

Week ending 11/04/18 - 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 — **30.4%** (no change from last report)

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick — **83.9%** (no change from last report)

Senator Pat Toomey — **90.8%** (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. Neither house held votes this week.

Words From Our Founders

"Of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greatest number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people; commencing demagogues, and ending tyrants."

— Alexander Hamilton, from [Federalist 1](#)

Votes of Interest -

No votes have been taken by either house since October 11, 2018. But it is your last chance before the election to review the voting records of the incumbent candidates who are running for office! Here are some tools you might find helpful in the lead-up to Election Day:

- A [database](#) of major votes taken by ALL PA members of the House of Representatives, broken down by topic, with short bill recaps and links to longer bill details
- A [recap](#) of major Cabinet-level, bureaucratic, and judicial confirmation votes from our senators.
- A short [prose recap](#) of the votes of Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick

MoC Twitter Action

Senator Bob Casey hot topics: The senator shared five tweets this week, all related to the murders in Pittsburgh from last weekend, including a link to an essay posted in *Medium* (which is quoted in full in the "Casey in the news" section below).

Casey tweets of the week, 10/28/18: "Beautiful vigil tonight in Pittsburgh. The people of this city have shown tremendous strength and support for one another. We are stronger than hate."

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics: The representative only shared two tweets this week, reserving most of his efforts for his campaign Twitter account (@RepBrianFitz). In one tweet he did some October jobs report promotion, and in the other he shared a thank you message he received from a children's' advocacy group for co-sponsoring a bill.

Fitzpatrick tweet of the week, 11/02/18: "Great news! U.S. employers added 250,000 jobs in October surpassing all expectations. Wage growth jumped past 3 percent. Our economy is booming!"

— shared with a link to a [CNBC article titled "Jobs smash estimates with gain of 250,000, wage gains pass 3% for first time since recession"](#)

Senator Pat Toomey hot topics: The senator is staying mostly silent during this election run-up, since he is not on the ballot. He shared a Halloween message and two tweets about the community response to the murders at the Tree of Life synagogue last weekend.

Toomey tweet of the week, 11/01/18: “Last night, hundreds came together in Allentown to remember those who were senselessly murdered at the Tree of Life Synagogue. It was an honor to join people of various faiths and backgrounds to pray, mourn, and to stand up against anti-Semitism and hate.”

— shared with a link to an [Allentown Morning Call](#) article titled “[At Lehigh Valley vigil, interfaith support for Jewish community in wake of Pittsburgh killings](#)”

Honorable mention, lawmaker

From @SenatorDurbin (D-Ill.) on 11/03/18:

“The perpetrator of this carnage expressed his rage over the activities of @HIASrefugees. I was heartened to learn that despite the negative statements about immigrants & refugees still flowing from the highest levels of our government, HIAS is receiving record levels of support.”

— shared as part of a longer [thread](#) about anti-Semitism, and how we can respond to it

Honorable mention, media

From @renato_mariotti, CNN legal analyst on 11/04/18:

“Yet another reason why Tuesday’s election matters so much. It will determine whether Devin Nunes or Adam Schiff is head of the House Intel Committee.”

— shared in response to [Natasha Bertrand](#), staff writer at *The Atlantic*, who [tweeted](#) several times about former Trump team member Roger Stone. Among the content was that “Roger Stone has amended his House Intelligence Committee testimony THREE separate times since last year as new reports have emerged about his ties to WikiLeaks.”

Honorable mention, constituent response

From @sadieldy777 on 10/31/18:

“Thank you for standing with Pittsburgh and not bowing down to trump. I am so proud of all the leaders here that put the families over his ego. You got my vote on Tuesday... well you always had it lol”

— tweeted in response to Senator Casey’s [Op-Ed](#) in *Medium* (quoted in full in the “in the news” segment of this report)

Casey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Kathy Sites

“In my lifetime, there has never been a midterm election of greater consequence.”

— from the [Penn State University Underground](#) article titled “[Senator Bob Casey, Democratic midterm candidates, holds meet-and-greet](#)”

“President Obama and the Democratic Congress dragged the country out of recession and back to health, cutting the unemployment rate in half under Obama, without help from Republicans. For Barletta to suggest this idea, that somehow the magic was created starting in January 2017, is a big lie and everybody knows it.”

— from the [Reading Eagle](#) article titled “[Senate candidates Casey, Barletta offer differing views on economy](#)”

“We know that, and unfortunately, because of corporate special interests, not just for years, but for decades now ... union membership has declined and that’s one of the reasons the middle class is in trouble. The corporate special interests that run the Republican Party are coming for the right to organize, they’re coming and they’re not kidding about it. We used to live in a state where moderate Republican politicians, governors, senators, and members of Congress had alliances, and appropriately so, with organized labor ... politicians who supported civil rights and supported the Voting Rights Act and supported health care and supported the rights of working men and women. That’s over folks! We don’t have a state like that anymore.”

— an excerpt from the senator’s speech as reported in the [Montgomery Times Herald](#) article titled [“Sen. Bob Casey stumps at Norristown union hall for organized labor”](#)

“Health care and the fight over the future of the Affordable Care Act has emerged as the most important issue in the election because it strikes at the heart of the economic security of many families. That’s made health care a bigger factor in the election than the 2017 federal tax cuts that benefited corporations more than their employees.”

“I was hoping that when the president said a few months ago that he would sign a DACA bill to keep a promise to the dreamers, if he had some border security money. Then when there seemed to be support for that bill, including some brave Republicans, he (Trump) pulled the rug out from everybody. Did not get the DACA bill and I was hoping that would be the first step in getting into the broader debate on immigration.”

— from the [New Castle News](#) article titled [“Casey: Health care fight is election's top issue”](#)

“I appreciate the work of journalists in our nation and throughout the world. I’ve worked in a bipartisan way to promote press freedom abroad and have urged each administration I have served alongside to make press freedom a foundation of our foreign policy. The First Amendment guarantees the rights of the free press. The role of the press is to help ensure accountability through accurate reporting. I won’t always agree with every story that gets written, but I will fight to protect the right to report. In particular, I oppose President Trump’s efforts to brand journalists as the “enemy of the people” and “fake news.” When the president undermines the freedom of the press, it undermines our values and erodes our democracy.”

“I am a supporter of medical marijuana. If a doctor determines that medical marijuana can help a patient, the government should not get in the way. I also believe in criminal justice reform, which would end the policy of mass incarceration for nonviolent drug offenders. States and localities should have the right to put in place marijuana laws that work best for their communities. At the federal level, I believe that the issue of recreational marijuana requires more study before there is a change in federal policy.”

— from the [Doylestown Intelligencer](#) article titled [“Bob Casey: Election a ‘make or break moment for Pennsylvania’s middle class’”](#)

Editor’s note - the Senator also has an [Op-Ed](#) published in Medium on 10/31/18. It is shared below, in full.
An Endeavor Worthy of a Great Nation

On Saturday morning, we witnessed the most deadly act of violence against the Jewish community in American history. As congregants of the Tree of Life Synagogue in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh were holding Shabbat morning services, including a bris to welcome a newborn child into their community, they became targets of horrific violence because of their religious beliefs. Eleven congregants were taken from their families and six other individuals were wounded, including four police officers who responded to the scene. My deepest condolences are with the families of the victims, and my prayers are with the survivors, Tree of Life congregants and members of both the Squirrel Hill and Pittsburgh Jewish communities, whose lives were forever changed by a hateful act of terror.

Tragically, the attack on the Tree of Life Congregation was part of a broader pattern. From the other synagogues and Jewish community centers that have been vandalized and have faced bomb threats, to the mass shootings at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston and Pulse nightclub in Orlando, to the burning of a mosque in Texas and the killing of an Indian man in Kansas, hate-based attacks occur with regularity. And even when hate is not the primary motivation, gun violence is prevalent in American homes, neighborhoods and communities.

These acts of violence strike at the heart of our Nation, and it is up to public officials to take action. We cannot simply offer thoughts and prayers while lives are lost and families and communities are torn apart. America must not let hate define us. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” The president and members of Congress have an obligation to come together to light the way out of these dark times.

We must take action and fight for common-sense policies that will reduce the likelihood that these acts of violence will continue to occur. We must require universal background checks, ban military-style assault weapons and limit high-capacity magazines that allow hundreds of rounds to be fired in short order. We must keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people—suspected terrorists and individuals convicted of hate crimes, stalking and domestic and dating violence. We must provide funding, resources and safety gear for the police officers and other law enforcement officials who respond to these acts of violence—who run towards the danger rather than away from it. We must ensure that nonprofit organizations who face threats, including religious communities, have the resources needed to ensure the security of congregants and religious leaders.

These policies cannot prevent every act of violence or replace what has been lost at Tree of Life and in communities across the Nation. But we cannot simply surrender to a future where we continue to lose over 30,000 lives a year to gun violence. We owe it to the victims, survivors and families to keep working to reduce gun violence and fight the hateful extremism at the root of these acts of terror.

On September 12, 2001, our Nation came together in the face of unfathomable grief and fear and took action to help prevent another 9/11 from happening. We didn’t sit back and say there was nothing we could do to prevent future terrorist attacks. We established the Department of Homeland Security, we made major changes to our aviation security protocols and we improved our systems for gathering and sharing intelligence. We said an attack of that scale would never happen again, and 17 years later Americans are safer because we took decisive action. We must do the same for congregants in our houses of worship, students in our schools and all Americans in other venues as well.

This is an endeavor worthy of a great Nation.

Fitzpatrick in the News

“I have been asked by many Democrats here in the past year why don’t I change parties. If I did that, I’d be doing exactly what I’m speaking out against...”

— from the [Washington Post](#) article titled “[Is spurning Trump enough? Republican Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick is about to find out.](#)”

“I’m exactly where I need to be with the voters.”

— from the [WHYY](#) article titled “[Philly-area GOP congressmen trying to keep distance from President Trump](#)”

“For 14 years, serving as an FBI agent — most of that time in political corruption units throughout the country — there was one commonality I saw most often; an unmistakable correlation between the length of time in office and incidents of corruption.”

— from the *Perkasie News-Herald* article titled [“Fitzpatrick, Wallace face off for U.S. House seat in Pennsylvania's 1st District”](#)

“I have not been shy to speak out against the lack of civility and the tone that I find very problematic. I've done that frequently.”

— from a *Bloomberg* article titled [“Political Violence Heightens Divisions in Trump's First Midterms”](#)

“We stand for what's right.”

— from the Bucks County Community College student newspaper *The Centurion* article titled [“Wallace and Fitzpatrick Hold Final Debate at Lower Bucks Campus”](#)

Toomey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Elayne Baker

“I have met repeatedly with the President of the United States....but frankly we're disappointed that we have not been able to get the solutions that we had hoped for. Nobody ever intended that this mechanism would end up costing hundreds of millions of dollars.”

— from a *State Impact Pennsylvania* article titled [“Sen. Toomey raises alarms about Trump's new ethanol policy”](#)

“I think that a well-intended idea from long ago is threatening this really, really important sector of this industry.”

— the senator's comments on the Renewable Fuel Standard from the *MyChesCo.com* [“Morning Briefing”](#) digest article

Synagogues and other places of worship are safe havens where communities come together to celebrate, pray and reflect. What happened today at the Tree of Life Synagogue was a cowardly act of violence fueled by hate and anti-Semitism.”

— from the *Beaver Times Online* article titled [“Pittsburgh synagogue shooting pushed politics aside for at least a day”](#)

Learning about Legislation - Voter Rights in Pennsylvania

This is a repeat from last week. It bears repeating!

As we approach Election Day on Tuesday, November 6th, it is important to know your rights and responsibilities as a voter.

1. Polls are open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM on Election Day. If you are still in line at 8PM, don't leave! You are entitled to place your vote as long as you were in line before closing.
2. You only need an ID to vote if it is your first time voting at a given polling place. Accepted IDs include your driver's license; a U.S. passport; a military, student, or employee ID; your voter registration card; a firearm permit; a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck or government check ;an ID issued by the commonwealth or federal government
3. You can still place a vote even if your name is not in the polling book. If that should occur, you can place a provisional ballot.
4. If you see improper behavior or intimidation in a polling place, you can call the Pennsylvania Department of State at 1.877.VOTESPA or the ACLU at 1.866.OURVOTE

Additional information about your rights on Election Day can be found at:

- The [ACLU Pennsylvania](#) website
- This excellent ACLU [flier](#) on voting rights
- The [official Pennsylvania government](#) website on voters' rights
- Governor Wolf's office [guide](#) to elections in Pennsylvania

EDITOR'S NOTE - Legislation of Interest has been on hiatus for a few weeks. Since the House and Senate are home, campaigning, it is unlikely that any major legislation has any chance of being introduced or making any progress in the next month. Also, this will allow our MoCTrack team more time to volunteer for our candidates of choice in the final month of the campaign season. Thanks for your understanding - we promise to be back with recaps of new bills of interest after campaign season is over!

This report brought to you by the PA-08 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 and put "MoCTrack Help" in the subject. Thanks!