

PA-01 Member of Congress Tracking Report - 05/05/19

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)	30.2%	-0.7%
Senator Pat Toomey (R)	88.2%	+0.3%
PA-01 Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R)	71.4%	-0.6%

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. Two votes were scored. The House vote was on the Paris Agreement and the Senate vote was related to Yemen.

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 basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

—[Thomas Jefferson](#), 1787

Quotation cited in the text of the resolution for this week's CTA

Votes of Interest -

House votes to reverse Trump's Paris Accord withdrawal

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 9](#)

Later this month our awesome environmental contributor, Andrea Wittchen of [iSpring](#), will have a full write-up of this bill for our "Learning about Legislation" section. In the meantime, the most basic description of this bill is that it would block President Trump from using federal funds to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Accord. While the President may have announced our withdrawal from this international environmental agreement back in 2017, due to the terms of the agreement, the actual withdrawal won't be for another year. If this bill passes both houses, and is not vetoed, the US would continue to participate despite the President's desire to leave. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

The House GOP slaps at Michael Cohen

[House Vote](#) on a Motion to Table [H. Res. 304](#)

In early April, Rep. Mark Green (R-Tenn.) introduced this resolution to force the Chair of the Oversight and Reform Committee give a copy of Michael Cohen's testimony before Congress to the Attorney General. Essentially, this resolution is a criminal referral, accusing the president's former attorney and fixer of lying before Congress. But the vote taken this week was a "tabling" of the resolution - they voted to disregard the resolution. (See this week's "Learning about Legislation" for more on tabling a motion.)

The text of the resolution runs through a litany of quotes from or about Michael Cohen, all relating to whether or not Cohen wanted or sought a pardon from President Trump. It cites statements from various people and parties, including Cohen's attorney Lanny Davis, the sentencing memorandum from the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and Rudy Giuliani. It is somewhat surreal that on May 1, 2019, when the rest of the country was flabbergasted at the spectacle of our nation's Attorney General lying before Congress, the GOP members of the House were trying to force a vote on the unprovable issue of whether or not Michael Cohen - in his heart of hearts - wanted a pardon.

In the May 1, 2019 vote, the motion to table passed, 226-183. One Republican (Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan) voted with the Democrats (who were united in voting YES). **Fitzpatrick voted NO**, which means he sided with the GOP members who want to make the criminal referral.

Senate fails to overcome Trump's Yemen veto

[Senate Vote](#) on [S.J. Res. 7](#)

This is a resolution that would withdraw US military from involvement in the [world's worst humanitarian crisis](#), but it is also part of a larger conflict over the Trump Administration's entire global foreign policy, their stance on human rights, their response to the murder of US resident and journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the direction of the Saudi Crown Prince, and even the differing views on the role of the legislative branch in [arms sales](#) and [war powers](#). Similar legislation had passed the Senate in late 2018, but the Paul Ryan-led House blocked it from coming up for a vote during the 115th Congress. This version of the resolution [passed the Senate](#) in a 54-46 vote on March 13, 2019. Then it [passed the House](#) in a 247-175 vote on April 4, 2019. This prompted a [veto](#) from President Trump on April 16, 2019.

Now the bill has returned to the Congress for an attempt to override that veto. As a reminder, to pass a measure despite a presidential veto, each house would need to achieve a $\frac{2}{3}$ [supermajority](#). And while some Republicans expressed concern about the underlying issues surrounding this vote, most notably Senate Foreign Relation Committee Chairman James Risch (R-Idaho), who said per [PBS News](#) "aspects of Saudi Arabia's behavior are cause for serious, serious concern," the Senate could not overcome the veto..

In a vote of 53-45, the veto override failed on May 2, 2019. All of the Democrats and Independents voted to override the veto, and they were joined by seven Republicans - Mike Lee (Utah), Susan Collins (Maine), Steve Daines (Montana), Jerry Moran (Kansas), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Rand Paul (Kentucky), and Todd Young (Indiana). **Casey voted YES** and **Toomey voted NO**..

Going nuclear

Remember how Mitch McConnell shoved through the "[nuclear option](#)" - reducing debate on most judicial and bureaucratic picks from 30 hours down to a scant 2 hours? Well, because of that, McConnell was able to jam three bureaucratic and five judicial confirmations through the Senate this week. In previous weeks before the procedural change, it would have been big to get through just two confirmation. Some of these nominees were just typical GOP fodder. The three recapped below were chosen because they either directly affect our lives by being appointed to our Pennsylvania court, or because they are so awful that they merit special notice.

Awful Senate judicial confirmation #1

[Senate vote](#) on the nomination of Andrew Lynn Brasher to the Alabama US District Court

Andrew Lynn Brasher has been nominated to a seat on the US District Court in Alabama that Mitch McConnell has held open since the Obama presidency (2015), when its previous inhabitant, Judge Mark Fuller, was [arrested on domestic abuse charges](#).

Mr. Brasher has had a fairly typical career for a young conservative jurist, clerking for a Circuit Court judge and then working in the private sector before being appointed to the position of deputy solicitor general of

the state of Alabama. According to the [Alabama Political Reporter](#), Mr. Brasher worked on several political campaigns before he “served on the Trump Transition Team coordinating criminal justice policy with the incoming administration.”

It is not his political alliances, but his ideological positions that caused the *Alliance for Justice* to write a [letter](#) objecting to Mr. Brasher’s nomination. They said:

Brasher’s record on eroding rights for persons of color should alone be disqualifying. He filed an amicus brief in *Shelby County v. Holder* that supported eroding the Voting Rights Act. He defended Alabama’s harsh felon anti-voter law that, according to one study, disenfranchises over 286,000 Alabamians. Brasher was involved in a lawsuit arguing it is unconstitutional for the Census Bureau to count non-citizens. He has a history of defending unconstitutional racial gerrymanders in Alabama and Virginia, and in his personal capacity has criticized the Supreme Court’s efforts to remedy racial gerrymanders. Brasher also supported an unconstitutional Florida law mandating universal drug testing for Florida Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) applicants that the Eleventh Circuit found stripped away “legitimate expectations of privacy” for thousands simply “by virtue of [their] poverty.”

That same letter also cites that the nominee “consistently fought against rights of women,” and “attacked LGBTQ rights” as well as “fought against workers, consumers, and the environment.” The [Vetting Room](#) also has a substantive list of cases where Mr. Brasher fought against the rights of citizens. Once such example was a Supreme Court case where he defended the imposition of the death penalty upon a mentally ill defendant.

The Senate voted upon Mr. Brasher’s nomination on May 1, 2019. Andrew Lynn Brasher was confirmed to the US District Court in Alabama, 52-47, along party lines. **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES**.

Awful Senate judicial confirmation #2

[Senate vote](#) on the nomination of J. Campbell Barker to the Texas US District Court

Much like the previously described nominee, Mr. Barker also walked the standard career path for a young conservative attorney, clerking for two Court or Appeals judges and then working in the private sector before being joining the U.S. Department of Justice Criminal Division as a Trial Attorney. Then, according to the [Vetting Room](#), he was hired by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton to be Deputy Solicitor General for the State of Texas.

The *Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights* wrote a comprehensive objection to the nomination of Mr. Barker. That [letter](#) contains detailed sections, including:

- Worked to Restrict Voting Rights
- Sought to Undermine LGBT Rights
- Hostile to Dreamers and Immigrant Rights
- Fought Fairness for Criminal Defendants
- Sought to Restrict Access to Women’s Health
- Challenged Environmental Protections

Each of those footnoted sections of the Leadership Conference letter includes case citations and quotes of the nominee’s own case arguments, documenting his deeply conservative positions.

The [NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund](#) issued a statement this week, prior to the confirmation vote for Mr. Barker (and the previously recapped proceedings on Mr. Brasher). It says:

As we prepare to honor the 65th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s unanimous decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* next month, the Senate is preparing to confirm judicial nominees who stand athwart the principles of equality laid out in that landmark decision. At his confirmation hearing, Andrew Brasher refused to endorse the *Brown* decision, and his record makes clear why. Throughout his career, Brasher has supported eroding the Voting Rights Act, defended a law that disenfranchised almost 300,000 people with felony convictions, and criticized the Supreme Court’s efforts to remedy racial gerrymanders. J. Campbell Barker’s record is similarly rife with efforts to thwart racial

justice, including defending Texas's discriminatory voter ID law and the racially-biased death sentence of Duane Buck. LDF successfully challenged both Texas' voter ID law and Duane Buck's capital sentence, and we're alarmed by what Barker and Brasher's confirmations would mean for litigants with civil rights claims.

Confirming these nominees to lifelong seats on the federal bench would be an affront to civil rights. We call on Senators to honor the conception of equality under the law articulated in the Brown decision by voting no on Brasher and Barker's nominations.

Despite these well founded objections, Mr. Barker was confirmed in a 51-47 vote on May 1, 2019. The vote was on strict party lines. **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES**.

Senate confirms a Pennsylvania judicial pick

[Senate vote](#) on the nomination of Joshua Wolson to the Pennsylvania US District Court One of five vacancies on the federal courts in Pennsylvania was filled this week with the confirmation of Joshua Wolson, the president of the Philadelphia lawyers chapter of the Federalist Society and the Republican National Lawyers Association. The [Philadelphia Business Journal](#) provided a concise CV for Mr. Wolson, reporting:

A litigator at Dilworth since 2008, Wolson made partner in 2010 and then served as a co-chair of the firm's plaintiffs' rights practice group and as a member of its executive committee. Prior to that he spent eight years as an associate at Covington & Burling in Washington, D.C., and clerked for U.S. District Judge Jan E. DuBois after graduating from Harvard Law School (1999) and University of Pennsylvania (1996).

[WFMZ 69](#) out of Allentown highlighted Mr. Wolson's local ties, "His father, who died in 2011, was a radiologist at Lehigh Valley Hospital. His mother is a retired school psychologist who worked at the Carbon-Lehigh Intermediate Unit."

While [The Vetting Room](#) concluded that "his background yields nothing likely to significantly impede his nomination, and Wolson should see himself on the federal bench," reporting from [Courthouse News](#) on Mr. Wolson's confirmation hearings raised some concern about his candor:

Nominee Joshua Wolson faced similar questions on abortion Wednesday. But like Clark, he said his rulings would be guided by the Supreme Court, not personal opinion.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Connecticut, told Wolson his answer was disingenuous.

"What if the Supreme Court reversed Brown v. Board of Education? Would you think that decision is correctly decided?"

"If Brown were reversed and I was in the position of controlling a new standard, my job would be to apply that standard," Wolson said.

"So you don't have an opinion if Brown [or any other case] was decided correctly. You're just going to say, whatever Supreme Court said is what I'll follow ... but I'm asking for your personal belief," Blumenthal replied.

Wolson stopped Blumenthal, telling the committee he "resisted the idea of delving into [his] personal views" any further.

Unlike many other Trump judicial nominees, Mr. Wolson does have the support of both of his home state senators. Both Bob Casey and Pat Toomey issued supportive statements. [Sen. Toomey](#) said, "I am confident that he will be an impartial jurist who treats everyone fairly and decides cases neutrally on the basis of the law and not a preferred policy outcome." Meanwhile, [Sen. Casey](#) spoke of Mr. Wolson's intellect, experience, character and temperament."

In a vote taken on May 2, 2019, Mr. Wolson was confirmed, 65-33. He had unanimous Republican

support. The Senate's Independents were split (King of Maine voted YES, Sanders of Vermont voted NO). Ten Democrats joined our own Bob Casey in supporting Mr. Wolson. None of the many Democratic presidential hopefuls voted YES, though Bennet of Colorado and Booker of New Jersey did not vote. **Casey voted YES and Toomey voted YES.**

MoC Twitter Action

This is a sampling of the major topics that were being discussed by our MoCs on Twitter this week

GOP Twitter talking point of the week - Economy cheerleading

We have left in members of the GOP Congress so you can see just how much Sen. Toomey and Rep. Fitzpatrick's tweets were in line with what was clearly a party-wide communication directive.

□ **Senator Pat Toomey, [05/03/19](#):**

"Another month, another set of great job numbers. In April, our economy added 263,000 more jobs and the unemployment rate dropped to 3.6%, which is a 50 year low. More evidence that tax reform and regulatory relief are working!" *[tweeted with a link to a [USA Today article](#)]*

□ **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, [05/03/19](#):**

"BREAKING: Hiring jumps as employers add 263,000 jobs in April, exceeding expectations. Unemployment [sic] rate falls to 3.6%, lowest in 50 years. We must continue to push a pro-jobs agenda that benefits the middle-class and continue this historic growth!" *[tweeted with a link to a [Wall Street Journal article](#)]*

□ **PA-09's Rep. Dan Meuser, [05/03/19](#):**

"The pro-growth policies supported by Republicans and the President are growing the economy and helping the American people. 4.6 million jobs have been created in the past two years, and the jobs report shows the lowest unemployment rate in 50 years." *[tweeted with a link to a [CNBC article](#)]*

□ **PA-10's Rep. Scott Perry, [05/03/19](#):**

"More great news: The job market is still red hot, and unemployment dropped to its lowest point in 50 YEARS! The regulatory and tax climate has put our economy back on track, and the proof's in the numbers." *[tweeted with a link to a [CNBC article](#), the same one shared by Rep. Meuser]*

□ **PA-11's Rep. Lloyd Smucker, [05/03/19](#):**

- 263,000 more jobs this month
 - Lowest unemployment rate in 50 years
 - Lowest PA unemployment rate in 40 years
 - Strong wage growth over 3%
 - 3.2% quarterly GDP growth
- The American economy is rolling!
[tweeted with a link to an [NPR article](#)]

□ **PA-13's Rep. John Joyce, [05/03/19](#):**

"Translation - Pro-growth policies like cutting taxes and reducing regulations are working and have our economy booming!" *[tweeted with content from [BLS-Labor Statistics](#) that reads, "Payroll employment increases by 263,000 in April; unemployment rate declines to 3.6% <https://go.usa.gov/vrK> #JobsReport #BLSdata"]*

□ **PA-14's Rep. Guy Reschenthaler, [05/03/19](#):**

"The U.S. jobs machine kept humming along in April, adding a robust 263,000 new hires while the unemployment rate fell to 3.6%, the lowest in a generation."

[quoted from and tweeted with a link to a [CNBC article](#), the same one cited by Rep. Perry and Rep. Meuser!]

□ **PA-16's Rep. Mike Kelly, [05/03/19](#):**

"Our economy continues to roar: April #jobsreport:

263,000 more jobs □

Lowest unemployment rate since 1969 (3.6%) □

Last 12 months: hourly earnings up +3.2% □

3% growth for the 9th straight month □

That makes for a pretty good #FridayFeeling!

[tweeted with a link to an [NPR article](#) - the same one shared by Rep. Smucker!]

Twitter Action - Healthcare

□ **Senator Bob Casey, [05/02/19](#):**

Senator Casey issued a truly epic 28 part tweetstorm where he completely marks up and eviscerates the 50 page court filing from the Department of Justice that argues that the ACA is invalid. PLEASE go read the full thread, with its screenshots, supporting articles, and highlighted photos of the document for yourself! This is the closing portion of that thread:

"On page 43, the document explains why they feel the rest of the law must be struck down. If you missed the earlier reminder, here is what else is at stake if that happens. Annual and lifetime caps on coverage, the ability to SHOP for coverage, assistance to afford coverage, coverage that costs the same for men and women, preventive care at no out of pocket costs. Shall I continue? The Affordable Care Act also makes sure that coverage is meaningful. That means it will actually be there for you when you need it for:

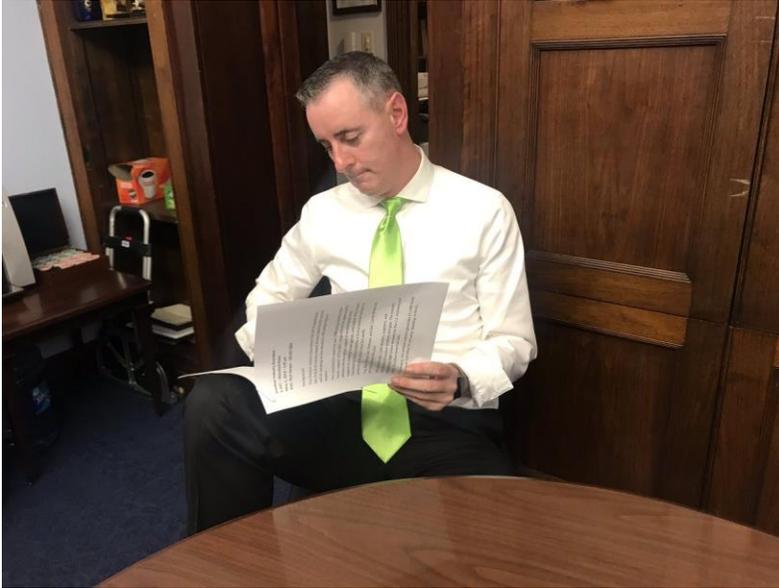
1. Ambulatory patient services (outpatient services)
2. Emergency services
3. Hospitalization
4. Maternity and newborn care
5. Mental health and substance use disorder services, including behavioral health treatment
6. Prescription drugs
7. Rehabilitative and habilitative services (those that help patients acquire, maintain, or improve skills necessary for daily functioning) and devices
8. Laboratory services
9. Preventive and wellness services and chronic disease management
10. Pediatric services, including oral and vision care

There is more, but you get the point.

Sir, you are not fooling anyone. This document is, at best, disrespectful to the millions of people in Pennsylvania and across the country who have gained health care coverage and protections through the law."

□ **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, [05/01/19](#):**

"Each year, 1 in 5 Americans are diagnosed with a mental health disorder yet many are unaware of the signs. I wore green to mark the start of Mental Health Awareness Month. Together we can remove the stigma around mental health & ensure everyone gets the help & resources they need"



Twitter Action - Promoted Legislation

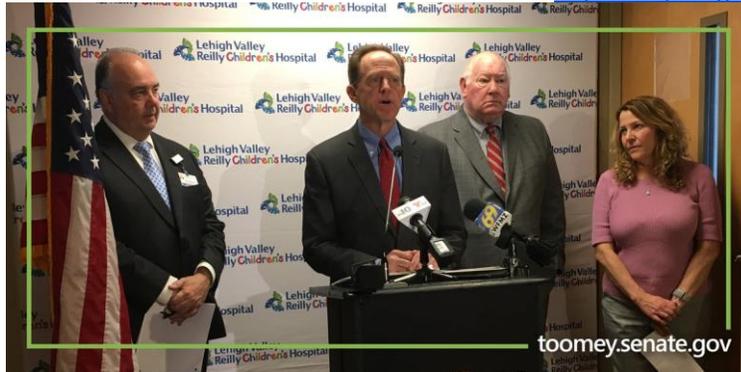
□ Senator Bob Casey, [04/30/19](#):

“Protecting Medicaid is about protecting our kids, seniors and people with disabilities who rely on this vital program. – at United States Capitol Building”



□ Senator Pat Toomey, <date>, via Twitter:

“Local officials and victim advocates joined me today in the Lehigh Valley to call for passage of my bipartisan Combat Online Predators Act. This bill would increase penalties for stalkers who exploit the internet to terrorize children. Learn more here: <http://bit.ly/2DqadmV> “



□ **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, 05/02/19:**

“As a member of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus, I'm committed to ensuring Congress is doing its part to promote animal welfare. I introduced the Puppy Protection Act to improve the lives of our treasured pets. Read more here” [tweeted with a link to Rep. Fitzpatrick's [full statement](#)]

Twitter Action - Assorted Awesomeness

□ **Senator Bob Casey, 05/01/19:**

“Committing to higher education, whether at a four-year university, two-year college, industry-recognized training program or the military, is a momentous step in achieving your dreams. Congratulations to all the students taking that step today. #CollegeSigningDay #BetterMakeRoom”

□ **Senator Pat Toomey, 05/01/19:**

Senator Toomey retweeted content from KDKA - “Coming up at 6 on @KDKA, the story of America's #1 pizza right here in Pittsburgh, at least according to the Pizza World Championship judges in Parma, Italy. Check it out.”

□ **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, 05/01/19:**

“Thank you to all the members of our community for making their voices heard! Our system of government relies on citizens actively engaging to determine the future of our community and this is a perfect demonstration of how it should work.” [tweeted with a link to a [Bucks County Courier Times reporter's image](#) from a packed hearing to stop a hazardous waste plant from being built on the banks of the Delaware River in Falls Township]

Casey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Kathy Sites

“It's critical that we focus on this issue at every level of government. Reauthorization should not be controversial. At some point in time, everyone pays for the cost of domestic violence.”

— from a [CitizensVoice.com](#) article titled “[Casey pushes to reauthorize the domestic violence act](#)”

“It is early in the game, but I just think this imperative in 2020 is such that we have to start early. Pennsylvania is so big and it's so consequential that it's going to take time to make the case here.”

— from an [Allentown Morning Call](#) article titled “[Biden turns to Pa. to pitch rebuilding American middle class](#)”

"The administration gave us a reminder about Medicaid recently. They said that in their budget that they wanted to cut Medicaid by \$1 ½ trillion. If Trump succeeds, he and Congress will have to answer to the millions of Americans whose lives are put at risk."

— from a [WPRI](#) article titled "[Senate Democrats call on Trump, GOP to end attack on health care](#)"

"Due to concerns that some [Managed Care Organizations] are putting their bottom line ahead of patient health and safety, I am requesting that you open an investigation into this industry to shed light on whether all patients enrolled in Medicaid managed care can successfully access the services to which they are entitled."

— an excerpt from Senator Casey's letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requesting an investigation into media reports about for-profit insurers refusing to cover health care for vulnerable people, cited in an opinion by the editorial board of the *Des Moines Register* titled "[Why didn't Sen. Grassley ask for federal Medicaid investigation?](#)"

"Under current law, an individual who has been convicted of a domestic violence offense against an 'intimate partner,' or who is subject to a restraining order restricting their contact with an 'intimate partner' is prevented from purchasing or possessing a firearm. However, guns may still be available to someone convicted of a domestic violence offense or stalking offense against someone they dated — he called it the 'boyfriend loophole.'

We will look into adding funding for education to the bill, which currently would earmark some \$750 million for fighting domestic violence, including provisions restricting access to guns for individuals convicted of domestic violence and stalking offenses. We will request another \$130 million be added to the funding to be allocated should the bill pass."

— Senator Casey's remarks during a panel discussion on domestic violence at the Luzerne County Courthouse, as reported in *The Weekender* article titled "[Casey hears advocates demand action on domestic violence legislation](#)"

"Patient care could be at risk if this policy takes effect. UPMC should not be permitted to simply refuse care to out-of-network beneficiaries. Mr. Azur should authorize a special enrollment period that would allow Medicare Advantage members that would allow Medicare Advantage members to select a plan that may better meet their needs."

— Senator Casey addressed the upcoming end of the UPMC-Highmark consent decree, as reported in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article titled "[Sen. Bob Casey asks feds to intervene in UPMC-Highmark pre-payment dispute](#)"

"There are two health care titans in Western Pennsylvania that are fighting like children over market share, profits and power: UPMC and Highmark. Patients should be the only concern of both giants. Pennsylvanians deserve better, and I will continue to fight to ensure that they have access to affordable, quality health care. In communicating with readers about this problem, the Post-Gazette's editorial board left out important facts about the work I am doing to hold UPMC, Highmark and the Trump administration accountable (March 31 editorial, "[Can you Hear Them?](#)"). The UPMC and Highmark fight is hurting patients and the region's economy. It has to stop, and I will continue to do everything in my power to protect the gains we have already achieved and press for more."

— Senator Casey's response to a *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* editorial board letter, titled "[The UPMC, Highmark fight needs to end](#)"

Fitzpatrick in the News

"PFAS chemical contamination is a public health crisis and the EPA must act with an urgency that matches the scale of the problem. If the EPA won't act, then Congress must take action to protect American communities from these dangerous chemicals."

— from a [Doylestown Intelligencer](#) article titled "[Rep. Brendan Boyle introduces bill to force EPA to create PFAS chemical standard](#)"

"LGBTQ Americans are part of the fabric of our society and should be free to exercise the rights guaranteed to every American by the Constitution to participate fully in our society and pursue every opportunity. This legislation will protect Americans from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity because discrimination against the LGBTQ community is an injustice which must end."

— from an article in [The Advocate](#) titled "[Bipartisan Bill Seeks LGBTQ Housing Protections](#)"

"Climate change must be addressed proactively with leaders from both sides of the aisle working to protect our planet. Every nation will be affected by climate change, which is why nearly every country agreed to work to reduce carbon emissions in the Paris Climate Accords. The people in my district remain committed to pursuing bipartisan solutions to address climate change and protect our environment which is why I voted yes on HR 9."

— from an article in [The Allentown Morning Call](#) titled "[Brian Fitzpatrick votes with Democrats on climate change resolution](#)"

"Everyone deserves access to quality health care, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been underserved for too long. "I'm proud to join Congressman Moulton to introduce this measure to help those with intellectual and developmental disabilities live healthy lives. This legislation will ensure those in the IDD community receive the care they deserve and incentivize physicians to provide critical services to them."

— from a blog post on the [Ripon Advance](#) titled "[Fitzpatrick's bill ramps up health benefits for people with intellectual, developmental challenges](#)"

Toomey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Elayne Baker

"I don't think he's a misogynist or anything of the sort... From what I have seen at this point, I don't think that that is disqualifying for him."

— from a [CNBC](#) article titled "[GOP Sen. Pat Toomey defends Stephen Moore hours before he withdraws from Fed consideration](#)"

"In my mind, I don't see anything that rises to an obstruction of justice."

— from a [Beaver Times](#) article titled "[U.S. Sen. Toomey says nothing in Mueller report 'rises to an obstruction of justice' by Trump](#)"

"It's long been no secret I am deeply skeptical of the mission of Ex-Im Bank. It's a great deal if you're an exporter and Ex-Im subsidizes a foreign company that buys your product, that's great. But sometimes that results in an unfair advantage for some and not others."

— from an article in [The Epoch Times](#) titled "[White House Faces Critical Battle Over Export-Import Bank](#)"

"We need strong penalties to dissuade the monsters that would prey on children in this way."

— from an article in [Allentown's WFMZ News](#) titled "[Senator unveils federal cyberstalking legislation at Reilly Children's Hospital](#)"

“The tariffs are so problematic. I’m not likely to support USMCA even in the absence of the tariffs on Mexico and Canada.”

— from a *Politico* article titled [“Quit thinking like a New Yorker’: GOP smacks Trump on trade”](#)

Committee Corner

In this section we provide snippets from some of the most interesting hearings of the week. For all of this week’s hearings, no transcriptions were provided by Congress or Committee, so they were performed by our MoCTrack team. Accordingly, we only provide a snippet from the hearing, with some of the best (or worst) moments from our Pennsylvania MoCs. Time markers and links are provided, so that you can see and hear the full exchanges from which these quotes are pulled, at your convenience.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing titled [“Countering a Resurgent Russia” - May 1, 2019](#)
Please visit the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s [website](#) for full information on witnesses present at this hearing.

□ **PA-10’s Rep. Scott Perry** - “How can there be unity when some in positions of great leadership and authority continue to promulgate the narrative that this president is a traitor and a collaborator with Russia based on what has now been determined by the Special Counsel, millions of dollars, two years, subpoenas, interviews, et cetera, to be patently false?” *Hearing is available on [Foreign Affairs website](#), these remarks start around 1:45:40*

□ **PA-07’s Rep. Susan Wild** - “My district, which is the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania, has a very significant Ukrainian American population, and they have shared with me some of their concerns about Russian and some of its activities in Ukraine... Clearly the Kremlin does not want Ukraine to succeed in its attempt to transform itself from a Putin-dependent government into a free market democracy that grows closer with Europe, because obviously that would show Russians if Ukrainians can succeed with such a transformation, perhaps so could they. So what I wanted to ask you is if you could discuss Russia’s strategy to counteract the efforts of nearby countries that are trying to build or expand democratic governments, and what we - the United States - need to do, in turn, to counteract Russia’s efforts to stop democracy in those countries, such as Ukraine.” *Hearing is available on [Foreign Affairs website](#), these remarks start around 2:29:08*

□ **PA-06’s Rep. Chrissy Houlahan** - “The bigger part of my question is, why, with \$700+ billion every year, or increasingly, every year, we are still behind, or not spending our money appropriately so that we can counter those asymmetrical strategies?” *Hearing is available on [Foreign Affairs website](#), Rep. Houlahan’s portion starts at 3:11:35, but her question quoted above is from 3:17:00*

Note for constituents of PA-01: MoCTrack is still struggling to locate our own Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick to highlight his contributions in committee hearings.

He is a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and while they held a [“Members’ Day hearing”](#) on May 1, 2019, where MoCs can “highlight issues of importance as the Committee develops its legislative agenda,” a review of the testimony listed on the committee website shows that Rep. Fitzpatrick did not provide any content. There was also a field [hearing on the GateWay Project](#) held on May 3, 2019. While there most certainly are commuters to Manhattan who live in PA-01, Rep. Fitzpatrick was not present at that hearing which concerns an issue that will affect his constituents.

Rep. Fitzpatrick is also on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. One of the sub-committees upon which he serves, the Middle East, North Africa, and International Terrorism group, held a hearing titled [“Examining the Global Terrorism Landscape”](#) on April 30, 2019. While nearby Rep. Tom Malinowski (NJ-07) was present and asked amazing questions, I went through the full hearing [video](#) and Rep. Fitzpatrick did not ask questions and was not present in the hearing room. The Foreign Affairs Committee also held a hearing on May 1, 2019 titled “Countering a Resurgent Russia.” Video of that hearing is available on both

the [Foreign Affairs site](#) and [Youtube](#). Despite the fact that Rep. Fitzpatrick is a co-chair of the Ukraine Caucus, and this hearing had quite a bit of content related to Russia's military engagement in Ukraine, our Congressman did not show for this hearing either. We left in the coverage of that hearing above so you could see what was covered at this event that Rep. Fitzpatrick missed.

It is entirely possible that Rep. Fitzpatrick was performing some official duties elsewhere this week, which would account for his absence at all his committee hearings. But since he does not share his public schedule, we have no way to confirm this. It is certainly worth asking his office, *where is Representative Fitzpatrick?*

Learning about Legislation - the Motion to Table

This week we saw the GOP try to bring up a resolution to make a criminal referral on Michael Cohen for lying to Congress, and the Democrats in the majority "tabled" the motion. "Tabling" is language from [Robert's Rules of Order](#), a collection of parliamentary procedures that dictate how business is done in our legislature.

The [Senate Glossary](#) defines a motion to table as "Used in both the Senate and House, if adopted a motion to table permanently kills a pending matter and ends any further debate on the matter."

The Congressional Legal Service white paper titled "[Commonly Used Motions and Requests in the House of Representatives](#)" has a more robust explanation:

If agreed to, a motion to table disposes of the pending matter adversely and without a direct vote on its substance. The motion is not debatable and is adopted by majority vote or without objection. If adopted, the tabling motion is the same as defeating the underlying proposition. If the tabling motion is defeated, the situation reverts to where it was when the motion to table was made. The House does not allow the tabling motion against the motion to recommit, but it is in order against some other motions, such as the motion to reconsider a vote or appeal the ruling of the chair. A motion to table an amendment, if successful, would also table the underlying proposition to which the amendment was proposed.

Call to Action - Support this Bill on Press Freedoms!

[S. Res. 179/H. Res. 345](#) - Recognizing widening threats to freedoms of the press and expression around the world..

Similar resolutions are introduced each year to commemorate World Press Freedom Day on each May 3rd, but this year it feels more important than ever to have at least one of the branches of our government come to the defense of the world's journalists.

The Senate version of this resolution was introduced by Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,, and has 12 co-sponsors (8D, 4R) including our own Sen. Bob Casey. The House version of this bill is pending in the House Foreign Affairs Committee and was sponsored by Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) - that version has one Republican co-sponsor.

The text of the resolution starts out by quoting from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." It then proceeds to share quotations from some of our nation's founders on the role of the press, and gives details on past legislation designed to research and report on the state of press freedoms. After that, the resolution then cites statistics from the Committee to Protect Journalists, including:

- at least 54 journalists were killed around the world for their work, of which at least 34 were singled out for murder

- 51 journalists worldwide were in prison, with Turkey, China, and Egypt responsible for more than half of the jailed journalists
- the number of journalists imprisoned on charges of false news rose to 28 globally, compared with 9 such imprisonments in 2016

The resolution then recounts details about the specific cases of journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo in China; Nouf Abdulaziz, Loujain Al-Hathloul, and Eman Al-Nafjan in Saudi Arabia; Mimi Mefo Takambou in Cameroon; Leonardo Gabriel Hernandez in Honduras; Carlos Fernando Chamorro, Miguel Mora and Lucía Pineda Ubau in Nicaragua; Rafael Murúa Manríquez and Carlos Dominguez Ramirez in Mexico; Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová of Slovakia; Daphne Caruana Galizia of Malta... and Jamal Khashoggi.

The resolution concludes by commending the world's journalists and reaffirming "the centrality of freedom of the press to efforts of the United States Government to support democracy, mitigate conflict, and promote good governance around the world." It also calls on the President and Secretary of State to do the same.

Upon the release of this resolution, sponsor Rep. Adam Schiff offered this [statement](#):

Every day, journalists put their lives on the line to report from some of the world's most repressive regimes and war zones, and play an indispensable role in exposing corruption and abuse. Recent years have been some of the most dangerous and deadly in memory for journalists. Each death and each imprisonment is a blow against freedom and accountability, and we will not stand idly by. I'm proud to introduce this resolution recognizing the importance of press freedom around the world, and affirming the need for U.S. leadership to promote a free and fair press.

Senate sponsor Bob Menendez also shared his thoughts upon the introduction of the resolution:

Freedom of the press is a fundamental human right, a foundational pillar of democracy, and an indispensable check on authoritarian overreach. Today, press freedom is under assault across the globe—including in the United States. As journalists fight to advance truth and objectivity, far too many governments and non-state actors are targeting them, seeking to thwart their efforts to promote transparency and accountability and expose abuses of power. Their focus on attacking journalists indeed serves to highlight their critical work.

Since 2009, 659 journalists and media workers have been killed in connection with their efforts to report and disseminate news and information. Stories of abuses of government power, of human suffering, of environmental disasters, and stories of the remarkable resilience of people abused and oppressed. 2018 marked the worst year on record for deadly violence and abuse toward journalists, with murders, imprisonment, hostage-taking, and enforced disappearances all on the rise.

That is but a part of his speech. Please visit [here](#) for the full contents.

None of what we do here at MoCTrack is possible without the hard work of the real journalists whose output we but curate. Our democracy would not exist without a free press - the world's journalists are the font of accountability without which an educated and informed electorate is impossible. Accordingly, all readers should make three calls:

1. Call Senator Casey and thank him for sponsoring "S. Res. 179 - Recognizing widening threats to freedoms of the press and expression around the world."
2. Call Senator Toomey and ask him to co-sponsor "S. Res. 179 - Recognizing widening threats to freedoms of the press and expression around the world."
3. Call Representative Fitzpatrick and ask him to sponsor "H. Res. 345 - Recognizing widening threats to freedoms of the press and expression around the world."

Thank you.

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 - 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!