

PA-01 Member of Congress Tracking Report - 03/31/19

This is a 100% volunteer effort brought to you by a handful of progressive Democrats and Independents who share a vision of an informed electorate and a desire to make the process of getting legislative news easier! We want to offer thanks to the Pennsylvania Together and Pennsylvania Statewide Indivisible organizations who host our report and help us share it out 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)	30.9%	0.0%
Senator Pat Toomey (R)	87.9%	0.0%
PA-01 Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R)	72.2%	-1.3%

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. The votes scored this week are both in the House, on the attempt to override the President's first veto, and on opposing a ban on openly transgender people serving in the military.

Want to see exactly what votes went into giving your MoC the numbers above? Click on the name of any legislator and you will be brought to their 538 webpage, where all of the positions that went into the index are listed in an easy-to-read format.

Words From Our Founders

"...the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority..."

— James Madison, from [Federalist 10](#), 1787

Votes of Interest

The Senate takes a first vote on the Green New Deal

[Senate Cloture Vote](#) on [S. J. Res. 8](#)

This week the Senate Majority Leader brought the resolution referred to as the Green New Deal to the floor of the Senate for a vote. Before the March recess, the Senate Republicans had been fractured by the vote on the President's national emergency. In order to pull his caucus together, McConnell called for the vote to simultaneously mock Democrats and highlight their divisions over this climate package. *Roll Call* suggests another strategy in an [article](#) that states, "Republicans had hoped to force Democrats, especially those running for president in 2020, to record their position on the resolution, which conservatives would then use against them on the campaign trail." Additionally, *The Hill reports* that President Trump backed the move to bring up the Green New Deal for a vote, quoting the president as announcing "I want them to keep going forward with it because I want to campaign against it."

In a Cloture vote taken on Tuesday, March 26, 2019, the measure failed. Cloture votes need 60 to pass, and are the means of bringing a bill to the floor for debate in the Senate. The official vote on this bill is 0-57... but that definitely merits clarification. Zero senators voted YES for cloture. Fifty-seven senators voted NO. That NO group included every Republican, three Democrats (Doug Jones of Alabama, Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, and Joe Manchin of West Virginia), and one Independent (Angus King of Maine). The remaining 43 Democrats, including all of the presidential hopefuls, simply voted PRESENT. Vox explained the PRESENT vote, [reporting](#):

Democrats predominately voted “present” on the resolution as a means of calling out Republicans, who had set up this vote to highlight potential splits in the Democratic caucus and force lawmakers to splinter from a high-profile, progressive idea. As the thinking goes, if only part of the Democratic caucus wound up backing the idea, Republicans could argue that it didn’t actually have enough support from the party. They could also suggest that 2020 Senate Democrats — all of whom have expressed support for the proposal — weren’t actually down to follow through, if they didn’t vote in favor of it. Additionally, the move was aimed at putting Democrats from more moderate states in a tough position, forcing them to choose between backing a popular liberal idea and potentially turning off some of their constituents

Casey voted PRESENT and Toomey voted NO.

Senator Casey did not have comment on his official Twitter, Facebook or website presence about this, but here’s what Senator Toomey tweeted after his vote:

□ **Senator Pat Toomey, 03/26/19, via [Twitter](#):**

“Eliminating the use of natural gas and other fossil fuels, phasing out air travel as we know it, and forcing the renovation of every building in the country is impossible and not based in reality. Of course I voted against the #GreenNewDeal <http://bit.ly/2UdUoGy>”

The House fails to override the President’s veto on his fake emergency

[House Vote](#) on [H.J. Res. 46](#)

The President issued his first veto after both the House and Senate passed the joint resolution ending his national emergency (declared to allow him to unilaterally route already appropriated funds to his border fence).

The House attempted to override the veto on Tuesday, March 26, 2019. This is a vote that needed a $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority to pass - that’s 291 House votes. This override attempt failed, 248-181. Fourteen Republicans joined with all of the Democrats for this override. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

Because of the way the National Emergencies Act of 1976 is written, the Congress can bring up a new joint resolution every six months to end the emergency. [NPR reports](#) that Nancy Pelosi is leaving the possibility of another joint resolution vote in September on the table.

The House votes on Paycheck Fairness

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 7](#)

The House took a major step this week, passing the Paycheck Fairness Act. Bill author Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) has introduced this bill in to every session of Congress for the last 22 years. The [National Organization for Women](#) championed this legislation, applauding it for:

- Increasing penalties for wage discrimination and assuring that employers determine wages through the factors of experience, training, and education rather than sex.
- Directing federal agencies to collect and distribute data on compensation discrimination.
- Barring retaliation against women who seek information on pay disparity.

This [article](#) in Vox has additional information about how this bill addresses loopholes in the Equal Pay Act of 1963.

The House voted on this bill on Wednesday, March 27, 2019, and the measure passed 242-187. Democrats were united in support of this bill, and they were joined by 7 Republicans. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

The House stands with openly transgender people in the Armed Forces

[House Vote](#) on [H. Res. 124](#)

Back in July 2017 the President first [tweeted](#) about his intention to ban transgender people from serving in the military. Since that time, an official policy was released by the Trump Administration, but the courts

blocked its implementation. If this summary is too concise, Vox has a complete [rundown](#) of the twists and turns related to the status of transgender military service people, and the background for this resolution. The wording on the bill is direct. It states that the House of Representatives “strongly opposes President Trump’s discriminatory ban on transgender members of the Armed Forces” and “rejects the flawed scientific and medical claims upon which it is based.” It then concludes by urging the Department of Defense “to not reinstate President Trump’s ban on transgender members of the Armed Forces and to maintain an inclusive policy allowing qualified transgender Americans to enlist and serve in the Armed Forces.”

The vote on this resolution took place on Thursday, March 28, 2019, and it passed in a 238-185 vote. The Democrats were united in support of the resolution, and they were joined by five Republicans, including **Fitzpatrick, who voted YES.**

Upcoming Legislative Action - BAD NEWS from the Senate

Keep an eye on this story. It has MAJOR ramifications - bad ones - for the composition of the judiciary. The Trump Administration has been putting forth one judicial nominee after another, each more controversial than the next. Need a reminder? How about [this one](#). Or [this one](#). Or... you get it, and those were just from this month.

In February, Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) introduced [S. Res. 50](#), “A resolution improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate.” This bill would change the confirmation process for almost all Trump Administration nominees, including most judicial and bureaucratic picks. Under current Senate rules, any nominee gets 30 hours of debate time assigned. The ‘improvement’ cited in the title of this resolution would cut that debate time from 30 down to just TWO hours. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell spoke out in support of this resolution last week, as reported in the [Washington Post](#), stating “This is a change the institution needs. This is a reform that every member should embrace: a functional process for building their administrations. Let’s give the American people a government they actually elected.”

That 28 hour reduction in time for debate will mean that the Trump Administration can shove through many more unsuitable and reactionary judicial picks. And according to [Politico](#), they have 128 judicial vacancies to fill. The Senate Majority Leader has scheduled S. Res. 50 to come to the Senate floor on this Thursday. We’ll have more on this situation in next week’s MoCTrack.

MoC Twitter Action

There was so much news that EVERYONE was talking about that it broke the way we normally handle Twitter reporting. So, we’re trying something a little different with this week’s Twitter recap section. What you’ll find below is collections of MoC tweets, bunched by subject. You will also see sections devoted to legislation that our MoCs are promoting, as well as an “assorted awesomeness” section, which gathers up good content that doesn’t fall under any other heading. Please do share feedback to [@BucksCoKierstyn](#) if you have a preference between this new layout or the old version. Thanks!

Please note, this is an abridged version of the Twitter coverage, with only content from Fitzpatrick, Toomey and Casey... except for the “assorted awesomeness” section, because it is a joy to see what other PA MoCs are prioritizing. Almost all of the topics below had commentary from five or more other PA MoCs. If you are interested in seeing more, please visit the [full Pennsylvania version of MoCTrack](#).

Twitter Action - Promoting legislation

☐ Senator Bob Casey, 03/28/19, via [Twitter](#):

“The Stop HATE Act would require @TheJusticeDept and @CommerceGov to study how social media platforms are being used to fuel violence and hate crimes against individuals or groups, and recommend ways—consistent with the First Amendment—that we can combat these growing threats.”
[tweeted with a video clip of a *CNN* appearance discussing this bill]

- **Senator Pat Toomey, 03/26/19, via [Twitter](#):**

“Expanding #SCOTUS for partisan political reasons is a terrible idea. It would diminish the legitimacy of, and faith in, the institution as an independent branch of government. Read about my constitutional amendment with @MarcoRubio here.” [shared with a link to a paywalled [article](#)]

- **PA-01’s Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, 03/28/19, via [Twitter](#):**

“The cost of college tuition, and the crippling effects of student loan debt, have gotten completely out of control. I introduced legislation today to take this issue head-on for the sake of our kids and the next generation.

Twitter Action - feedback on the Trump Administration’s ACA attacks

- **Senator Bob Casey, 03/26/19, via [Twitter](#):**

“Here’s some news you might have missed. Yesterday, with all of Washington focused on the Mueller investigation, Trump’s DOJ quietly filed a brief that they support a recent district court decision that invalidated the ENTIRE Affordable Care Act. It’s now the official position of @realDonaldTrump’s administration that they want to rip health care coverage away from the 30 million Americans that receive theirs under the ACA marketplace and Medicaid expansion. It’s now the official position of @realDonaldTrump’s administration that we should no longer protect people with preexisting conditions. They are attempting to circumvent Congress and the will of the people by using the courts stacked with Trump’s handpicked judges to rip away health care without any plan in place to replace it. This will not only affect the 30 million people who get their coverage through an ACA marketplace or Medicaid expansion but will create chaos throughout our entire health care system.” [tweeted with a copy of the brief submitted by Trump Administration lawyers]

Twitter Action on Vietnam Veterans Day

- **Senator Pat Toomey, 03/29/19, via [Twitter](#):**

“#VietnamVeteransDay is a time for us to give thanks to the brave American veterans who served in Vietnam. These individuals and their families made tremendous sacrifices to keep us safe. It was my honor to recognize some of these brave Americans in Philadelphia this morning. Vietnam veterans live all across our great commonwealth. This #VietnamVeteransDay, I’m traveling around Pennsylvania to give thanks and recognition to these selfless individuals. I appreciate @RepSmucker joining me in Lancaster to help recognize these Pennsylvanian’s heroism.” [tweeted with photo collages from events with veterans]

Twitter Action on the Trans Week of Visibility

- **Senator Bob Casey, 03/28/19, via [Twitter](#):**

“Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. This #TransVisibilityWeek I am proud to show my support for transgender people throughout our commonwealth and across the country. #WontBeErased”

Twitter Action on Attorney Barr’s letter about the Mueller Report

- **PA-01’s Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, 03/25/19, via [Twitter](#):**

The representative retweeted *CNN’s The Situation Room*, which included a video of an interview he did. That tweet read, “GOP @RepBrianFitz, a former FBI agent, says the Mueller report should be released: ‘There are 3 things that all of us in Congress ought to be demanding: truth, transparency and finality. And anybody who is not demanding all 3, I would respectfully suggest is not doing their job.’”

Twitter Action - Assorted awesomeness!!

- **Senator Bob Casey, 03/28/19, via [Twitter](#) (made in response to a report that the Trump Administration was reversing its decision to defund the Special Olympics):**

“Great. While you’re at it, how about you restore all the other cuts you’re making that hurt individuals with disabilities? You could...
Restore funding to Gallaudet University.

Restore funding to the Limb Loss Resource Center.
Restore funding to the State Councils on Developmental Disabilities.
Restore funding to the paralysis resource center.
Restore funding to the National Institute on Disability Research.
Restore funding to the university centers on disabilities.
Restore funding to the assistive technology programs.
Restore funding to the lifespan respite care program.
Restore funding {sic} to the Alzheimer's disease program.
Restore funding to the family caregiver support services program.
Restore funding to the program for voter access for people with disabilities.
Just to name a few..."

□ **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, 03/26/19, via [Twitter](#):**

"Today I joined @LWV and @CommonCause to call on the Supreme Court to end partisan gerrymandering, which takes away the power of people to decide their representatives. Today #SCOTUS heard arguments on two cases that I filed an amicus brief on. #FairMaps"

□ **PA-02's Rep. Brendan Boyle, 03/27/19, via [Twitter](#):**

"Proud that my brother @RepKevinBoyle walked off the floor of the House to protest this disgraceful display." [tweeted with a [link](#) to the [bigoted, awful 'prayer'](#) offered by PA State Rep. Borowicz at the swearing-in ceremony of newly-elected Rep. Movita Johnson-Harrell]

□ **PA-03's Rep. Dwight Evans, 03/27/19, via [Twitter](#):**

"The #GOPTaxLaw is correctly named the #GOPTaxScam because it doesn't work for hardworking constituents in Philly and doesn't work for the rest of Americans who are forced to make tough decisions on a day-to-day basis to simply survive."

□ **PA-04's Rep. Madeleine Dean, 03/24/19, via [Twitter](#):**

The representative retweeted content from the March for Our Lives account, which reads, "1 year ago, we held the largest protest against gun violence in history. 1 year later, young people everywhere are still organizing to power the movement that is saving lives. We won't live in fear because our current leadership is immoral. We can be the morally just leaders."

□ **PA-05's Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon, 03/25/19, via [Twitter](#):**

"Our district is an economic engine with unlimited potential. That's why we're launching "Work A Day With Mary Gay," a series where I will spend time with the people, businesses, and organizations driving our district and regional economy. Where should I visit next?" [tweeted with a short video of the representative at various workplaces with constituents]

□ **PA-06's Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, 03/26/19, via [Twitter](#):**

"Thank you to the @thelilynews for speaking with me about my journey to Congress. I am proud to stand up for my daughter, for the vulnerable, and for my community in #PA06. You will not be left behind." [tweeted with a link to an article in *The Lily* titled "[She ran for Congress to protect her daughter](#)"]

□ **PA-07's Rep. Susan Wild, 03/29/19, via [Twitter](#):**

"As a trial lawyer of 30+ years, I can say with confidence that:
A) I fully understand this language & that this amendment was a clear attempt to undermine the fundamental objectives of the #PaycheckFairnessAct
B) This isn't the 1st time someone has mansplained #EqualPay to me"
[tweeted with a video clip of said mansplaining]

□ **PA-08's Rep. Matt Cartwright, 03/25/19, via [Twitter](#):**

"ICYMI: I listened to some of our seniors in Scranton last week, and most said they want Congress to focus on protecting Social Security & Medicare, lowering drug prices, and working #ForThePeople." [tweeted with a short video clip from a local *NBC* affiliate]

□ **PA-17's Rep. Conor Lamb, 03/25/19, via [Twitter](#):**

"SAVE THE DATE! On Thursday, April 4 at 6pm I'm holding my next Town Hall at VFW Post 709 in Sharpsburg (1017 Main Street). I'll be there to listen to your concerns and to provide an update on my work in Washington. #PA17" [tweeted with a link to a [facebook event](#) post]

□ **PA-18's Rep. Mike Doyle, 03/26/19, via [Twitter](#):**

"Pleased that the Communications & Technology Subcommittee just passed the #SaveTheNet Act by a vote of 18-11! We have to keep building momentum as we move to @EnergyCommerce Full Committee."

Casey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Kathy Sites

"I commend the independent work and public service of Special Counsel Mueller and his team. This report was paid for with taxpayer dollars and must be made public as quickly as possible."

— from an article in the [Allentown Morning Call](#) titled "[Pennsylvania lawmakers call for disclosure of now-completed report from Mueller investigation](#)"

"It's a product of taxpayer dollars and the American people deserve an opportunity to read it for themselves. Additionally, seeing the full report will inform Congress as we work to protect our nation from further interference by Russia in 2020 and to conduct basic oversight and hold the administration accountable. A four-page summary from the Attorney General is insufficient."

"I am particularly concerned that the issue of obstruction of justice remains an open question. Attorney General Barr's letter provided his own view about obstruction, but not that of Special Counsel Mueller. This fact only reinforces why the full report must be made public."

— from an article on the website of the [Harrisburg ABC News affiliate](#) titled "[Pennsylvania senators call for transparency of Mueller report](#)"

"Our nation owes a debt of gratitude to Special Counsel Mueller and his team for conducting an independent investigation. I have confidence that he and the law enforcement officials who worked alongside him followed the facts wherever they led and reached conclusions based upon a thorough and fair investigative process."

— from a [Butler Radio](#) article titled "[Lawmakers Differ On Mueller Report](#)"

"Winning Pennsylvania is why I spent any time thinking about (getting in the presidential race). The Democratic nominee has to win Pennsylvania. You can't win the presidential election without winning Pennsylvania. Having a large field seeking the nomination is good for the process. But in the end, the candidate must be able to carry Pennsylvania if the Democrats hope to regain the White House and defeat Trump."

"Having many candidates offers voters the opportunity to see what each is about. There's no likely nominee out there. Let's let the process happen and allow the voters to sort it all out."

— from an article in the [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#) titled "[Casey hopes Biden will run, stops short of endorsement](#)"

"Affordable, high-quality child care enables parents to work so that they can support their families and helps give children the early learning experiences they need to develop and succeed in school. When children learn more earlier in life, they earn more later. Unfortunately, the cost of child care has increased by 25 percent over the past decade, creating significant financial strain for middle-class families. The average cost of full-time center-based daycare is \$11,560 for an infant and \$8,712 for a 4-year-old. This is

about 12 percent of annual income for married couples in the Commonwealth, and nearly 46 percent of annual income for single parents.”

— from an article in the [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#) titled “[Casey pushes for child care assistance](#)”

“This legislation is aimed at a particularly troubling manifestation of the growing problem of discrimination against those of Jewish faith or Jewish ancestry. I’m proud to work with Senator Scott on this bill, which aims to combat anti-Semitism and help investigate illegal discrimination on college campuses.”

— from an article in the [Jewish Journal](#) titled “[Sens. Scott and Casey Propose Anti-Semitism Awareness Act](#)”

“It’s a real violation of people’s lives, it’s devastating so if we can play a role in mitigating that and in some cases even preventing that that’s the role the government’s going to play.”

— from the senator’s speech at the groundbreaking of a flood mitigation project along the Susquehanna River that will protect more than 100 homes from potential flooding, as reported in the [PAHomepage.com](#) article titled “[Bloomsburg Flood Mitigation Expansion Groundbreaking](#)”

Fitzpatrick in the News

“The report must be made public and full briefings must be made to Congress. We must insist on 100% full transparency on all investigative matters and full disclosure to the public. Once that occurs, and once we respond accordingly, it is time to move on.”

— from a [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) article titled “[As Trump declares victory in Mueller probe, Democrats call for more information, continued investigation](#)”

“Bob Mueller was my boss. I worked with him for many years in the FBI - fully support his investigation, took 22 months. They had 40 of my former colleagues on that case. They’ve rounded it out. But I do believe that what we need is truth, transparency but also finality. And I think that any of my colleagues on either side of the aisle who want to advance any partisan investigations going forward after 22 months of criminal investigations, that’s not a - an advisable move....”

“...Congress has an oversight role to play, without a doubt. And they should round out the - the - the edges of this - this report once we get it. We don’t know when we’re going to get it. They’re - you know, they’re trying to go through the 6(c) and national security analysis to scrub it. But once that’s done, if they want to call Mr. Mueller - Mr. Barr to the Hill, I think that’s - that’s the - the OK thing to do as far as circulating out this - this report. But after that, we need to move on. We can’t have perpetual political-based investigations going forward.”

— excerpts from the transcript of an interview performed by [NPR](#) with the congressman, titled “[We Need Finality, Rep. Fitzpatrick Says, Then Move On From Mueller Probe](#)”

“With skyrocketing premiums in the federal marketplace, state-based exchanges have proven to be more effective at increasing the rate of coverage and lowering costs.”

— from an article in the insurance industry website [Benefits Pro](#) titled “[Dems aim to restore ACA as 'law of the land' with new health care proposal](#)”

“We’re here today to call on House and Senate leadership to immediately pass the Never Forget the Heroes Act, which will fully fund and permanently reauthorize the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund (VCF) until 2090 to ensure that every first responder and their family never has to worry about paying for medical conditions that were caused by the 9-11 attacks.”

—from a [Bucks Local News](#) article titled “[NEVER FORGET THE HEROES: Congressman Fitzpatrick joins first responders to lobby for re-authorization of 9-11 victims compensation fund](#)”

“We need to revolutionize American education and job training so we’re preparing students for a 21st century job market. That means, among other things, reducing barriers to educational opportunities and post-graduation success. For too many, student loan debt is a crippling burden that impacts their involvement in our economy and achieving personal goals like owning a home, starting a family and supporting their community. This bipartisan legislation is a step toward addressing this crisis.”

— from an article in the [Lake County Record-Bee](#) titled [“Reps. Garamendi and Fitzpatrick reintroduce the Student Loan Refinancing and Recalculating Act”](#)

Toomey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Elayne Baker

“When Democrats coalesce around some idea that I think is a huge threat to us, then absolutely we should have a discussion about it.”

— the senator explains why he introduced a constitutional amendment with Sen. Marco Rubio about limiting the number of Supreme Court justices, from a [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) article titled [“As liberals push big 2020 agenda, Democratic old guard tries to seize the wheel”](#)

“Expanding the Supreme Court for partisan political reasons is a terrible idea. It would diminish the legitimacy of, and faith in, the institution as an independent branch of government. I hope my colleagues will join us in supporting this amendment to maintain the integrity of our nation’s highest court.”

— from an article in [The Bradford Era](#) titled [“Toomey, Rubio introduce amendment to keep SCOTUS at nine”](#)

“When a convicted felon lies about his conviction in an attempt to purchase a gun, he is committing a new felony. This happens regularly in America.”

— from an article in the [Pittsburgh Post Gazette](#) titled [“Judiciary Committee shows support for ‘red flag’ laws restricting gun access when violence is threatened”](#)

“I’m not for banning whole categories of firearms. ,” Toomey said. “But it’s very frustrating that we didn’t have a vote in the Senate. I’m still trying to persuade more colleagues to embrace [this legislation].”

— from an opinion piece in the [Cumberland Sentinel](#) titled [“Micek: There’s will to act on guns in America. So why don’t we?”](#)

“To suggest that Volkswagens are a national security threat to the United States is not true and we should not be doing that. It would be very bad for our economy and very bad for our consumers.”

— from an article in [Politico](#) titled [“Republicans warn Trump to back off economy-wrecking tariffs”](#)

“I believe it’s in the national interest for Attorney General Bill Barr to be as transparent as possible about the investigation’s findings with Congress and the public — consistent with the law and longstanding Department of Justice policy. I have shared this view with the attorney general.”

— from an article in [The Danville News](#) titled [“Pennsylvania lawmakers weigh in on Mueller probe”](#)

Committee Corner

This is our new segment where we review what our legislators have on their minds when they are in committee hearings. We are focusing on the statements made, and the questions asked by our MoCs. If you are interested in hearing the answers our lawmakers received from testifying parties, or if you want to hear more from any legislator, the link to the hearing is available in each section header, and the time markers are included with each quote.

From March 27, 2019 - State Department Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request

C-SPAN carried this coverage of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo appearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee to discuss the Administration's budget request. A full video is available [here](#). Several of our Pennsylvania MoCs are on that committee, and one can see their vastly differing priorities from the kind of questions they asked and statements they made. All MoC comments/questions are directed at Secretary of State Pompeo. No closed captioning transcript was available for this hearing, so transcription was made by MoCTrack, to the best of our abilities.

□ **PA-10's Rep. Scott Perry** - "I want to begin by applauding the President and your department for taking steps to recognize the Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. As you might recall, I wrote you a letter last year in that regard encouraging that recognition, and I just think it is time, with Iran, their proxies, terrorist organizations, the IRGC, Hezbollah, all on the border, there is no more important time than now to take this action, and I speak for all of the people in the district that I am privileged to represent that are proud of this action, support it, and say thank you very much and we offer our support and assistance." [taken from about 1 hour, 3 minutes into the hearing]

□ **PA-07's Rep. Susan Wild** - "I am deeply concerned about the unprecedented lack of transparency and potential conflicts of interest in this administration. Members of Congress and the American people do not always know what foreign policy decisions are being made, or whose interests they are intended to serve. Earlier this month, on March 18th, you held a telephone press briefing focused on -quote- 'international religious freedom' -end quote- that was only open to faith based media outlets. This briefing was closed to the State Department's press corps and closed to major independent news organizations. The State Department has said it will not release a transcript of the briefing to the public, which is highly unusual for this type of high level briefing. To me, this instance raises concerns about First Amendment violations. The Administration should not be granting some media outlets access to briefings while selectively excluding others based on the Administration's preferences. As a public official, what you say, especially during a press briefing, is inherently of interest to the public and the media. And I am concerned, also, that the department during your tenure has greatly reduced the frequency with which it holds regular, open press briefings on foreign policy matters of the day. So my question to you is, why did you want to limit the type of the participants who could join this press briefing call on March 18th and why are you not releasing the transcript of that briefing?" [taken from about 1 hour, 44 minutes into the hearing]

□ **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick** - "Thank you for your service. I wanted to touch on Ukraine. I'm the co-chair of the Ukraine Caucus, also before being in Congress I was an FBI agent. My last international assignment was in Ukraine. I spent a lot of time and put a lot of effort into working with their anti-corruption efforts to start the national anti-corruption bureau, and also working a lot of counter-intelligence. My question, sir, is, the Administration, the broader policy in regards to Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea and the ongoing battle occurring in the Donbas region; do you feel that we are supplying them with enough of what they need? What is the follow-up in regards to the commitments we've made? Do you think it's sufficient?" [taken from about 2 hours, 50 minutes into the hearing]

□ **PA-06's Rep. Chrissy Houlahan** - "I'm here representing the people of Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District, and so I take great responsibility in making sure that my people in my community understand the importance of the State Department, frankly. I am a third generation military service member, myself. I have active-duty cousins, many of them in harm's way right now, but I firmly believe that the work that you do prevents the work that my family needs to do... I'm a member of this committee, but I am also a member of the Armed Services Committee, and I'm actually quite concerned about the Administration's delay in submitting to Congress the strategy on bolstering women's inclusion in peace and security efforts globally. It was required by the Women's Peace and Security Act of 2017, and so my first question to you is, when do you plan to deliver this strategy, which was due October of 2018?" [taken from about 3 hours, 11 minutes into the hearing]

From March 27, 2019 - The 2017 Tax Law and Who It Left behind

This hearing was not aired on C-SPAN, but it can be found on [Youtube](#), as the Ways and Means Committee streamed it live. There was a panel of five witnesses, and information about each can be found [here](#), at the House Ways and Means Committee website. What follows are excerpts from how our Pennsylvania MoCs chose to use their time in this hearing.

□ **PA-16's Rep. Mike Kelly** - "The title of the hearing is The 2017 Tax Law and Who It Left behind, so thank you all for being here today to talk about that. One piece that hasn't been addressed yet, when we talked about who it left behind, are any of you aware of the opportunity zones that were included in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act? Do you know what that is?... All politics is local! Let me just go over something really quickly here. In the district that I represent there are sixteen opportunity zones. Opportunity zones are exactly what we are talking about, it's created an opportunity in a zone that the rest of the world has left behind and doesn't even look at anymore 'cuz there's no reason to invest there. Part of this Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was to breathe life back into our economy, breathe life back into our communities!" [taken from about 1 hour, 46 minutes into the hearing]

□ **PA-03's Rep. Dwight Evans** - "I'm from the city of Philadelphia, we have 26% poverty. That is huge for a major city...I had the pleasure of meeting with the Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission. The Mission is a not for profit organization that helps the hungry, homeless and hurting by providing three meals a day to anyone in need; and providing shelter and transitional programs for the homeless. The Mission does not receive government funding but relies on charitable donations... Can you please explain the potential consequences of there being a reduction in the charitable donations to organizations like the Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission and the guests they serve?" [taken from about 3 hours, 43 minutes into the hearing]

□ **PA-02's Rep. Brendan Boyle** - "I am so thankful to the Chairman of this Committee that we should have had last Congress on what was the biggest chance in our tax code since 1986. The process that was taken in the last Congress under different leadership was <pause> dramatically different than that bipartisan effort that was taken in 1986 that was really the culmination of about five years worth of work. Back then, in 1986, there was a reduction of the nominal rates and a broadening of the base, and the effort was bipartisan. What we saw last Congress, with the GOP Tax Cut, was none of that. It wasn't paid for, there was no broadening of the base, so really it wasn't tax reform. It was a dramatic tax cut, oh, by the way, coming in the eighth or ninth year of an economic expansion." [taken from about 3 hours, 49 minutes into the hearing]

Call to Action - Support this Bill! RAISE THE FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE

H.R. 582/S. 150: Raise the Wage Act

Here in Pennsylvania, over the past week there have been widespread efforts to increase awareness about the need to raise our state's minimum wage (for more, just search #RaisetheWagePA or #The15Challenge on Twitter). But there are nationwide efforts underway as well, centered around this pair of bills to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Additionally, these bills would raise the tipped wage so that it is the same as the standard minimum wage (it is currently \$2.13 an hour, and has not been raised since 1991!), and would ban employers from paying disabled workers less.

The Senate version was introduced in January by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Ver.), and it has 31 Democrats as co-sponsors, including our own Sen. Bob Casey. The House version was introduced simultaneously by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), and that version has 204 Democrats as co-sponsors - and every single Pennsylvania Democrat is onboard, which is great!

But this should not be just an effort backed by Democrats. Our Republican MoCs need to hear from us about this bill as well. The Progressive Majority Action Fund helpfully provided some [guidelines and scripts](#) for talking about this issue. Pick any of these that best appeals to you:

- “America is supposed to be a land of opportunity, where hard work is rewarded. But today’s minimum wage is not enough for a family to make ends meet. Raising the minimum wage provides hard-working Americans with income to spend on the basics they need. This, in turn, generates business for our economy and eases the burden on taxpayer-funded services. It’s a win-win. Raising the minimum wage helps build an economy that works for everyone, not just the richest one percent.”
- “Minimum wage workers earn less than \$300 a week. No matter where you live, that’s just not enough money to make ends meet. This is about people who show up every day and work hard so their employer can make a profit. At the very least, they deserve to be able to pay their bills.”
- “First, hard-working people in our community deserve a wage that pays the rent and puts food on the table. But also, it will not reduce the number of jobs available. Over the past few years, many states have increased their minimum wage far higher than neighboring states, and economists have been able to study what happens to jobs in the state with the higher wage in comparison to its neighbors. According to seven Nobel Prize-winning economists, ‘increases in the minimum wage had little or no negative effect on the employment of minimum-wage workers.’ “
- “The federal minimum wage for tipped employees like waiters is only \$2.13 an hour and that minimum has not increased since 1991. Very few waiters make a good living on tips. Instead, the poverty rate for tipped workers is more than double the rate for other employees. Raising the tipped minimum wage does not hurt restaurants. In fact, seven states—including California, Minnesota, Nevada and Washington—have the same minimum wage for tipped workers as they have for everyone else, and the restaurants in those states are thriving. Everyone who works hard deserves to make a living.”

If you would like to read more about the bills, please see this [Vox article](#), titled “[House Democrats’ new plan for a \\$15 minimum wage, explained](#).” The final word on this should go to Rep. Bobby Scott, the House sponsor, who was quoted in that *Vox* article - “The federal minimum wage is no longer serving its purpose. There is no place in America where a full-time worker who is paid the current federal minimum wage can afford the basic essentials.”

Please call Senator Toomey to ask him to support this legislation. If you live in a district with a Democrat Representative, please call them to thank them for sponsoring H.R. 582. And if you have a Republican representing you in Congress, please contact them and try those talking points listed above.

A reminder of other Call to Action bills from previous MoCTrack Reports:

- [The Equality Act, to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity](#)
- [A legislative fix for Dreamers and TPS recipients - the American Dream and Promise Act](#)
- [The Green New Deal!](#)
- [Repairing the Voting Rights Act at the invitation of SCOTUS, to protect against voter suppression and intimidation](#)
- [Forcing the president to stand up to human rights abuses \(like the murder of Jamal Khashoggi\) and disentangling the US from the hostilities in Yemen](#)
- [Modernizing a 1988 bill about “undetectable weapons” to include new 3D printed guns](#)
- [Prohibiting the president from ordering a nuclear first strike if Congress hasn’t declared war](#)
- [The Democrats’ signature ethics reform package, H.R. 1](#)
- [A bill to create more IT/Cybersecurity infrastructure and oversight](#)
- [A bill to provide back pay to low-wage contractor employees](#)

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.

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

Elayne Baker

Gary Garb

Kathy Sikes

Kierstyn Piotrowski Zolfo

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!