situation, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) offered a bare-bones resolution that simply says “the United States should refuse to make available any current or former diplomat, civil servant, political appointee, law enforcement official, or member of the Armed Forces of the United States for questioning by the government of Vladimir Putin.” In a vote taken on July 19, 2018 (after Sen. Cornyn objected to the more expansive resolution and sent it to committees), this resolution was agreed to, unanimously, 98-0. **Casey voted YES and Toomey votes YES.**

**On the Nomination PN1391: James Blew, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Department of Education**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/115-2018/s156>

Another highly questionable Trump Administration nominee was confirmed to fill another key post in our nation's bureaucracy. This time the position is in Betsy DeVos's Department of Education, as the assistant secretary for planning, evaluation, and policy development. Unsurprisingly, the nominee shares DeVos's passion for weakening the public school system and has been a professional advocate for charter schools. [James Blew](#) worked for 11 years as director of K-12 reform investments for the Walton Family Foundation, the nation's largest funder of charter schools. During the hearing process the [Washington Post](#) reported that Blew told Congress "he was 'unaware' of extensive research showing that voucher programs in three states negatively affected student achievement. And he conceded that his belief that school choice always led to positive impacts on achievement rested on anecdotal evidence." It is deeply disturbing that the person assigned to create policy at the Department of Education pays greater attention to anecdotal evidence than actual studies. Mr. Blew was confirmed in a party line 50-49 vote. **Casey voted NO and Toomey voted YES.**

**On the Nomination PN1645: Andrew S. Oldham, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/115-2018/s160>

This vote represents one more move on the part of the Trump Administration to reshape the judicial branch in their reactionary, ultra-conservative image. Andrew S. Oldham was nominated to fill a vacancy on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which oversees Louisiana, Mississippi and parts of Texas. The [Alliance for Justice](#), an organization that describes themselves as a “national association of 130 organizations, representing a broad array of groups committed to progressive values and the creation of an equitable, just, and free society” made the following [statement](#) about Mr. Oldham:

Oldham’s record paints a clear picture of an ideological warrior bent on curtailing critical rights and protections for everyday people. His nomination is entirely in keeping with the Trump Administration’s stated goal of appointing judges who will assist in tearing down health, safety and consumer protections and the federal agencies that create and enforce them.... At 39, Oldham is also the youngest person Trump has nominated for a seat on the circuit courts of appeals, which means that if confirmed, he could wield influence on the Fifth Circuit for three to four decades or more. This, too, is in keeping with the administration’s strategy of naming ever-younger individuals to the federal bench to cement in place a rightward tilt to our system of justice. Alliance for Justice strongly opposes Oldham’s confirmation.

The statement goes on to explain their concerns about Mr. Oldham’s legal positions on the environment, workers and consumers, Dreamers, gun safety, civil rights, reproductive rights, health care, and antitrust issues. Despite these voluminous and well-documented concerns, Mr. Oldham was confirmed in a party line vote, 50-49, on July 18, 2018. **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES**.

**On Motion to Recommit with Instructions: H.R. 6147: Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/115-2018/h364>

A good portion of the House’s efforts this week revolved around this appropriations bill. One of the more notable changes made to it was the Republican decision to strip out all of the funding to the states for election security. This was particularly noteworthy and concerning in light of the recent revelations from Rod Rosenstein’s [indictments of Russian intelligence officers](#) for election interference. Prior to the final vote, Rep. Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) made a [motion to recommit](#) the bill. From the Congressional Record:

The instructions contained in the motion seek to require the bill to be reported back to the House with an amendment to decrease funds for the Fund for America’s Kids and Grandkids account by \$380 million and increase funds for the Election Assistance Commission account by a similar amount.

The motion failed on party lines, in a 182-232 vote on July 19, 2018. **Fitzpatrick voted NO**.

**H.R. 6147: Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/115-2018/h365>

This is a massive appropriations bill that will provide 2019 funding for the departments cited in the bill title, as well as the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education, the Department of Agriculture for the Forest Service, the Department of Health and Human Services, and over a dozen other smaller agencies and programs. The tab for this bill is \$58.7 billion. Among the more upsetting parts of this bill are a \$100 million cut to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) budget, and a policy rider to repeal the EPA’s Obama-era Clean Water Rule. Rep. Betty

McCollum (D-Minn.) observed “these riders undermine clean water and clean air safeguards, jeopardize protection and recovery for vulnerable species, and even intercede in California water issues outside of the jurisdiction of the subcommittee,” as reported in an article in *The Hill* titled “[House completes first half of 2019 spending bills.](#)” The vote took place on July 19, 2018, and it passed 217-199. **Fitzpatrick voted NO.**

### **H.Con.Res. 119: Expressing the sense of Congress that a carbon tax would be detrimental to the United States economy**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/115-2018/h363>

Earlier this week Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.) signaled his support for a carbon tax, a policy to discourage big corporate polluters by putting a cost on their anti-environmental actions. In response, House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) introduced a resolution that states “it is the sense of Congress that a carbon tax would be detrimental to American families and businesses, and is not in the best interest of the United States.” The resolution passed on July 19, 2018, in a 229-180 vote. This was not a pure party line effort. Seven Democrats voted for this regressive effort, and six Republicans voted on the green side. **Fitzpatrick voted NO.**

### **H.Res. 990: Supporting the officers and personnel who carry out the important mission of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/115-2018/h337>

In last week’s MoCTrack we reported that the House Republicans were planning on forcing a vote on the ‘abolish ICE’ [bill](#) introduced by Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Wis.) on July 12, 2018. They quickly reversed course on this plan. As [The Hill](#) reported:

[Majority Leader McCarthy] said Thursday he intended to bring the abolish ICE bill to the floor in an attempt to force vulnerable Democrats to take a difficult vote. GOP leaders thought Democrats in swing districts would be reluctant to criticize the federal agency responsible for fighting human and drug trafficking and border enforcement. But Democrats responded by vowing to vote “no” and dismissed it as an election year show vote. It’s a “political stunt,” Democratic Reps. Mark Pocan (Wis.), Pramila Jayapal (Wash.) and Adriano Espaillat (N.Y.) — the architects of the progressive-backed bill — said in a joint statement.

Instead, the Majority Leader chose to offer a resolution introduced by Rep. Clay Higgins (R-La.) that includes the phrase “The House of Representatives...denounces calls for the abolishment of ICE, and supports the efforts of all Federal agencies, State law enforcement, and military personnel who bring law and order to our Nation’s borders.” In a vote taken on July 18, 2018, the measure passed 244-35. This irregular tally is the result of 133 Democrats opting to vote “[Present](#)” instead of yes or no. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

## **MoC Twitter Action**

**Senator Bob Casey hot topics:** The senator was his typically voluble self, splitting his attention between a number of progressive concerns. Throughout the week his feed was peppered with his objections to President Trump’s behavior at the Helsinki summit, including responses to the president’s corrections, backtracking and commentary from the intelligence community. He also focused heavily on the administration’s continuing attempts to sabotage the ACA, including its attack on the coverage of people with pre-existing conditions. His responses to this issue included a [link](#) to video of the Senate Democrats announcing their plans to defend the ACA and pre-existing condition protections. Other issues that merited the senator’s attention were his objections to circuit court nominee David Porter, the massive stock buy-backs by corporations (instead of promised worker investments) that were the result of the GOP Tax Plan, and improving rural broadband access.

**Casey tweets of the week, 07/19/18:** “The free press is not the enemy of the people, but a guarantor of their liberty. Saying a bedrock of our democracy is more of a threat than a

Russian adversary, who is actively attacking America, demonstrates this Administration's dangerous and reckless approach to our security."

— shared in response to [President Trump's tweet](#) that read, in part, "The Summit with Russia was a great success, except with the real enemy of the people, the Fake News Media"

**Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics:** The representative shared only two tweets this week. One was the contents of his "Trump missed the mark" statement about the Helsinki summit (shared in full in the next section). The other was an image of his statement on the Hamas attack on Israeli citizens.

***Fitzpatrick tweet of the week, 07/16/18:*** "Hamas terrorists continue launching indiscriminate attacks on Israeli citizens, intentionally targeting women and children, in synagogues and kindergartens. These incendiary attacks against Israel are morally reprehensible and must come to an immediate end"

— shared with a link to his [full statement](#)

**Senator Pat Toomey hot topics:** The senator put most of his twitter efforts this week into comments on the Helsinki summit. He shared his statement, which discussed Putin at length, but makes no mention of President Trump or his behavior. The Senator also announced a town hall and provided a link to its feed.

***Toomey tweets of the week, 07/18/18:*** "I've been hearing from a lot of constituents this week on everything that's going on in Washington. Setting up a teletown hall this AM to speak with you about news from D.C.. We'll go live ~10:50, link to come soon. Will also take Qs from Twitter and Facebook."

— the senator's announcement of his telephone town hall, giving his constituents a whole four hours notice on a weekday morning before commencing his event

#### **Honorable mention, lawmaker**

From @SenatorCarper, Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) on 07/20/18: "Make no mistake: Brett Kavanaugh is the next Scott Pruitt, except he'll have the power of our nation's highest court behind him. Read my op-ed in @USATODAY on #WhatsAtStake"

— shared with his [USA Today Op-Ed](#) titled "[If Brett Kavanaugh becomes a Supreme Court justice, he'll finish what Scott Pruitt started](#)"

#### **Honorable mention, media**

From @dandrezner, Daniel W. Drezner, professor at the Fletcher School and contributor to the Washington Post, on 07/22/18: "Because more ideologically extreme representatives tend to get elected from politically safer seats, many of these members end up being wholly unprepared to run a capable campaign when the political tide turns against them."

— shared with a [National Journal](#) article titled "[Republicans in Gerrymandered Districts Facing Tough Races](#)" (sorry for the paywall)

#### **Honorable mention, constituent response**

From @MerryBollheimer on 07/16/18: "Troubling"? He publicly sided with Putin over our soldiers, law enforcement, intel agents, elected reps. and you are troubled? I just can't even imagine what your "statement" would have said if HRC or BHO did this? #ComplicitGOP"

— in response to Senator Toomey's [tweeted statement](#) about the Helsinki summit

## **President Trump's behavior at the Helsinki summit, our MoCs respond**

**Bob Casey, 07/16/18, via [Twitter](#):**

"@realDonaldTrump's conduct during today's press conference with Vladimir Putin was dangerous and reckless. I have supported the Administration's engagement with North Korea and on other matters of foreign affairs because I believe that America is strongest when our foreign policy is bipartisan. However, what occurred today was a new low and profound embarrassment for America. Vladimir Putin is an adversary of America who attacked our elections in 2016, illegally annexed Crimea, has backed the murderous Assad regime in Syria and works every day to undermine our country's security."

"@realDonaldTrump attacked and diminished our law enforcement officers and intelligence agencies on foreign soil in front of a hostile dictator and on matters directly relating to an attack on our nation. In 2017, our intelligence agencies wrote, 'We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election.' They continued 'Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump.'

"The President told the world today that he believes the word of Vladimir Putin over the findings of his country's own intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Why is the President so deferential to Putin while he trashes our law enforcement who protect our country and our communities every day? Is he afraid of Putin? Instead of holding Vladimir Putin accountable in Helsinki, President Trump embraced him and in doing so diminished America's standing in the international community and shamed the office of the presidency."

**Brian Fitzpatrick, 07/16/18, via his [website](#):**

"Our nation must never tolerate a Russian autocrat that seeks to interfere in our elections. As a former FBI Special Agent, I support our Intelligence Community, and I stand by their conclusions. President Trump missed the mark today in failing to confront Vladimir Putin on these realities. The President must acknowledge that Putin directed Russian actors to interfere and undermine our democratic process. Russia is not our ally and Putin is a KGB thug. We must serve harsh justice to those who engage in activities that threaten our democracy, continue an illegal occupation in Ukraine, and support the brutal Assad regime in Syria."

**Pat Toomey, 07/16/18, from [website](#):**

"President Trump's blindness to Vladimir Putin's hostile acts against the United States and our allies - election meddling included - is very troubling."

"American intelligence agencies have confirmed, unequivocally, that Russian actors, almost certainly at the direction of the Russian government and Vladimir Putin, meddled in our 2016 presidential election."

"Whether it's protecting the hackers responsible for this crime, committing numerous human rights violations, invading Ukraine, annexing Crimea, supporting the Iranian regime, taking hostile actions in Syria, or threatening peaceful European neighbors, it's clear that Putin is a bad actor and should be treated as an international pariah."

"Putin insists that the Russian government has nothing to do with meddling in our elections. In that case, he should not object to the hackers recently indicted being brought to justice. Absent his cooperation in achieving that justice, the United States should impose tough new sanctions on Russia."

## Casey in the News

“You have to be hard right to be on that list. I don’t think that’s America. I don’t think that reflects the mainstream of America so we’re going to mobilize on this issue, just like we mobilized on health care and make sure that a corporate justice doesn’t land on an already corporate court.”

— [the senator’s comments on judges on the list of potential nominees to be considered by President Trump, from a \*Bucks County Courier Times\* article titled “Sen. Bob Casey says he fears high court will undo health care gains”](#)

“With respect to the opioid crisis, everybody—especially in these rural counties—thinks they are hit hardest, but the next county over is the same or worse. I remember visiting one and they told me, ‘We can’t keep up with the bodies.’ At the local level, the response and cooperation among police, hospitals, government and community agencies has been remarkable—they just need more resources.... The latest budget did allocate \$1 billion and Pennsylvania got \$52 million of that. But I’ve proposed consistent funding on the order of \$7 billion a year for 10 years because we’re going to be dealing with this for 25 years at least.”

— [from a \*Pittsburgh Courier\* article titled “Sen. Casey calls for more investment in opioid crisis and infrastructure”](#)

“Insurers are warning about the short-term effects of missing the deadline for 2017 risk-adjustment payments and collections. If this occurs, it will financially reward the plans that enrolled higher numbers of healthy individuals in 2017 at the expense of plans that enrolled more individuals with preexisting conditions. In the long term, we will see higher premiums due to the uncertainty this adds to the marketplace, on top of a number of efforts the Trump Administration has taken to undermine our health care system.”

— [an excerpt of a letter co-authored by Casey and Rep. Gary Peters \(D-Mich.\), as reported in the \*Dearborn Press & Guide\* article titled “Peters, Casey urge Trump Administration to resume payments to stabilize health insurance markets”](#)

“From announcing our declaration of independence to the muckrakers of the early 1900s to the chronicling of the opioids crisis today, journalists serve an essential function of our democracy through faithfully reporting and transmitting the news. A free press and newspapers serve as a bedrock of our democracy, and they must have access to the necessary resources that ensure our informed public... While we value our larger publications with wide circulation, it is our local newspapers, whose reporters execute the duties of the fourth estate for their communities, that have struggled the most as Americans across the country make difficult choices in the face of stagnant wages”

— [from an article in \*The Times of Beaver County\* titled “Casey advocates for newspapers in Canadian tariffs hearing”](#)

“I would hope that if you care about pre-ex conditions you should sign on to this resolution... This is a test of the Republican Party whether or not they are going to do the right thing on protecting people with pre-existing conditions.”

— [from a \*Washington Examiner\* article titled “Senate Democrats push to intervene in lawsuit against Obamacare”](#)

## Fitzpatrick in the News

*Editor’s Note - the Representative was uncharacteristically quiet this week. The only direct quotes in the news were taken directly from press releases, like the one he made in the aftermath of the Helsinki summit (quoted in full in the previous section), and quotes from joint statements made with other legislators, like the ones cited below.*

“The EPA should move quickly to make appropriate changes to the existing drinking water health advisories that effectively communicate and explain risks to the public, as well as provide tools for adequate protection from exposure to these chemicals.”

— an excerpt from a letter submitted by a bipartisan group of Congressional delegates from Michigan and Pennsylvania including Representative Fitzpatrick, from an article in *Michigan Live*, titled [“Bipartisan group wants 'immediate' PFAS safety levels update”](#)

“We, as co-chairs of the bipartisan group of support of Ukraine, are deeply concerned about the subordinate behavior of the President in relation to President Putin. USA can't take actions aimed at weakening democratic institutions in the United States and allies abroad. The illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine is an attack on peace and security in Europe, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of Ukrainians and forced millions to flee their homes. We are also concerned the attack of the government of Russia on Ukrainian sovereignty, including cyber attacks on companies, the aggression in the Donbas and the illegal occupation of the Crimea.”

— from a statement made by both Representative Fitzpatrick and Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), as reported in the *Silver Post* article titled [“The Congressmen Called on Trump to Resist the Aggression of Russia against Ukraine”](#)

## Toomey in the News

*Courtesy of contributor Elayne Baker*

“The administration is wrong to use 'national security' as a pretext to impose taxes on steel and aluminum from our closest allies. These taxes are hurting workers, consumers, and companies in Pennsylvania and across the country. It's time for Congress to reassert its constitutional responsibility on trade and today's bipartisan vote shows that there is a way forward to accomplish this.”

— from a *Lehigh Valley Live* article titled [“Touting support for Trump, GOP congressional candidates stump in Easton area”](#)

“The president used national security as the justification. I'm sorry. It is not a threat to our national security to buy modest amounts of steel and aluminum from Canada, Mexico. Seventy-five percent of all the steel that we consume in the U.S., we produce in the United States. Only 3 percent of our consumption is needed for defense purposes. So how can you agree that we have a national security threat when some of the 25 percent comes from one of our closest allies in the world, Canada? It is not true that this is a national security risk.”

— from a *Sunbury Daily Item* article titled [“Toomey: Trump's blindness to Putin's hostility is troubling”](#)

“The president's blindness to Vladimir Putin's hostile acts is very troubling to me. It is obvious that the Russian state directed this kind of meddling. The Russian state doesn't do anything without Putin's okay. And the fact that he [Putin] insisted that he had nothing to do with it proves that he is a practiced liar... What we can do is issue the equivalent of warrants through Interpol and every country with which we have a treaty - if any leave Russia and go there, they would be subject to arrest and depuration to the United States.”

— from *PennLive*, quoting the senator from his telephone town hall earlier this week, in an article titled [“Trump has 'inexplicable blindness' to Putin, U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey says”](#)

“I think they're going to let this run its course and that's exactly what they should do.”

— the senator's comments on the Mueller investigation, from his town hall, quoted from the same *PennLive* article cited above



"I think we should pass legislation that would automatically impose a new round of sanctions that no president could block, in the event that Russia were to intervene in the next round of elections. They need to understand they're going to pay a price that's too steep for them to want to go down this road again."

— from a *WITF* article titled "[Toomey calls for automatic sanctions if Russians meddle with future election](#)"

"[Philadelphia] is one of the most radical sanctuary cities in the country."

— another excerpt from the senator's telephone town hall, as reported in *The Times of Beaver County* article titled "[U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey holds tele-town hall](#)"

## Learning about Legislation: Unanimous Consent

This week Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) attempted to bring a resolution he wrote with Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) to the floor, bypassing the committee process. The resolution dealt with a response to President Trump's behavior at the Helsinki summit with Russian President Putin, so timeliness was of the essence. He asked for unanimous consent to bring the resolution directly to the floor of the Senate for a vote.

The Senate's [website glossary](#) defines unanimous consent as follows:

A senator may request unanimous consent on the floor to set aside a specified rule of procedure so as to expedite proceedings. If no Senator objects, the Senate permits the action, but if any one senator objects, the request is rejected. Unanimous consent requests with only immediate effects are routinely granted, but ones affecting the floor schedule, the conditions of considering a bill or other business, or the rights of other senators, are normally not offered, or a floor leader will object to it, until all senators concerned have had an opportunity to inform the leaders that they find it acceptable.

As described in the "Votes of Interest" section above, Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) did object to this maneuver, so the resolution could not come up for a vote, and was sent back to the committee process.

## Legislation of Interest:

### **S. 3227: A bill to reunite families separated at or near ports of entry**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/s3227>

This bill was introduced by Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) on July 17, 2018. It has 13 co-sponsors (12D, 1I) and it is pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee. At the end of June a San Diego judge ordered the Trump administration to [reunite](#) all of the families who had been separated by the so-called "zero tolerance" policy, but they are nowhere near reaching the benchmarks set by that judge. A large part of the problem is that the agencies responsible for custody of detained children is different from those who detain and try the parents. A lack of cooperation is at the heart of the delays in reunification. This bill would establish permanent coordination between those agencies and non-governmental agencies involved in the separation crisis. [Senator Harris](#) observed:

"This is a crisis created by this administration and has resulted in thousands of children being ripped from their mothers and fathers. Government should be in the business of keeping families together not tearing them apart. A stunning lack of transparency and accountability has left thousands of children in need of reunification. That must happen immediately. We are better than this."

It is a continuing tragedy that the Congress has yet to take action to hasten the end of this crisis. Please consider calling both of our senators about this bill. Please ask Senator Casey to join on

as a co-sponsor, and when you call Senator Toomey, make sure his staff knows that the ongoing family separation crisis is still an issue of major concern to you.

### **S.Res. 582: A resolution protecting American democracy**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/sres582>

This resolution was introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) on July 19, 2018. It currently has one co-sponsor, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) and it is pending in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Sen. Sanders wrote this resolution in aftermath of the President's shocking press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki. While the [text of the resolution](#) is not yet available through tracking websites, Sen. Sanders has posted it on his website. The Senator also kindly [recapped the contents](#) for our ease of use. He explains that if passed the Senate:

1. Accepts the assessment of the United States intelligence community with regard to interference by the Russian Federation in elections in the United States and in other democracies;
2. Must move aggressively to protect our election systems from interference by Russia or any foreign power, and work closely with our democratic partners around the world to do the same;
3. Demands that the sanctions against Russia that were passed last year be fully implemented by the president;
4. Will not accept any interference with the ongoing investigation of Special Counsel Mueller, such as the offer of preemptive pardons or the firing of Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, and that the president must cooperate with this investigation; and
5. Declares that the President must cooperate with the investigation of Special Counsel Mueller.

In light of the debacle in the Senate this week, when a similar bipartisan effort was blocked by Sen. John Cornyn (see the Votes of Interest segment for additional details), it is imperative that our legislative branch take some action to express their unwillingness to back President Trump's inappropriate behavior on the world stage. Please contact both of our Senators to let them know that you demand the Senate take action to support the goals of this resolution.

### **H.R. 6423: To impose sanctions with respect to certain Russian financial institutions**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr6423>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Steve Cohen on July 18, 2018. It does not yet have any co-sponsors, and it is pending in the House Foreign Relations Committee. If the name of Rep. Cohen is familiar to you, that is because MoCTrack has highlighted several of his past efforts, including his [bill of impeachment](#) against the President and a past [resolution objecting to the behavior of the president](#), citing numerous specific emoluments clause violations and unpresidential actions (like lying, bullying, casting doubts on the judiciary and framing the media as the enemy of the public). *This* bill would impose new sanctions on Russia, specifically Russian banks, in protest for Russia's attack on Ukraine and their occupation of the Crimea. In support of this bill, Rep. Cohen made the following statement:

More than four years after the invasion of its sovereign neighbor, Ukraine, Russia continues to flout its international obligations and world opinion, and needs to see that the United States believes there should be a painful consequence. This bill would hit Russian President Vladimir Putin where it hurts – in his and his cronies' banking relationships.

This is a topic of considerable interest to our own Representative Fitzpatrick, who is a member of the Ukraine Caucus. Just this week he issued a [joint statement](#) with other members of the caucus to condemn the president and his decision to not bring up Ukraine and the attack on Crimea at the summit. It would be interesting, then to highlight his reliance on words without actions by bringing this bill to his attention and follow that up with the question why, if he condemns this, he won't join on to an effort that actually takes action against Russia to punish them for this behavior.

**H.R. 6436: To direct the Director of National Intelligence to submit to State election officials and Congress annual reports on pre-election threats for general elections for Federal office**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr6436>

This bill was introduced by Rep. Kathleen Rice (D-N.Y.) on July 18, 2018. It does not yet have any co-sponsors and it is pending in the House Permanent Select Intelligence Committee. Just this week the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Dan Coats appeared at public event and [continued to assert](#) that there was election interference by the Russians and they are maintaining their efforts as we move into another election season. In light of these attacks on our electoral systems, Rep. Rice's new bill would improve intelligence communications between states (who each run their own voting systems), the Congress (who appropriates funding to support state and federal election systems) and the DNI. [Rep. Rice explained:](#)

Right now our country is facing an unprecedented threat from a foreign adversary. An Election Security Coordinator would bring oversight and cohesion to our splintered election security strategy, and would be responsible for overseeing and coordinating all election security efforts across federal agencies. Russia was already successful once, and with Election Day just four months away, we need nothing less than an all-hands-on-deck response, including regular public briefings on an Election Security Coordinator's progress and work... Before they go to the polls in November, the American people deserve real assurance that our government is taking every necessary step to protect our elections. Anything less is unacceptable.

Just this week, all of the Republican representatives in the House refused to return an appropriations bill to committee so that election security funding that had been stripped from it could be returned. Part of their reasoning was that some states still hadn't used election security funding that had been given. This bill, which would provide the latest information to the states, would give them some direction as to how to best use the funding already on hand. Please consider calling your representative to ask him to support this effort.

This report brought to you by the MoCTrack team...

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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 or experience. Can you help us out? Please email [KierstynPZ@gmail.com](mailto:KierstynPZ@gmail.com) and put "MoCTrack Help" in the subject. Thanks!