

PA-01 Member of Congress Tracking Report - 07/14/19

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)	28.7%	0.0%
Senator Pat Toomey (R)	88.7%	0.0%
PA-01 Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R)	69.0%	0.0%

Nate Silver's [FiveThirtyEight website](#) assesses the voting records of our MoCs to provide this index, by reviewing any bills where President Trump has stated a position, and comparing the vote of the legislator to that opinion. There were not any votes scored since before Congress went on recess in late June.

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

"In reality there is perhaps no one of our natural Passions so hard to subdue as Pride. Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself."

—Benjamin Franklin, from his [autobiography](#)

Votes of Interest -

The House passes the Defense Authorization, blocks action in Iran

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 2500](#), the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020

This week the House passed their own version of the Defense budget for 2020, after the [Senate passed a different bill](#) in late June. [Reuters](#) outlines some of the differences between the two bills, observing, "the version of the bill passed by the Democratic-controlled House has several provisions that angered Republican Trump, including providing \$17 billion less for the military than he wanted and denying funds he wants to fulfill his campaign promise to build a wall on the border with Mexico."

[ABC News](#) provides a more detailed recap of the bill's contents They cite:

- 3.1% pay raise for servicemembers
- Tenant bill of rights to protect families in military housing
- \$11.5 billion for military construction and family housing
- \$121 million to clean up chemicals in drinking water on or near bases
- \$17 million for advance planning efforts in support of refueling USS HARRY S TRUMAN
- \$48.9 million for construction improvements at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in support of the Secretary of the Navy's Public Shipyard revitalization plan
- \$10 million in DoD supplemental Impact Aid to reimburse local school districts for costs incurred in providing public education to military children with severe disabilities

- Requirement for the DoD to develop expanded standards for the Defense Access Roads Program and to direct DoD to use its authority to initiate construction, repair, and mitigation projects related to sea-level rise and recurrent flooding
- Accelerates DoD's implementation of the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program (DCIP) to improve the long-term sustainment and resiliency of defense installations

[The Hill](#) included one MoC quote that best summarizes the GOP's talking points about this package. That outlet reports Republican Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy said, "this bill is filled with poison pills" and "this bill will not make America safe." [The Washington Post](#) details some of the provisions that the GOP thinks are poison pills:

Members endorsed a repeal of the 2002 Authorization for the Use of Military Force that was passed to approve the Iraq invasion, and a statement that the 2001 AUMF, adopted after the 9/11 attacks, ought to be replaced with a time-limited measure. They also voted in favor of suspending for one year the sale of air-to-ground munitions to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, one of several efforts in the bill to deny weapons and limit U.S. support for Saudi-led military operations in Yemen's civil war.

Prior to the final vote on the defense package, the Republicans offered a [motion to recommit](#), a procedural maneuver that would send the bill back to committee, and one that is usually treated as a pure party line exercise. According to the [Congressional Record](#), Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) introduced the "motion to recommit with instructions. The instructions contained in the motion seek to require the bill to be reported back to the House with an amendment to add the following new titles to the bill: Increase in Funding for Operation and Maintenance, Increase in Funding for Military Personnel, and Increase in Basic Pay." Despite the fact that this is a simple gambit to delay a bill the minority doesn't like, 16 Democrats joined with the GOP, and the motion was only narrowly defeated, [204-212](#). Interesting tidbit - newly reclassified Independent House member Justin Amash voted NO with the 211 Democrats on that motion.

The final vote on H.R 2500 took place right after lunch on Friday, July 12, 2019. The bill passed, 220-197. All 188 GOP MoCs voted NO, along with Independent Justin Amash and 8 Democrats (Barbara Lee of CA, Ayanna Pressley of MA, Rashida Tlaib of Mi, Ilhan Omar of MN, Adriano Espaillat of NY, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of NY, Earl Blumenauer of OR and Mark Pocan of WI). Interesting tidbit #2 - none of these Democrats overlap with the 16 who voted for the GOP's motion to recommit. **Fitzpatrick voted NO.**

Fitzpatrick had no comments on the Defense Authorization bill and vote, but here is how some other MoCs responded:

☐ **PA-04's Rep. Madeleine Dean, @RepDean, 07/12/19:**

"Passed the National Defense Authorization Act which includes two of my amendments to combat PFAS contamination. We will no longer pass the buck on this PFAS problem -- we must protect our communities by tightening federal PFAS regulations and studying the effects. #FY20NDAA"

☐ **PA-05's Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon, @RepMGS, 07/12/19:**

"This afternoon, the House passed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to address various challenges impacting our armed forces. This NDAA also provides funding for the Chinook program, safeguarding thousands of jobs in our district. The next step is for both chambers to conference and develop a final version of the NDAA, which will be voted on again before heading to the President's desk for final signature. Read my full statement here:" *tweeted with a link to the MoC's [website statement](#)*

☐ **PA-07's Rep. Susan Wild, @RepSusanWild, 07/12/19:**

"The passage of #FY20NDAA, including my bipartisan amendment w/ @RepBrianFitz to combat the opioid crisis among servicemembers, includes:

!!☐ A pay raise for our men & women in uniform

☐ A tenant bill of rights for military families ☐ A green energy focus for the @DeptofDefense"

□ **PA-12's Rep. Fred Keller, @RepFredKeller, 07/12/19:**

"For over 50 years this process has been bipartisan. It's time for Speaker Pelosi to come to the table and put forth a bill that takes care of our troops and ensures our national security. More □ " *tweeted with a link to the MoC's [website statement](#)*

□ **PA-13's Rep. John Joyce, @RepJohnJoyce, 07/11/19:**

"House Democrats are working late into the night to sneak their open borders agenda into the National Defense Authorization Act. Not on my watch. Tonight, I took to the House floor to oppose their effort to restrict our military from helping to secure our border and keep us safe." *tweeted with an embedded video*

House permanently reauthorizes the fund for 9/11 victims and first responders

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 1327](#), the Never Forget the Heroes Act

The bill that covers healthcare costs and expenses for victims of the 9/11 attacks has been one that needed periodic reauthorization of Congress. At times, Congress has lagged behind in bringing these reauthorization efforts up for votes. This is an issue close to the heart of former *Daily Show* host [Jon Stewart](#), and the media picked up the story of him lambasting Congress for not doing a better job of handling this issue. At Stewart's side for that impassioned testimony was Luis Alvarez, a 9/11 first responder who [passed away](#) scarcely three weeks later. In the wake of all of that tragedy and publicity, Congress voted to permanently reauthorize this funding in a bill now called the Never Forget the Heroes Act.

In a vote taken on Friday, July 12, 2019, this measure passed, 402-12. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

Our MoCs comment on this the Never Forget Heroes Act:

□ **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, 07/12/19:**

"Your move @SenateMajLdr. It's long past time this bill was brought up for a vote. The brave men and women of Ground Zero did their jobs, now we must do ours." *tweeted with a link to a USA today article titled "[9/11 Victims Compensation Fund reauthorization passes the House, goes to Senate](#)"*

□ **Senator Pat Toomey, @SenToomey, 07/08/19:**

"We have an obligation to the emergency responders who ran towards danger on 9/11. Sadly, a number of these heroes developed illnesses from their selfless acts. They served our nation in its darkest hour, now we must do the same for them." *tweeted with a link to the senator's [website statement](#)*

□ **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, @RepBrianFitz, 07/12/19:**

"Just In: Congress just overwhelmingly voted to support the permanent reauthorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund. We are officially one step closer to ensuring that American heroes receive the benefits they are owed. #RenewVCF"

Bureaucratic confirmation number 1 - the corporate lawyer to an uber-polluter

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Peter C. Wright to be Assistant Administrator at the EPA

Peter Wright has been nominated to serve as the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Solid Waste and Office of Land and Emergency Management at the Environmental Protection Agency. This position controls the federal response to toxic spills as well as the management of Superfund sites. With Mr. Wright's longtime tenure as a corporate lawyer at Dow Chemical, overseeing litigation related to dioxin and other toxins, this is just one more case of the Trump Administration bringing in a corporate crony who has a work history opposing the very agency he will now be tasked with leading.

The [New York Times](#) reports that Mr. Wright is...:

...steeped in the complexities of restoring polluted rivers and chemical dumps. He spent more than a decade on one of the nation's most extensive cleanups, one involving Dow Chemical's sprawling headquarters in Midland, Mich. But while he led Dow's legal strategy there, the chemical giant was accused by regulators, and in one case a Dow

engineer, of submitting disputed data, misrepresenting scientific evidence and delaying cleanup, according to internal documents and court records as well as interviews with more than a dozen people involved in the project.

But, because of Mr. Wright's experience with Dow and Dupont (another polluter who merged with Dow last year), the new Assistant Administrator is going to have to recuse himself from management of an unwieldy portion of the agency's Superfund sites! [E&E News](#) reports that "...ethics documents obtained by E&E News under the Freedom of Information Act mean Peter Wright... won't be able to weigh in on roughly 14 percent of all the toxic waste sites on the National Priorities List of Superfund sites eligible for federal cleanup dollars until July 2020. Wright promised to avoid getting involved with 171 proposed and final sites on the National Priorities List as well as nearly 130 sites that have been removed from the list or may one day be added to it."

The vote on Mr. Wright's confirmation was taken on Thursday, July 11, 2019. He was confirmed, 52-38. This was a party line vote, with all Republicans present voting YES, and the Democrats and Independent present voting NO. Only one of the Democratic presidential candidates, Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, was present for the vote (as is the case for the other confirmation votes on this same day). **Casey voted NO and Toomey voted YES.**

Bureaucratic confirmation number 2 - the long time GOP operative

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on John P. Pallasch to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor

John Pallasch was nominated to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training. An [industry blog](#) explains that this position "oversees all aspects of apprenticeship at DOL and has been vacant since Trump took office." The Department of Labor's own [website](#) provides additional information on the position, noting it "administers federal government job training and worker dislocation programs, federal grants to states for public employment service programs, and unemployment insurance benefits."

[AllGOV.com](#) notes that Mr. Pallasch's CV has him filling in at a variety of positions at the Department of Labor and out of it. He started in 2001 as "a special assistant directing the closure of department offices across the country" before serving as a deputy assistant secretary for policy in the Mine Safety and Health Administration for two years. He also worked for a few years at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, which runs Washington D.C.'s schools. But outside of the federal workforce, Mr. Pallasch has spent time as a Republican Party operative. [AllGOV](#) reports that he "was executive director for Victory 2000, where he coordinated direct mail and volunteer efforts for Republican candidates during the 2000 election cycle." He also worked as a lobbyist for an issue group supported by many Republicans, at "...StudentsFirst, a lobbying organization for the charter school movement, first as director of implementation and then as human resources director."

The vote for Mr. Pallasch's confirmation also took place on July 11, 2019. He was confirmed, 54-39. All of the Republicans present voted YES, and they were joined by West Virginia Democrat Sen. Joe Manchin. **Casey voted NO and Toomey voted YES.**

Bureaucratic confirmation number 3 - the man with no federal experience

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Robert King to be Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education

Robert King has been nominated to one of the Assistant Secretary positions at the Department of Education under current Secretary Betsy DeVos. This particular office handles over 60 separate post-secondary education programs, and determines policy related to the federal student financial assistance programs. [Inside Higher Ed](#) reports that Mr. King has absolutely no federal government experience, an issue that might not be problematic if he was working under an experienced cabinet member. But since he reports to Betsy DeVos, his lack of federal-level experience is deeply problematic.

The [Lane Report](#) indicates that most of Mr. King's related experience has been in his work in Kentucky, where, "...he has advanced statewide efforts to work collaboratively with his counterparts in K-12 education, focused campus attention on student success, and more recently, led efforts for a rational and

equitable funding model for the public colleges and universities. King also has served on the Executive Committee of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), and served as its chair and vice chair.” It is pertinent to note that in the time that Mr. King was involved in Kentucky post-secondary education leadership, Kentucky was in the bottom third of US states for college graduation rates, according to the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#).

Mr. King’s confirmation vote took place on July 11, 2019. He was confirmed, 56-37. The 53 Republicans all voted yes, and they were joined by Democrats Doug Jones of Alabama, Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona and Joe Manchin of West Virginia. **Casey voted NO and Toomey voted YES.**

Judicial confirmation

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Daniel A. Bress to the Ninth Circuit

Daniel Bress was nominated to serve on the Ninth Circuit, that very large portion of the federal courts that covers much of the western United States, including Hawaii and Alaska. President Trump has often [insulted](#) that court, particularly after it found his [Muslim ban](#) was unlawful and blocked it from implementation three times. To that end, the President is doing his best to [reshape the philosophy of the Ninth Circuit](#) with a glut of new judges (made possible because Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell held open so many positions on the judiciary due to his obstruction and foot-dragging on judicial confirmations during the Obama Administration). In Daniel Bress, Trump has nominated a former clerk to Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. Mr. Bress is a GOP-loyalist who donated to the campaigns of Mitt Romney, John McCain, and Sen. Jeff Flake, per [The Vetting Room](#), and who has scant ties to the region in which he will preside.

Almost every organization that keeps an eye on judicial nominees found a reason to object to Mr. Bress. What is amazing is that they all found different reasons to find him so unsuitable!

The [Alliance for Justice](#) has noted that, once again, Senate leadership has disregarded the Senate’s century old [blue-slip process](#) in proceeding with this vote: “The White House did not meaningfully consult with Bress’s home-state senators, Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris – and neither senator has returned her blue slip on his nomination.”

The [People for the American Way](#) have taken on the issue that while Mr. Bress was born in the state of California, he lived a tiny fraction of his life in the circuit where he will sit, and has no meaningful ties to that geographic region. They stated:

“Bress lives in Virginia and works in Washington, D.C. Confirming him would set a new precedent that circuit court vacancies can be filled by individuals with no connection to any of the states within that circuit, a substantial self-inflicted wound to every senator’s influence...He has not worked as an attorney in any Ninth Circuit state since a brief stint in San Francisco in 2007-2008.

Confirming an out-of-circuit nominee for a circuit court position would be yet another violation of the norms under which the Senate once operated. The chairman should be standing up to the White House and refusing to denigrate his fellow senators. Instead, he has chosen to serve as Trump’s lapdog, tossing his colleagues aside to further the GOP’s efforts to stack the courts with narrow-minded elitists. Every senator should have enough respect for their colleagues and the institution of the Senate to oppose confirmation.”

The [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#) mentioned both of the previous concerns, but they also cast a critical eye on his legal record and affiliations:

Mr. Bress has been a longtime member (since 2003) of the Federalist Society and served on the Federalist Society Executive Committee for Criminal Law and Procedure Practice Group... and [he] worked as a Republican political operative for Lawyers for Romney in 2012 and Republican Virginia Attorney General candidate John Adams in 2016.

As an attorney at the conservative Washington, DC law firm, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Mr. Bress has devoted his legal career primarily to defending large corporations in class action cases in which several of his clients were accused of making harmful products. He has represented defendants in several lawsuits in which he opposed the efforts of consumers to band together to hold corporations accountable for their adverse actions. In a case he listed as one of his two most significant litigated matters, Mr. Bress defended a corporation that made defective bullet-proof vests that put law enforcement officers at risk of death or serious injury. In the other case, he represented a corporation that was accused of conspiring to prevent thousands of asbestos-injury victims from obtaining fair tort recoveries for their injuries.

The vote for Mr. Pallach's confirmation also took place on July 9, 2019. He was confirmed, 53-45. This was a pure party line vote. **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES**.

Twitter Action welcomes a new MoCTrack Contributor!

Please join us in welcoming Helen to our ranks of dedicated PA Member of Congress Trackers! She is an educator and a researcher, as well as a significant part of the PAResists circles on Twitter - you can follow her at @ElastigirlVotes. Thanks for helping us keep an eye on our legion of PA MoCs, Helen!

Our MoCs respond to the humanitarian crisis at the border/ ICE raids

□ **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, 07/14/19:**

"Today's raids, which will sweep up innocent children and families, will go down as one of the lowest points of a thoroughly immoral Administration that has shown itself to be devoid of decency." *tweeted with a link to the USA Today article titled ["No ICE raids yet, but immigrants in Miami, Los Angeles, New York and elsewhere still bracing"](#)*

□ **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, @RepBrianFitz, 07/07/19:**

"Please read and share my Op-Ed in today's paper. Our community must come together to end the crisis on our border." *Tweeted with this [link](#) from the Bucks County Courier Times. As the text is now behind a paywall, here is the entire text of Fitzpatrick's Op-Ed:*

"The United States of America is a nation of the rule of law and a nation of compassion. We are a nation of good, generous and loving human beings who hold a shared belief in both fairness and justice. When it comes to immigration, those qualities are rooted in two principles: 1) Sovereign nations have both the right and the obligation to defend their borders and enforce their laws; and 2) The human dignity and human rights of all undocumented immigrants, particularly children, must be respected and protected. As a community, I believe we must insist on achieving both. The core and fabric of our nation's soul depends on us achieving both.

Our current immigration system is completely broken. Millions of people are living in our country without the proper documentation. Surges of asylum seekers continue to overwhelm our law enforcement along the border. Our government agencies aren't being given the resources they need to process those arriving at points of entry. No matter which angle you approach this problem from, we should all view this as unacceptable.

I've seen firsthand the threats our nation faces from a porous border and a broken immigration system: First as an FBI Agent working border security, and later as a member of Congress' Homeland Security Committee. Congress must act now to secure our borders, respect the rule of law, and show compassion for those legitimately fleeing gang violence and drug cartels.

Our Bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus Members have consistently supported policies that will bring our community together to keep Americans safe, stop the flow of illegal drugs, weapons, and people, and protect children brought here through no fault of their own.

I voted for and co-sponsored Kate's Law, named for 32-year-old Kate Steinle, who was murdered by a five-time deported criminal illegal alien with seven prior felony convictions. This legislation increases penalties for criminal illegals who reenter the country following their removal from the U.S. and empowers our law enforcement agencies to keep violent gangs and criminal cartels out of our community. I've voted to strengthen laws to combat sanctuary cities that shield criminal illegals from federal immigration enforcement. I'm cosponsoring efforts to fix asylum loopholes which allow criminals to exploit our system.

Our Bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus will always support our Customs and Border Protection officers. These brave men and women spend every day on the front lines, defending our borders from those who wish us harm. Congress must fully fund investments in technology, including drones and aerial surveillance, infrared technology, heat sensors, motion detectors, and an array of 21st century high-tech options that serve as force-multipliers along the border. And this includes physical barriers where law enforcement deem them necessary.

Moreover, we must treat people with fairness and decency. Young people brought to the United States through no fault of their own who wish to contribute to our economy and society should have an opportunity to do so. Any serious immigration package must include border security and protecting our Dreamers, who are serving our country in numerous ways.

As Vice-Chair of the Bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, I will support policies that promote these core American principles. I voted for legislation which would keep families together, provide \$25 billion in border security funding, and ensure law enforcement has the tools it needs to secure our border and process those arriving. Unfortunately, these proposals did not pass our divided Congress. And in December, I again voted for legislation which would have provided \$5 billion for border security. But this legislation didn't pass the Senate. And last month, I voted to protect our Dreamers, a bill which is now stalled in the Senate.

As Americans, we have a clear choice to make. We currently have a divided government, with different parties controlling the House and the Senate. No single standalone provision can survive both the House and the Senate. We must find the compromise that both secures our borders and protects our Dreamers. To support one without the other is to support neither. Let's end the partisanship, come to the center to build consensus, and solve the problem. Our nation's security, and our nation's children, require this from all of us."

Twitter Action - Our MoC's respond to the latest attempt to take away healthcare

As neither Rep. Fitzpatrick or Sen. Toomey have anything to say about the GOP's action in pursuing the court case to dismantle the ACA, please find below the commentary from other PA MoCs.

□ **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, [07/10/19](#):**

"There's no backup plan, there's no Republican replacement plan. This lawsuit is totally irresponsible. They don't seem to give a damn if this coverage is ripped away. #TexasvUS" *Tweeted with this [link](#).*

□ **PA-03's Rep. Dwight Evans, @RepDwightEvans, [07/09/19](#):**

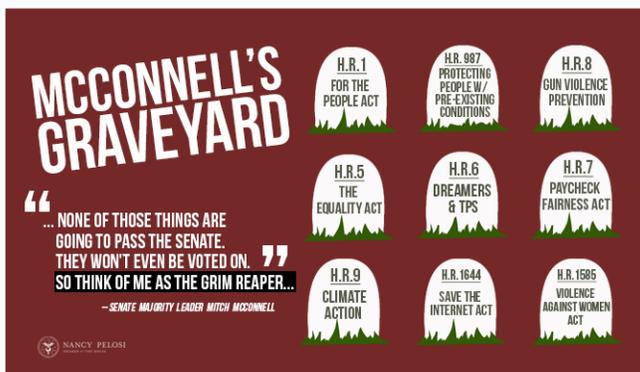
"Today, I stood shoulder to shoulder w/ my @HouseDemocrats and @SenateDems colleagues to support the #AffordableCareAct & its life-saving protections for people with pre-existing conditions because, yet again, Trump is hard at work gutting healthcare from 130 million Americans!"



- **PA-05's Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon, @RepMGS, 07/09/19:**
 "This administration has been working to sabotage the #ACA since day one. #HR987 protects people with pre-existing conditions and reduces prescription drug prices. #ProtectOurCare" *Tweet included article [link](#).*
- **PA-06's Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, @RepHoulahan, 07/09/19:**
 "My community has made it clear that access to affordable health care is paramount. A pre-existing condition should never prevent someone from getting the health care they need." *Article [linked in tweet](#).*
- **PA-07's Rep. Susan Wild, @RepSusanWild, 07/03/19:**
 "That's why I held a press conference with @SenBobCasey this morning and a press call with @RepAndyKimNJ this afternoon. Folks everywhere must know of the continued threat to #healthcare & that we must stand together to protect this right for every American. #ProtectOurCare"



- **PA-08's Rep. Matt Cartwright, @RepCartwright, 07/09/19:**
 "For months, @HouseDemocrats have worked hard to pass important legislation #ForThePeople, including bills to make health care more affordable and protect people with pre-existing conditions. It's time for @senatemajldr Mitch McConnell to do his job and give these bills a vote."



- **PA-18's Rep. Mike Doyle, @USRepMikeDoyle, 07/11/19:**
 "Americans should not have to worry about losing health insurance because of a pre-existing condition! The ACA helped some Pittsburghers buy affordable high-quality health coverage - we cannot let Texas v. United States send us backward. #ProtectOurCare" *Tweet included this [link](#).*

Twitter Action - MoCs on July 4th

- **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, 07/03/19:**
 "After proposing steep cuts to the @NationalParkService, President Trump is now wasting their limited resources on what's essentially a campaign rally on the government dime." *Tweet included this [link](#).*

- **Senator Pat Toomey, @SenToomey, [07/04/19](#)**

“243 years ago in Philadelphia, our founders began the greatest experiment in self-governance the world has ever known. As the birthplace of our nation, Pennsylvania has always been at the center of our shared history. Wishing everyone a happy, safe, and great #IndependenceDay”



Twitter Action - MoCs on Legislation

- **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, [07/12/19](#):**

“There is a humanitarian crisis at our southern border that has been exacerbated by the policies of this Administration. This Administration’s policy of separating children from their parents goes against our values as a Nation. Asylum seekers who have fled violence and persecution should not be subjected to unhealthy, unsanitary or unsafe conditions under any circumstances. This is why I am proud to support the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act, which would ensure humane standards of care and safety for migrants.” *Editor’s note - more about this bill in this week’s call to action, on the final page of this report*

- **Senator Pat Toomey, @SenToomey, [07/10/19](#):**

“.@CommerceGov’s tariffs on steel and aluminum cost 80 Pennsylvanians their jobs last week. It’s time for the Senate to have a debate on trade authority and vote on my bipartisan bill to restore Congress’s constitutional trade responsibilities.” *tweeted with a link to a Sharon Herald article titled [“NLMK blames Farrell plant layoffs on tariffs”](#)*

- **PA-01’s Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, @RepBrianFitz, [07/09/19](#):**

“Pennsylvania has one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the United States. I am proud to cosponsor the TICK Act to give federal, state, and local governments the tools they need to minimize the impact of tick-borne illnesses.” *tweeted with a link to a WBCB [article](#) that is a cut and paste copy of a Fitzpatrick [press release](#)*

Tweet of the Week

- **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, [07/10/19](#):**

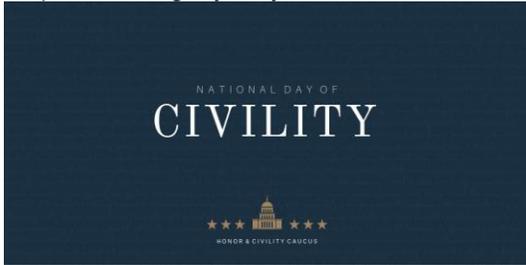
“As U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Secretary Acosta provided a child predator, Jeffrey Epstein, with a sweetheart plea deal that was kept secret from his numerous underage victims and their families. As an appointed official, Secretary Acosta should resign for his part in perpetuating this cycle of abuse. It is my hope that Mr. Epstein and anyone who harmed children as part of his trafficking ring will finally be held fully accountable for their actions and go to prison for many years.”
Editor’s note - Acosta resigned on 07/11/19

- **Senator Pat Toomey, @SenToomey, [07/10/19](#):**

“Many thanks to President Trump, my congressional colleagues, and community leaders with whom I worked to prevent the plant’s immediate closure. I remain dedicated to supporting the workers in Coatesville and will remain engaged on this issue.”

- PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, @RepBrianFitz, [07/12/19](#):

"Today is #NationalDayofCivility, and now more than ever we must remember to treat others with the respect and dignity they deserve as we work towards the betterment of our country."



The replies to this tweet are... amazing.

Casey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Kathy Sites

Senator Casey was omnipresent in the press this week, speaking out against the Trump Administration-backed lawsuit that would dismantle the Affordable Care Act. Our first five offerings represent the tone and content of Senator Casey's many quotes about the attacks on the ACA.

"Women would be charged more than men for healthcare. We would go back to that discrimination that was part of our healthcare for many years. Young people would no longer have access to their parents' coverage up to the age of 26. Is this America?"

— from an article in [Lehigh Valley Live](#) titled "[Local leaders say affordable health care is a right, 'not a privilege for the fortunate few'](#)"

"If you support protections for pre-existing conditions you have to be against this lawsuit, you have to be against the budget cuts."

— from an article on Allentown's [WFMZ 69 News](#) titled "[Some Pennsylvanians on edge as lawsuit aims to strike down Affordable Care Act](#)"

If you think we're in a fight, you're right. We're in a big, big fight. Rip away protection and Medicaid expansion and eliminate the Affordable Care Act and I don't think a lot of people understand yet the consequences of this lawsuit being successful. The Trump administration proposed to cut Medicaid funding to one and a half trillion dollars over 10 years. That is the end of Medicaid as we know it. Benefits within the Affordable Care Act that could be in jeopardy are pre-existing conditions and children staying on their parents' health insurance until 26 years old."

— from an article on [PAHomepage.com](#) titled "[Casey shows support for Affordable Care Act](#)"

"We know that 20 million people plus, more than 20 million will lose coverage right away if this lawsuit is successful, there's no backup plan. This is an effort by a corporate White House led by corporate Republicans in the House and Senate to do in the courts what they couldn't do in the halls of Congress when we stopped them in 2017. Because of the Affordable Care Act, 89,000 Pennsylvanians have coverage because they can stay on their parents insurance until they are 26."

— from a [KDKA Radio](#) article titled "[Senator Bob Casey Defends Affordable Care Act](#)"

"There's no backup plan, there's no Republican replacement plan. This is totally irresponsible. They don't seem to give a damn if this coverage is ripped away. Democrats in Congress, I'll say it bluntly, are not doing enough. We've got to ramp up and amp up our game to stop Republicans from destroying our

health care system, ripping away coverage from more than 20 million people and ending protections for more than 150 million Americans.

Very few Americans know what's happening. Most people in this state don't even know this lawsuit is underway, quite frankly."

— from a [Trib Live](#) article titled "[Patients fear losing health insurance if Trump-backed lawsuit to gut ACA prevails](#)"

"As U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta provided a child predator, Jeffrey Epstein, with a sweetheart plea deal that was kept secret from his numerous underage victims and their families. As an appointed official, Secretary Acosta should resign for his part in perpetuating this cycle of abuse."

— the senator addresses the role the now-former Labor Secretary played in the Epstein child rape ring scandal in a [Trib Live](#) article titled "[Casey, Toomey react to plea-deal controversy surrounding Labor Secretary Acosta](#)"

We still have a long way to go on these issues. We're not where we need to be. Younger voices- like Richard's- bring an urgency to the issue that no legislator can. "

— Senator Casey discusses the renewal of the Special Diabetes Program and the introduction of his legislation that would specifically help cover the care and insulin costs for these patients as reported on [PAhomepage.com](#) in an article titled "[Fighting for a Diabetes Cure & Care](#)"

Fitzpatrick in the News

"The high prevalence of Lyme disease in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is a very serious matter, and efforts must be made on a federal, state, and local levels to minimize its presence. This legislation would give researchers and government officials the tools and resources needed to ward off tick-borne illnesses."

— from an article in the [Bucks County Courier Times](#) titled "[Fitzpatrick, local Lyme disease group support TICK bill](#)"

"Just this week, the president stated that clean water is a 'top priority' of his administration. I remain committed to the establishment of a deadline to phase out the use of fluorinated firefighting foam."

— the representative defends the president, immediate after saying he was "deeply concerned" in a [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) article titled "[Threatening veto of spending bill, White House opposes two PFAS cleanup measures](#)"

"As co-chairs of the bipartisan Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, we respectfully urge you to invite President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, to address a joint meeting of Congress... Russia is intent on escalating its aggression as evidenced by the illegal seizure of 24 Ukrainian soldiers and three naval vessels in the waters of the Kerch Strait. During this dangerous time for Ukraine and the world, Congress must strengthen our engagement to our close ally as it confronts these challenges as new leadership ascends,"

— an excerpt from a letter authored by the House Ukraine Caucus co-chairs (of which Rep. Fitzpatrick is one), as reported in [Ukrinform](#), in an article titled "[U.S. Congress wants to hear address by Zelensky](#)"

"Now, more than ever, it is important to rededicate ourselves to the work of remembering the Holocaust and learning the lessons of the attempt to eliminate European Jewry."

— an excerpt from a letter sent by six Congresspeople, from an article in the [Washington Examiner](#) titled "[Bipartisan congressional group to lead private tour of Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)"

Additionally, this excerpt from the *Allentown Morning Call* article titled "[A \\$15 minimum wage would mean higher pay and job losses, according to a new analysis. Do Pennsylvania lawmakers support the proposed wage hike?](#)" does not have a direct quote from Rep. Fitzpatrick, but the content merits review by our readers: "A spokesman for Republican U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick said the congressman is still reviewing the legislation, the CBO report and other data, and does not yet have a position on the bill."

Toomey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Elayne Baker

"It's actually quite a nice and comfortable environment, there's not much security there... It's certainly not a comprehensive thing, but if the people generally around the world believe that when they get in the United States there are no consequences and they can stay indefinitely, then this problem will never go away."

— the senators description of the Berks ICE facility and the Trump Administration's immigration policy, from an article in the *Penn Capital Star* titled "[Immigrant families detained in coming Trump crackdown could be held in Berks County](#)"

"There is not a single Republican senator who believes people with chronic and/or expensive pre-existing conditions shouldn't have access to quality, affordable health care."

— the senator dismisses criticism of the GOP's lawsuit to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, from the *Trib Live* article titled "[Patients fear losing health insurance if Trump-backed lawsuit to gut ACA prevails](#)"

"I do think it's important the Fed remain insulated from political pressure. I also want to say that I think [Mr. Powell has] done an outstanding job."

— from an article in *Money and Markets* titled "[Republicans Praise Fed Chair Powell Amid Constant Trump Attacks](#)"

"It is deeply ironic, not to mention painful to out of work steelworkers, that the administration's protectionist steel tariffs have directly caused the layoff of over 80 Pennsylvanians working in the steel industry. Blanket tariffs on steel and aluminum from our allies distort prices, disrupt supply chains, and increase prices for consumers—including downstream users of these products, who collectively employ millions of Americans."

— from an article in *Reason* titled "[At Least 80 Workers Are Losing Their Jobs at This Pennsylvania Steel Plant. Tariffs Are To Blame](#)"

"Refineries provide family sustaining wages to thousands of Pennsylvania workers. EPA and the courts have made clear that waivers must be issued to refineries suffering severe economic harm from the ill-conceived corn ethanol mandate. The waivers simply diminish the burden of this terrible mandate on the refineries least able to afford it, and therefore allow them to continue doing business. With this in mind, Administrator (Andrew) Wheeler and President Trump should continue working to bolster our flourishing energy sector, not undermine it."

— the senator issues his support for the elimination of an EPA clean air regulation in the *Bradford Era* article titled "[Ad campaign asking Trump to protect small refineries, like ARG](#)"

"Now, just today the Hong Kong Chief Executive [Carrie Lam] said that that the bill is dead; but, it has not been formally withdrawn, as I understand it. I think the threat remains... The accused would then face prosecution by an authoritarian government in mainland China that does not uphold the rule of law, nor does it practice the fair and impartial administration of justice. Let's face it, the judicial system in China is politicized and controlled by the Chinese Communist party. Some people are concerned that, if this bill were to become law, it would even pave the way for Chinese state-sponsored kidnapping of dissidents... It's simply a fact: mainland China is a legal black hole and Hong Kong's extradition bill would be a step to exposing Hong Kong residents directly to mainland China's opaque, and often blatantly unfair, legal system."

— from an article in the *Epoch Times* titled [“US Senator Raises Concerns About Hong Kong Leader Pronouncing Extradition Bill ‘Dead’”](#)

“When students and their parents are deciding where — or if — to attend college, they should have all the relevant information necessary to make the best possible decision. This bipartisan legislation will better inform families on student outcomes for different schools, degrees, and majors. I urge my colleagues to pass this commonsense measure.”

— from an article in *The Bradford Era* titled [“Toomey cosponsors bipartisan college transparency act”](#)

Committee Corner

The following House committee hearings and reports from the past week were interesting, and featured content worth your time.

The [House Budget Committee](#) issued a new report on July 10, 2019 titled [“Congress Must Act on Comprehensive Immigration Reform.”](#) This document is a recap of the findings from a [June 26th hearing](#) held by the committee. If you are planning on writing a letter to the editor related to immigration at any point in the future, the committee’s report is an essential source of useful information that highlights “the critical contributions immigrants make to the economy and affirmed how comprehensive immigration reform can act as an engine for job creation, innovation, economic growth, and fiscal stability.”

The [House Committee on Energy and Commerce](#) held a hearing on July 12, 2019 titled [“Keeping The Lights On: Addressing Cyber Threats To The Grid.”](#) The [testimony](#) of the first witness, Department of Energy Assistant Secretary Karen S. Evans, was particularly bracing. She said “our nation’s energy infrastructure has become a primary target for hostile cyber actors, both state-sponsored and non-state sponsored. The frequency, scale, and sophistication of cyber threats continue to increase. Cyber incidents have the potential to disrupt energy services, damage highly specialized equipment, and even threaten human health and safety.” Her testimony and that of her colleagues who appeared at the hearing are valuable resources.

The [House Homeland Security Committee](#) held a hearing on July 11, 2019 titled [“Road to Recovery: Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands after Hurricanes Irma & Maria.”](#) Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Subcommittee Chairman Donald M. Payne, Jr. (D-N.J.) issued a scathing observation about the Trump Administration’s unwillingness to provide a witness from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. [Rep. Payne said](#), “The agency has a personnel shortage, but you would think it would be able to provide a witness for a hearing on some of the most devastating storms our country experienced in modern history. If that empty chair isn’t a perfect metaphor for this Administration’s response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria, I don’t know what is. Unfortunately, FEMA’s absence today is just the latest example of the Administration’s apathy towards Hurricanes Irma and Maria recovery and further underscores the need for this Committee to provide robust oversight.”

The [House Judiciary Committee](#) held a hearing on July 10, 2019 titled [“Marijuana Laws in America: Racial Justice and the Need for Reform.”](#) □ **PA-04’s Rep. Madeleine Dean** was a participant at this hearing, and she held a colloquy with witness Dr. David L. Nathan to dispel the notion that cannabis is a gateway drug (around 2:20:00 in the hearing video). Rep. Dean also spoke about our “racist roots of marijuana policy.”

The [House Committee on Oversight and Reform](#) held two big hearings this week. July 10th brought us [“Kids in Cages: Inhumane Treatment at the Border”](#) and July 12th saw a hearing on [“The Trump Administration’s Child Separation Policy: Substantiated Allegations of Mistreatment.”](#) As media has covered both of those hearings extensively, please see this [Washington Post piece](#) for more information.

Since the testimony of Robert Mueller, which had been planned for July 17th has now been [postponed](#) by a week to July 24th, maybe these other hearings will interest you:

- July 15, 2019 at 4:00 PM - The House Committee on Oversight and Reform hearing on [“Violations of the Hatch Act Under the Trump Administration, Part II: Kellyanne Conway”](#)

- July 15, 2019 at 5:30 PM - The House Judiciary Committee hearing on "[Overcrowding and Prolonged Detention at CBP Facilities](#)"
- July 16, 2019 at 2:00 PM - The House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on "[Russian Disinformation Attacks on Elections: Lessons from Europe](#)"
- July 16, 2019 at 2:00 PM - The [House Science Space & Technology Committee](#) hearing on "[EPA Advisory Committees: How Science should inform Decisions](#)"

Lastly, we have information about the committee assignments for **PA-12's Rep. Fred Keller** - he has landed on the Committee on Education and Labor and the Oversight and Reform Committee. Education and Labor already has representation from Pennsylvania, but he will be the only Keystone State MoC on Oversight and Reform.

Call to Action - Support this Bill!

Senate Bill - Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act

At MoCTrack, we normally wait until a bill has reference numbers before we share out information, but this Senate effort is just too important to wait on the Congressional clerk's office! The Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act was introduced by Senate Minority leader Chuck Schumer and Oregon's Sen. Jeff Merkley. In short, it is meant to accompany the [border funding bill](#) that passed two weeks ago without any humanitarian improvements. This is where we are going to find the necessary changes to minimum acceptable standards, to stop the Trump Administration from abusing and dehumanizing migrants. [Salon](#) reports:

It calls to "end all family separations, except when authorized by a state court or child welfare agency" or when CBP agents and an independent child specialist "agree that a child is a trafficking victim, not the child of an accompanying adult or is in danger of abuse or neglect." The measure would ensure children have access to legal counsel inside all detention, holding and border facilities, and it would provide funding to non-profit assistance centers and other providers caring for migrants released from DHS custody. It states children "cannot be turned away or delayed from crossing the border."

Senator Merkley helpfully provided this [one-page recap](#) of the contents of his work:



Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act

Members of Congress and the public continue to be outraged by the Trump Administration's response to and treatment of asylum seeking families and children at our southwestern border. This legislation combines and supplements several legislative proposals to protect children and families at the border.

Following the passage of the border supplemental funding bill, this legislation is intended to provide guardrails and minimum standards for the treatment of children and families, ensuring that government funds are not used to traumatize or harm asylum seekers.

Here's what the bill would do:

End family separations

End family separations except when authorized by a state court or child welfare agency, or when Customs and Border Protection and an independent child welfare specialist agree that a child is a trafficking victim, not the child of an accompanying adult, or is in danger of abuse or neglect.

Set minimum health & safety standards

Set minimum health and safety standards for children and families in Border Patrol Stations.

- o This section requires access to hygiene products including toothbrushes, diapers, soap and showers, regular nutritious meals, and a prompt medical assessment by trained medical providers.

End for-profit contractors

End for-profit contractors from operating new Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) standard shelters or influx facilities.

- o Ensure that temporary influx facilities are state-licensed, meet Flores standards, and are not used to house children indefinitely.
- o Expand alternatives to detention and the successful Family Case Management Program.

Remove roadblocks to placing unaccompanied children with sponsors

Remove roadblocks to placing unaccompanied children with sponsors by lowering case manager caseloads, mandating lower staffing ratios, and ending the information sharing agreement between ORR and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Ensure unaccompanied children have access to legal counsel

Ensure unaccompanied children have access to legal counsel and continue to be placed in a non-adversarial setting for their initial asylum case review.

Provide resources to non-profit centers

Provide resources to non-profit centers that are helping provide humanitarian assistance.

Allow access for oversight

Allow Members of Congress, accompanying staff, and credentialed press (without cameras) to visit any facility with 24 hour notice.

The bill already has thirty seven co-sponsors, including our own Senator Bob Casey. Upon the introduction of this bill, Sen. Casey made the following [statement](#):

There is a humanitarian crisis at our southern border that has been exacerbated by the policies of this Administration. This Administration's policy of separating children from their parents goes against our values as a Nation. Asylum seekers who have fled violence and persecution should not be subjected to unhealthy, unsanitary or unsafe conditions under any circumstances. This is why I am proud to support the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act, which would ensure humane standards of care and safety for migrants.

In light of the introduction of the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act, MoCTrack asks that you make three phone calls (or website contacts to your MoCs) to support this legislation:

1. **Call Senator Casey and thank him for sponsoring the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act**
2. **Call Senator Toomey and tell him that you want him to co-sponsor this bill.** You can use this script - "I am calling today because I want Senator Toomey to support the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act. We have all seen reports of the increasing abuses and indignities being forced on detained migrants and asylum-seekers. We have seen pictures of people kept outside under bridges, and in crowded, unsanitary conditions. Children have died in custody, for lack of basic medical care. This bill outlines basic minimum humanitarian standards, and provides pathways to ensure that children are not detained indefinitely. Our nation is better than the care that we have provided until now. We need to do better. Please join on as a co-sponsor of the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act."
3. **Call Rep. Fitzpatrick and ask for him to support this effort.** You can use this script - "The Senate just introduced the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act. I am horrified at the way our nation has been treating children in our care. Children have died in custody, for lack of basic medical care. This bill outlines basic minimum humanitarian standards, and provides pathways to ensure that children are not detained indefinitely. Right now it does not appear that the House has an identical bill to the one that was introduced in the Senate. I would like Rep. Fitzpatrick to work with his colleagues in the House of Representatives to introduce a companion bill, and pass it as soon as possible. You have already approved emergency funding to the very agencies who are enacting these abuses. Now it is time to pass improved standards so that we do not see these abuses repeated."

As soon as we have bill numbers for this effort, we will update this report. We will also promulgate the information on Twitter, using the hashtag #MoCTrack.

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
Helen a.k.a @ElastigirlVotes
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!