

PA-01 Member of Congress Tracking Report - 01/20/19

This is a 100% volunteer effort brought to you by a handful of Democrats, Independents and progressives who share a vision of an electorate that knows exactly what their elected officials are doing on their behalf, and who bring that knowledge with them to the polls each year. We want to offer a big thank you to the Pennsylvania Together and Pennsylvania Statewide Indivisible groups who host our report and help us share it to the residents of our Commonwealth!

Tracking Congress in the Age of Trump

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

Member of Congress	This week's score	Change from last report
Senator Bob Casey (D)	32.6%	+0.5%
Senator Pat Toomey (R)	89.2%	+0.3%
PA-01 Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R)	77.1%	-2.3%

Nate Silver's [FiveThirtyEight website](#) assesses the voting records of our MoCs to provide this index, by noting any bills where President Trump has stated a position, and comparing the vote of the legislator to that opinion. Five votes were scored this week - two in the Senate related to Russian sanctions and federal funding for abortion, and three in the House, on disaster funding, appropriations and Russian sanctions.

Words From Our Founders

...is on hiatus until the National Archives are reopened at the end of the #TrumpShutdown

Votes of Interest

Withholding consent in the Senate

[Senate Cloture vote \(the 3rd\) on S. 1](#)

In last week's MoCTrack we discussed the strategy of "[withholding consent](#)" - how a group of at least 41 senators can hold up ALL Senate business to attempt to force the Speaker to bring legislation, in this case bills to end the shutdown, up for a vote. This effort to try and force Senate Majority Leader McConnell's hand is still ongoing, as McConnell attempted to bring up a bill to authorize funding for several efforts in the Middle East to the floor for a third time. On January 14, 2019, he was once again met with the majority of the Democratic caucus withholding consent to proceed, in a 50-43 vote.. Our own Senator Casey continues to be a part of this effort, while Sen. Toomey backs the GOP Majority leader's decision to prolong the shutdown through legislative inaction.

Withholding consent on an abortion bill

[Senate Cloture vote](#)

This is a cloture vote for the bill [S. 109: A bill to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions](#). The bill itself would make permanent the provision often referred to as "[the Hyde Amendment](#)." Currently there are [17 states](#) that allow Medicaid to cover abortion services, using state funds. Pennsylvania is not one of those, and thus the Hyde Amendment is the law of the land here. In a vote on January 17, 2019, the withholding consent strategy continued to prevent Senate Majority Leader McConnell from getting any business done until such time as he brings bills to end the shutdown to the floor. However, Senator Casey was one of only two Democrats (the other being Sen. Manchin of W.V.) to cross over and vote with the GOP to move ahead with consideration of this bill. Senator Toomey was also a YES on this cloture vote.

Senate action on Russian sanctions

[Senate Cloture vote](#)

A good portion of Senate action on Tuesday and Wednesday around the Treasury Department's announcement that they would be lifting sanctions on the Russian owned aluminum corporation Rusal, owned by oligarch Oleg Deripaska. The think-tank *Council on Foreign Relations* [explains](#):

Sanctions against Russia have enjoyed strong support in Congress since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and even more so since the summer of 2017, when concern that President Donald J. Trump planned to lift Ukraine-related sanctions produced strong majorities in both houses limiting his ability to do so... The Treasury Department claimed that relief made sense because sanctions had forced Oleg Deripaska, Rusal's principal owner and a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, to agree to cut his holdings from 70 percent to 45 percent. (Deripaska himself will remain personally sanctioned.) Senators were right to deride this claim. Some of Deripaska's shares will simply be donated to his own foundation or to relatives; others will be acquired by a government-owned bank, itself under sanctions, in exchange for forgiveness of Deripaska's debts. The package bespeaks considerable naivete about how Russia works: does Treasury really believe Deripaska will not continue to run (or, for that matter, own) Rusal?

The first voting action was on Tuesday afternoon, when Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell made a motion to table the resolution. That means a YES vote would be to essentially discard this bill, and let the Treasury Department lift the sanctions. That vote failed, 42-57, and **Casey voted NO** while **Toomey voted YES**. Since the tabling motion failed, the Senate then took a vote to resume debate for this action. In this case a YES vote is to resume debate, while a NO vote would stop all consideration. For the motion to proceed, **Casey voted YES** and **Toomey voted NO**. The motion to proceed passed 57-42, with the same legislators grouped together.

The next day, January 16, 2019, the Senate held a cloture vote, which needs 60 to pass. While 11 GOP Senators sided with the Democrats to move to a final vote, the bill did not achieve the supermajority needed, with a reguly of 57-42. **Casey voted YES** and **Toomey voted NO**

House action on Russian sanctions

[House vote](#)

Back in 2017, the House and Senate passed a bill called Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (or CAATSA, [H.R.364 of the 115th Congress](#)) with nearly unanimous support. It directed the Treasury Department to impose sanctions on various entities, including "senior foreign political figures and oligarchs in the Russian Federation." The Trump Administration dragged its feet in implementing these sanctions, merely cutting and pasting a [list of oligarchs](#) pulled directly from a *Forbes* magazine article. Now, there is an effort in the Treasury Department to relent on sanction against Oleg Deripaska, an aluminum magnate closely connected to Paul Manafort and the entire Trump-Russia investigation.

The *New York Times* [reports](#):

Thursday's House vote, in which nearly 70 percent of House Republicans sided with Democrats and against the Trump administration, represented an even more dramatic display of Republican opposition to the move, signaling concerns within President Trump's own party about his administration's handling of a key aspect of its Russia policy... The congressional showdown over Russia sanctions comes at a time when Mr. Trump's allies have increasingly struggled to address questions about the investigation by the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, into Russian interference in the 2016 election on behalf of Mr. Trump, and whether Mr. Trump's team coordinated with the effort.

In a vote taken on January 17, 2019, this resolution (H.J. Res. 30) passed, 362-53. **Fitzpatrick voted YES**.

Two more House funding bills

[House Vote on H.R. 268](#) and [House vote on H.J.Res. 27](#)

The House continues to vote upon funding bills. H.R. 268 is a bill that extends funding to a variety of departments (Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, Defense, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Interior, Energy, Homeland Security, Environmental Protection Agency, Forest Service, Health and Human Services, Labor, Education, Government Accountability Office, Veterans Affairs, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development) as well as appropriating \$12.1 billion for disaster assistance for a variety of natural disasters (like the wildfires and hurricanes of the past few years). H.J. Res. 27 is a continuing resolution to end the government shutdown, and includes reauthorizations for several popular programs that the previous Congress failed to extend, like the Violence Against Women Act.

The resolution was came up for a vote on January 15, 2019. It was brought up under a process called "[suspension of the rules](#)" which would require that it get a $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority to pass. The final vote was 237-187, thus it failed. This could be considered a test vote for overcoming a veto, since it would need to achieve the same $\frac{2}{3}$ majority. The disaster appropriations bill was then brought up on January 16, 2019. It passed by the exact same vote, 237-187. The chart below shows how each member of the Pennsylvania House delegation voted on these efforts, as it was identical for both bills. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

Slapping the wrist of a racist House member

[House vote](#)

Congressman Steve King, representative for the Fourth Congressional District in Iowa, has been the most outwardly racist Congressman in the GOP for some time. The list of outrageous and offensive statements he has made over the years is long, but to give one example, in 2017 he [tweeted](#) "we can't restore our civilization with somebody else's babies." For years, sentiments like these have been mostly ignored by members of his own party, but that changed as of this past week. But in a January 10th [interview](#) with the *New York Times*, King mused, "White nationalist, white supremacist, Western civilization — how did that language become offensive?" Since then, both Iowa senators have rebuked King, the *Des Moines Register* has called upon Rep. King to [resign](#), as has Utah Senator [Mitt Romney](#).

It was in this environment that the House drafted the resolution "[H.Res. 41: Rejecting White nationalism and White supremacy](#)." The resolution opens by citing the quote from the *New York Times* and the representative by name, and goes on to list a litany of recent racially inspired incidences of violence, including the mass murders at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina and the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The resolution concludes with the statement, "the House of Representatives once again rejects White nationalism and White supremacy as hateful expressions of intolerance that are contradictory to the values that define the people of the United States."

In a vote on January 15, 2019, this resolution passed. 424-1. **Fitzpatrick votes YES.** Even King himself voted for the resolution. The only person who did not vote for it was Rep. Bobby Rush (D-Ill.) who [said](#), "It did not go far enough... [and it's] not worth the paper that it was written on." In the same interview with *CNN*, Rep. Rush spoke of President Trump, adding, that the president is "very versed in the racist antics of Steve King" and that King, "wrote the President's playbook in regards to how a racist should really conduct himself."

While the resolution itself is only a glancing rebuke of Rep. King, of more import is that the Republican Steering Committee has [stripped](#) King of all of his House committee assignments. Read the [Learning about Legislation](#) section of this week's MoCTrack to learn more about why that stings more than the vote on this resolution.

Our senators respond to President Trump's proposal to end the Shutdown

On Saturday, January 19, 2019 the President made a [public statement](#) where he offered a deal to the Democrats where he would grant 700,000 DACA recipient a temporary, 3 year legislative protection for the \$5.7 billion in funding for his wall. This is quite a change from [a year ago](#), when the deal offered (and failed) was permanent protections for 1.8 million Dreamers, including a path to citizenship, in exchange for wall funding. Here is how our Senators reacted to the President's offer.

Senator Bob Casey, 01/19/19, via [Twitter](#):

"President Trump must end the shutdown he created and open the government. Once the government is reopened, Democrats and Republicans can talk about a range of ways to secure the border and reform our immigration system. I have supported increased funding for border security, but I won't vote to fund a wall that security experts say won't work. The House did it's job by sending the Senate a Republican-supported bill to open the government but the @senatemajldr refuses to let us vote."

Senator Pat Toomey, 01/19/19, via his [website](#):

"President Trump's request for \$5.7 billion in border security funding is reasonable and certainly deserved a counter proposal, at the very least. But Speaker Pelosi has refused to negotiate. Now, President Trump is offering Speaker Pelosi and the Democrats a top legislative priority of theirs in an effort to end this partial government shutdown. The president's offer, which is based on the bipartisan BRIDGE Act introduced by Senators Lindsey Graham and Dick Durbin - who serves as the number two Democrat in the Senate - would provide legal status to DACA recipients for three years.

"The Senate will vote on this sensible plan next week. Speaker Pelosi should allow the House to do the same."

NEWS!The retirement announcement from PA-12's Rep. Tom Marino

Less than two weeks after taking the oath of office to start his fifth term in Congress, Rep. Tom Marino issued the following statement (as reported in the Moosic ABC affiliate *WNEP 16 News*):

As of January 23, 2019, I am officially stepping down from Congress. Having spent over two decades serving the public, I have chosen to take a position in the private sector where I can use both my legal and business experience to create jobs around the nation. I want to thank the people of the 12th Congressional District of Pennsylvania for the faith they have placed in me to represent them in Congress. It truly has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I worked in Congress to fight for the hardworking people of our region and I am proud of the work we have accomplished. I am confident that the area will continue to thrive.

It is exceedingly rare for a lawmaker to retire so shortly after winning an election, leaving some to speculate about what kind of 'private' sector job he is taking... or if his [early endorsement](#) and involvement with the Trump campaign in 2016 has any relation to the timing of his departure. Marino's time in office was not without its own controversy. As *Politico* [observed](#), "Marino was nominated in 2017 to be the White House's federal drug czar, a post tasked in part with crafting a response to the opioid crisis, but withdrew after a damning report from The Washington Post and "60 Minutes" showed that he advocated for legislation that would make it harder for the Drug Enforcement Administration to freeze suspicious opioid shipments, a win for drug distributors."

There will now be a special election in this heavily red district. The timing of this election is set by the [Pennsylvania Election Code, Section 627](#), which says that the Governor has to announce an election date within 10 days of the vacancy (so by February 2nd), and that election date has to be at least 60 days after the announcement. So we can expect the election to occur sometime after early April. It is possible for Governor Wolf to make the special election occur at the same time as the primaries on May 21st.

MoC Twitter Action

Senator Bob Casey hot topics: The senator shared a number of stories from Pennsylvanians struggling as we enter the fifth week of this longest shutdown in American history. He tweeted a clip of a [speech](#) he made in a press conference about protecting the rights and coverage for Americans with pre-existing conditions. There was an extended thread about his displeasure at the EPA's decision to 'tamper' with the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard. Also covered this week were tweets about addressing scams targeting senior citizens, an investigation into the deaths of children in the custody of Border Patrol, and well wishes to fellow Senator Angus King, who is being treated for cancer. The senator's Scranton office also shared a notice that they are looking for a Regional Manager (along with a [GIF](#) of Steve Carrell from the Office).

Casey tweets of the week, 01/19/19: "This Administration schemed to deny vulnerable children their right to asylum and then tried to cover it up. Secretary Nielsen is complicit in a policy of cruelty towards migrant children. She lied to the American people and is unworthy of their trust."
— shared with an article from [NBC News](#) titled "[Trump admin weighed targeting migrant families, speeding up deportation of children](#)"

Representative Brian Fitzpatrick hot topics: The representative was more active on Twitter than usual, but most of it was retweets of other people's content. He shared an [Op-Ed](#) from *The Hill* authored by former senator Joe Lieberman that thanked Fitzpatrick (along with a pair of other GOP representatives) for backing the Democrat's rules package. He also retweeted an item from @FloorCharts, an account that shares visual content from congressional floor speeches, that highlighted one of his recent appearances. He then shared two offering from newly elected female Democrats, Abigail Spanberger of Virginia and Mary Gay Scanlon of PA-05, both related to ending the shutdown. His only two original tweets of the week were one related to human trafficking, and another thanking the Pennsylvania and Bucks County District Attorneys for "being leaders in the fight against opioid abuse."

Fitzpatrick tweet of the week, 01/18/19: "Thanks to @PAAAttorneyGen and @BucksDa for being leaders in the fight against opioid abuse. As National Chair of the Opioid Task Force, I will stand with them to #EndThisEpidemic."

Senator Pat Toomey hot topics: The senator's office has certainly picked up on its Twitter presence with week, with several custom designed memes shared from his office. One related to the anti-choice march in Washington this week (see his tweet of the week), another meme was a [branded](#) picture of the senator with Federal Housing Finance Agency nominee Mark Calabria, and the final was a [statement](#) related to the violation of human rights of LGBTQ people in Chechnya. He also shared his thoughts on the ongoing tariff policy of the Trump Administration, and an announcement related to two bills he is backing related to the shutdown (but neither are the funding bills passed by Democrats in the House). There were also offering this week related to the passing of a financier, a meeting with a president of a college, and well wishes for his colleague Sen. Angus King (I-Maine), who is undergoing treatment for cancer.

Toomey tweets of the week, 01/18/19: "Thank you to everyone from Pennsylvania and across the United States who has traveled to DC to attend today's #MarchForLife. Every human life is a sacred gift from God, and we must continue our fight to protect the rights of the unborn. #WhyWeMarch"
— shared with a [meme](#) from his office that showed the March for Life logo superimposed over the Capitol building

Honorable mention, lawmaker

From @SenJeffMerkley (D-Ore.) on 01/18/19:

I'm formally requesting that the @FBI investigate whether @SecNielsen committed perjury during her testimony under oath before @HouseJudiciary. The memo I released yesterday flat-out contradicts her statement that there was no child separation policy.
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/17/politics/migrants-family-separation-dhs-memo/index.html>

— the link shared in the text of the senator's [tweet](#) was to a *CNN* article titled "[2017 draft memo details early plans to separate migrant families.](#)"

He also included an image of the letter he sent to FBI Director Christopher Wray, wherein he requests "an investigation to determine whether Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen committed perjury before the House Committee on the Judiciary"

Honorable mention, media

From @ DanRather on 01/17/19:

Let's remember that probably all it would take to end this madness is for Mitch McConnell to say, "ok, let's vote."

Honorable mention, constituent response

From @Sue_Zee-Que4 on 01/18/19

When you have a uterus, you can have an opinion. Keep your fake Christianity out of our bodies & out of government. You only fight for the unborn. That's not pro-life, that's pro forced birth. Separation of Church and State. Your blatant disregard for the health of women is noted

— shared in response to Senator Toomey's [tweet](#) celebrating the March for Life

Casey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Kathy Sites

"With all of the challenges confronting us and with our Commonwealth playing a potentially decisive role in the 2020 vote, I believed it was important for me to at least consider the monumental undertaking of running President. After two months of considering it, I have concluded that the best way for me to fight for the America that so many of us believe in is to stay in the U.S. Senate and not run for the presidency in 2020."

— the senator's statement to press outlets, as reported by Dan Merica of *CNN* in a 01/18/19 [tweet](#) and cited in a *Politico* [article](#) the same day

"The most important thing we should do is to vote to open up the government. It would still allow us to continue to have an important debate about border security and how best to do that, but that could be done between now and February, and then we'd have another deadline. The bill could be updated to include an accommodation for people who were brought to the United States illegally as children. In one bill, you could have a new immigration policy to fix our broken system... If we care about rural America, we should invest in rural America, by improving access to high speed internet and addressing infrastructure in those areas.

— from a *Lancaster Farming* article titled "[Casey: End Shutdown, Help Farmers](#)"

"Hell no. If the Administration tries to decimate Medicaid through executive action after its scheme was rejected by Congress and the American people, I will fight it with everything I have. Through legislation, in the courts, holding up Administration nominees, literally every means that a U.S. Senator has."

— the senator's comments in response to the Trump Administration plan to initiate Medicaid block grants that would include implementing spending limits impeding states ability to assist the most vulnerable citizens, from a *Politico* article titled "[Trump wants to bypass Congress on Medicaid plan](#)"

"More stories like this need to be heard to create awareness. This bill will create an advisory council to develop the best practices so that banks and financial institutions and other entities that handle money for people are better educated."

— the senator's comments on the reintroduction of his bipartisan Stop Seniors Scams Act, from an article on the Altoona CBS WTAJ website titled ["Bill to protect seniors from scams introduced"](#)

"But he (Trump) should not be taking hostages — hostages not just in the form of government agencies, nine departments of government, I should say, but hostages in terms of the people who will be adversely and already (are) being adversely affected by the shutdown."

— from a [Philadelphia Tribune](#) article titled ["Pols raise alarms over federal funding for food stamp program during shutdown"](#)

"This bipartisan legislation would give law enforcement and judges additional tools to keep young victims safe from adults who have stalked them and targeted them online. Stalking and cyberstalking offenses are uniquely invasive and distressing for victims and their families, especially when the victim is a minor. I urge my colleagues to support and swiftly pass this measure so that we can continue to fight against predatory behavior, keep our kids safe and ensure that they and their families have peace of mind."

— the senator's statement on the introduction of the Combat Online Predators Act which will increase penalties for stalking children, from an article in Allentown's [WFMZ 69](#) website, titled ["Pa. senators, congressman introduce cyber-stalking bill"](#)

Fitzpatrick in the News

"It is] simply hypocritical to vote against funding the government while still accepting pay."

— from a [PennLIVE](#) article titled ["Congress shouldn't take a salary during shutdown,' Bucks County congressman says. But few are listening"](#)

"...any time an investigation is opened on an elected official, member of the media, member of the clergy, they are put in a sort of a separate category called SINS, sensitive investigations that require the highest level of approval. In this case, it would have been, in all likelihood, the deputy director at the time, Andy McCabe and requires coordination with the DOJ and the deputy attorney general, at which point it would have been Rod Rosenstein. So it sort of raises more questions.... These are not opened on a whim."

— from a [Raw Story](#) article titled ["Secret Trump/Russia investigation defended by ex-FBI agent now serving as a GOP House member: 'These are not opened on a whim'"](#)

"This situation is absurd and it's time to end [the shutdown]. Who feels safe flying today? People are worried."

— from a [Washington Examiner](#) article titled ["GOP congressman calls for McConnell to take up a Democrat-proposed bill to reopen government"](#)

"We have no higher responsibility than to protect our kids. We must do everything we can to forcefully respond to egregious instances of stalking and cyberstalking, especially when committed against minors — the most vulnerable among us. The Combat Online Predators Act ensures that, not only are we increasing penalties for these crimes, but we are also requiring federal law enforcement officials to constantly evaluate and update practices to combat this online harassment. I look forward to working with Senators Toomey and Casey and Congresswoman Murphy to get this measure signed into law."

— from an article in the [Wayne Independent](#) titled ["Toomey, Casey, and Fitzpatrick Introduce Cyber-Stalking Bill"](#)

"Human trafficking continues to devastate millions of lives around the world. This criminal conduct may seem a distant problem, but it is not. It exists right here in our own backyards... [this bill] will not only bolster our efforts to prevent human traffickers from using our domestic financial system, it sends a signal around the world to cut off traffickers from the global financial system."

— from a [Ripon Advance](#) post titled ["Fitzpatrick aims to bolster financial industry's ability to combat human trafficking"](#)

“Each and every day, our nation’s military and federal law enforcement officials sacrifice for our safety. Even with their paychecks threatened due to the current government shutdown, members of the U.S. Coast Guard and critical law enforcement continue to honorably report to work. These federal employees are essential to American national security, and their lack of timely compensation is unacceptable.”

— from a [Homeland Preparedness News](#) post titled “[Introduction of SHIELD Act would prioritize military pay during federal shutdown](#)”

Toomey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Elayne Baker

“Everyone is going to be paid, but you have to wait for it.”

— the senator’s unfeeling observation to those affected by the shutdown, from an [Indiana Gazette](#) article titled “[‘Frustrating’ shutdown requires compromise, Sen. Toomey says](#)”

“It’s maddening. There’s nothing happening. There’s a lot of work to be done, and we’re not able to do it, unfortunately.”

— from a [Vice News](#) article titled “[As Federal Staffers Go Without Paychecks, Congress Goes on Vacation](#)”

“It is time to end government by crisis. Every time Congress can’t agree on a funding bill, it’s our constituents and government employees that bear the brunt of Washington’s dysfunction.”

— from a [TRIBlive.com](#) article titled “[TSA union: ‘Our morale is now at an all-time low’](#)”

“I’m not convinced it’s a great idea. ... I think the president probably has the legal authority to do this, but it’s really stretching the intent of the law...It’s probably not illegal.”

— from a [WITF](#) article titled “[Shutdown: Pa. GOP lawmakers wary of national emergency option](#)”

“He invited everybody to blame him for this. Well, that’s exactly what’s been happening, and as a result Speaker Pelosi is absolutely refusing to negotiate.”

— the senator’s commentary on President Trump taking the blame for the shutdown, from the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) article titled “[They won swing districts, but most Pa., N.J. Dems are holding firm against Trump during shutdown](#)”

“Congressman Marino has served the people of Pennsylvania with integrity. His service in the U.S. House of Representatives, and as a prosecutor at both the federal and local level, is laudable. I wish Congressman Marino and his family all the best in the future.”

— an excerpt from the senator’s official statement on the resignation of the PA-12 congressman, from a [Sunbury Daily Item](#) article titled “[Marino resigns House seat 2 weeks after start of 5th term](#)”

“The simple fact is NAFTA was enacted through legislation. It requires legislation to repeal it. The bizarre thing about the administration’s contention is they acknowledge that if they changed one word in NAFTA they have to come back to Congress to get it approved, but somehow they can strike the whole thing and they don’t need Congress for that? That makes no sense and it is not consistent with the legislation.”

— Senator Toomey’s quote from a [Business Insider](#) article titled “[Sen. Chuck Grassley clarifies NAFTA comments: ‘No, I don’t want the president to withdraw’](#)”

“He has been willing to hear me on a variety of occasions. I can’t say I have persuaded him on my point of view. There have been moments when the president was going to take even more draconian steps. I think it could have been much worse. I have to give them credit for at least being willing to listen.”

— from a *Go Erie* article titled “[Sen. Toomey: President has misused tariffs](#)”

“My hope is the administration and China reach an accord that ends this incipient trade war and rescinds the tariffs.”

— from a *Bloomberg* article titled “[USTR Pledges Exclusions From Higher China Tariffs If Talks Fail](#)”

“Enacting this bipartisan measure to strongly punish deviants who exploit the internet to terrorize children is a necessary and common-sense step Congress should take. I appreciate the work of Congressman Fitzpatrick on this matter and look forward to working with Senator Casey to get this legislation passed in the Senate.”

— from a *Sunbury Daily Item* article titled “[Expert, DAs support new bill to combat online stalking of children](#)”

Learning About Legislation - Types of Committees

Last week we indicated that we would try to get up information about committee assignments. The [website](#) for the Clerk of the House does not yet show any official committee assignments. And while a few announcements have been made (like that noting that PA-06’s Rep. [Chrissy Houlahan](#) will be on the House Armed Services Committee), calls on Friday to various MoC offices revealed that staffers are not yet in a position to definitively say to which committees their MoCs have been placed. As soon as this is official, we’ll make it known here.

There are four types of Committees in Congress (excepted from [www.ushistory.org](#)):

1. SELECT COMMITTEES are temporarily formed for specific purposes, often to study a particular issue. They usually do not draft legislation. Some, like the select committees to investigate the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, are obviously intended to have limited lives. Others, like the Select Committee on Aging and the Select Committee on Indian Affairs, have existed for a number of years actually produce legislation. Sometimes long-standing select committees eventually become standing committees.
2. JOINT COMMITTEES have similar purposes as select committees, but they are made up of members from both the House and the Senate. They are set up to conduct business between the houses and to help focus public attention on major issues. Some joint committees handle routine matters, such as supervising the Library of Congress.
3. CONFERENCE COMMITTEES (*which MoCTrack previously [covered](#), when the GOP was working out the details of their 2017 tax bill*) are specially created when the House and the Senate need to reconcile different versions of the same bill. A conference committee is made up of members from the House and Senate committees that originally considered the bill. Once the committee agrees on a compromise, the revised bill is returned to both houses of Congress for their approval.
4. STANDING COMMITTEES, which continue from one Congress to the next, are probably the most important type because they consider and shape the vast majority of proposed laws. Standing committees can be combined or discontinued but most of them have been around for many years. Standing committees also conduct investigations, such as the Senate Banking Committee’s investigation of President Bill Clinton’s Whitewater investments.

Standing Committees are what people generally think of when we speak of committee assignments. What follows is a rundown of the current standing committees in each house:

HOUSE COMMITTEES

Agriculture
Appropriations
Armed Services
Banking and Financial Service
Budget
Commerce
Education and the Workforce
Government Reform
House Administration
International Relations
Judiciary
Resources
Rules
Science
Small Business
Standards of Official Conduct
Transportation and Infrastructure
Veterans Affairs
Ways and Means

SENATE COMMITTEES

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Appropriations
Armed Services
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Budget
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Energy and Natural Resources
Environment and Public Works
Finance
Foreign Relations
Governmental Affairs
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Indian Affairs
Judiciary
Rules and Administration
Small Business
Veterans Affairs

The reason that we here at MoCTrack are so interested in committee assignment is that they do a lot to shape an MoC's tenure in Congress. The bills that our MoCs submit generally have a lot to do with the committees on which they are placed. They spend a great deal of time in their committees and the hearings that they participate in revolve around those topics. Perhaps the most important feature in this political environment, committee placement does a lot to dictate the type of donors that an MoC receives and the businesses that lobby them. As you might imagine, defense contractors spend a lot more time trying to cultivate relationships with the members of the Armed Services Committee than they do those MoCs on the Rules Committee; and big banks are significantly more interested in MoCs on the Senate Finance Committee than they are those on the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee. And some committees that have the strongest ties to budgets and purse strings (like Ways and Means, Appropriations, and Budget) are the most coveted assignment, because every lobbyist wants to be in the good graces of the people who write the checks.

Call to Action - Support this bill!

Obligatory shutdown preface... I am assuming you are already calling Sen. Bob Casey to thank him for holding firm on the Indivisible "withholding consent" plan or to Sen. Pat Toomey to tell him you want him to put pressure on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to bring the funding bills that passed the House to the floor of the Senate for a vote. If you are tired of making those same exact calls, please consider adding this to your repertoire...

S. 162/ H.R. 678 - A bill to provide back pay to low-wage contractor employees

Earlier this week it was widely reported that White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett amended the economic effects of this government shutdown, and said it was twice as bad as was initially projected. The explanation given did not get quite as much press. According to Mr. Hassett, per [CNN](#):

We made an early estimate right at the beginning of the crisis that was a little bit lower than the estimate you just cited and have been studying hard as this has gone on and have found that actually **the damage is a little bit worse because of government contractors**, something that was excluded from our first analysis.

Those government contractors have a major impact on our economy. In an article titled "[Federal contractors strain to stay afloat as shutdown grinds on](#)" CNN explains, "At least 2 million contracted workers could be affected by this partial shutdown, more than twice as many people as the 800,000 federal workers whose jobs have been paused." The *Washington Post* [reports](#) that this situation is costing these businesses \$200 million each week the government is in shut down mode. That same

article has an illustrative map which reveals there is a high density of affected contractors here in Pennsylvania. And many of the workers at those affected companies are not in well compensated positions. The largest number are in roles such as security, housekeeping or clerical work.

The bill to address these troubling problems exists in identical forms in both the Senate and the House. If passed, the bill would compensate low-wage federal contract workers for the wages they lost during the shutdown. The threshold for inclusion would be families that earn up to 200% of the federal poverty level for a family of four.

The Senate version was introduced by Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minn.) on January 16, 2019. It is pending in the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and it already has 26 co-sponsors (24D, 2 Ind), though neither of our Pennsylvania Senators are included in that list. The House version was introduced on January 17, 2019 by Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) and it has 21 co-sponsors (all D).

[House sponsor](#) Rep. Pressley spoke movingly about the plight of low-wage workers when the bill was introduced:

As a former hotel worker, I understand all too well the reality of living paycheck to paycheck and the struggle to make ends meet. This shutdown has further exacerbated these challenges for the thousands of low-wage service workers and their families across the country who have had to take on second and third jobs just to keep the bills paid and food on the table. Within 72 hours of being sworn in as a member of Congress, I sent a letter to Congressional leadership to ensure that the pleas of these low-wage workers do not go ignored. The following week, I cosponsored legislation led by Representative Holmes Norton (D-DC) to ensure any retroactive pay efforts include these hard-working men and women. Today, I introduce my first bill to address this urgent issue. I ran to fight for the ignored, the left out and the left behind and this bill will ensure that these hard-working men and women receive much needed relief.

In a [statement](#) issued upon the introduction of this bill, Sen. Smith concurred with her House colleague:

This bill is about helping a group of people who are often invisible—people who work in the cafeterias, who clean offices after everyone else goes home, security guards who keep our buildings safe overnight,” said Sen. Smith. “These low- and mid-wage federal contract workers have had to go without pay for weeks now, and in past shutdowns, haven’t received back pay. That’s wrong and that’s what my bill is trying to fix.

It is a little embarrassing that there are no Pennsylvania legislators present in the list of co-sponsors of this effort, from either House. Please call all three of your MoCs and ask that they consider co-sponsoring this bill. If you are calling to speak to a Republican MoC, consider using this argument: “These workers may not be directly employed by our government, but that is the end result of a decades-long effort on the part of the Republican party to privatize government jobs. We owe the same responsibility to these people as we do to our federal workforce. Both houses overwhelmingly supported the bill to reimburse federal employees for wages lost in the shutdown ([S. 24](#)) and that bill has been signed into law by the president. Now do the same for these people who also serve our nation, but in a different capacity.”

Thanks for reading up on what our Pennsylvania Members of Congress have been doing this past week. We’re delighted to have you as a reader. If you liked what you read here and think others need to keep up with our MoCs, please share our website - <http://www.patogether.org/congress.html> Or you can head over to Twitter and search for #MoCTrack and retweet what you see there. The House version was introduced the next day by Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) and that bill is pending in both the House Appropriations and the House Oversight and Reform Committees. There are 21 Democrats who have sponsored the House version, but again, no Pennsylvanians. Considering that there are ov

This report brought to you by the PA-01 MoCTrack team...

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Are you an introvert activist looking for ways to help a progressive effort that don't involve phone calls, door knocking, or leaving your house? We are always seeking additional assistance. Our Congresspeople are always busy and there is always more for us to cover — tasks big (example - what traditional media is saying about your MoC) and small (example - what's your MoC tweeting about) 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!