

PA-01 Member of Congress Tracking Report - 07/21/19

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)	69.1%	+0.1%

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 six House votes scored this week - condemning the president for his racist comments, the motion to table impeachment articles, two Saudi arms votes, putting two Trump administration officials in contempt, and the bill to raise the minimum wage.

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 spirit of party... serves always to distract the Public Councils and enfeeble the Public Administration. It agitates the Community with ill founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another."

—[George Washington](#), from his 1796 Farewell Address

Votes of Interest -

The House condemns the President's Racist comments directed at Members of Congress

[House Vote](#) on [H. Res. 489](#)

Since this vote, and all of the events leading up to it, were covered extensively by every media outlet, let's look at the contents of the resolution.

Like all resolutions, the format starts with a series of "whereas" observations, or pieces of evidence that the House cites in preparation for coming to some conclusion. Those "whereas" items are followed by the resolutions, where the House expresses their opinion/intention based on the evidence they presented.

This resolution starts with "Whereas the Founders conceived America as a haven of refuge for people fleeing from religious and political persecution," and then follows that with a quote from Ben Franklin and then another from Franklin D. Roosevelt, both affirming the role of immigrants in our nation.

Then the resolution notes that "the commitment to immigration and asylum has been not a partisan cause but a powerful national value that has infused the work of many Presidents" and "American patriotism is defined not by race or ethnicity but by devotion to the Constitutional ideals of equality, liberty, inclusion, and democracy and by service to our communities and struggle for the common good." This is followed by

quotes from John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. In fact, the resolution contains seven quotes from Ronald Reagan, including an excerpt from his final speech as president, when he stated “we lead the world because, unique among nations, we draw our people—our strength—from every country and every corner of the world, and by doing so we continuously renew and enrich our nation.”

The final bit in the ‘whereas’ portion states “President Donald Trump’s racist comments have legitimized fear and hatred of new Americans and people of color.” Then the content moves on to three resolutions:

1. The House believes “that those who take the oath of citizenship are every bit as American as those whose families have lived in the United States for many generations”
2. The House “is committed to keeping America open to those lawfully seeking refuge and asylum from violence and oppression, and those who are willing to work hard to live the American Dream, no matter their race, ethnicity, faith, or country of origin”
3. The House “strongly condemns President Donald Trump’s racist comments that have legitimized and increased fear and hatred of new Americans and people of color by saying that our fellow Americans who are immigrants, and those who may look to the President like immigrants, should ‘go back’ to other countries, by referring to immigrants and asylum seekers as ‘invaders’ and by saying that Members of Congress who are immigrants (or those of our colleagues who are wrongly assumed to be immigrants) do not belong in Congress or in the United States of America.”

Prior to the final vote on the resolution, Republican lawmakers attempted to derail the proceedings by calling for a vote to [strike a portion](#) of House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi’s statements from the Congressional record. This motion failed, on purely party lines. Independent Justin Amash voted with the Democrats, and Nancy Pelosi’s full comments remain in the Congressional Record.

The resolution passed 240-187, in a vote taken on Tuesday, July 16, 2019. The Democrats were united in supporting it. They were joined by 4 Republicans and 1 Independent. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

Impeachment is tabled, at least for now

[House Vote](#) on the Motion to Table [H.Res. 498](#)

This week, Representative Al Green (D-Texas) brought forth Articles of Impeachment against the president. This is not the first time Rep. Green has composed articles of impeachment - he first brought them to the floor in [December 2017](#). Rep. Green’s articles, unlike those offered by Rep. [Steve Cohen](#) of Tennessee (which are expansive and covered emoluments and other corruption related topics), are entirely focused on the President’s racism. [CNN](#) called the action of bringing these articles to the floor as “the most direct challenge yet to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s handling of impeachment.”

The same [CNN](#) article explains how this motion could occur, even while Speaker Pelosi opposes impeachment:

Green was able to force the House to take up his impeachment articles because it’s considered a privileged resolution under the House rules. While any House member can introduce a privileged resolution on the floor — and Green introduced similar resolutions twice while Republicans were control — Pelosi has until now held her party back from doing so since Democrats took control of chamber, despite more than 80 members pushing for the start of an impeachment inquiry.

After the articles of impeachment were brought to the floor, the motion was made to table them. Tabling a motion is the equivalent of saying “we don’t want to deal with this now”. In a vote taken on Wednesday, July 17, the motion was indeed tabled, 332-95 - **Fitzpatrick voted YES** (against impeachment). [Politico](#) explains how the Democratic caucus voted:

The vote laid bare some divisions among some House Democrats, including among Pelosi’s leadership team — many of her senior members voted to block the articles of impeachment but more junior members, including Reps. David Cicilline, Jamie Raskin, Katherine Clark, Ted Lieu, Debbie Dingell and Joe Neguse voted against blocking Green’s proposal.

At least a handful of lawmakers who support launching an impeachment inquiry against Trump voted against immediate consideration of Green's articles, including Reps. Jim Himes (D-Conn.), Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) and Justin Amash (I-Mich.).

The two top Democrats on the Judiciary Committee — Reps. Jerry Nadler and Zoe Lofgren — also voted against sidelining Green's measure. Nadler, whose committee oversees the impeachment process, had publicly said he preferred to have the measure referred to his panel, rather than blocked altogether.

The Fight for Fifteen splits the House

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 582](#), the Raise the Wage Act; and the [House Vote](#) on a Motion to Recommit. The federal minimum wage has remained at \$7.25 an hour for non-tipped workers since 2009, in a time when the [average annual inflation](#) has been 1.8% for the last ten years. And the minimum wage for tipped workers (like restaurant waitstaff) is even lower, at \$3.13 an hour. The federal minimum wage is simply not a living wage - and we here in Pennsylvania are the only one of our neighboring states that use the federal rate as our own minimum. Other states have raised their own hourly minimum.

The bill under consideration is not an immediate increase of the minimum wage. [GovTrack](#) provides a summary of the legislation, courtesy of the Congressional Research Service:

This bill amends the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to increase the federal minimum wage for regular employees over a 7-year period, for tipped employees, and for newly hired employees who are less than 20 years old.

The bill sets forth a schedule of annual increases in the federal minimum wage for individuals with disabilities. The Department of Labor shall no longer issue special certificates for the payment of subminimum wages to such individuals after the final wage increase under this bill for such individuals takes effect...The bill eliminates the separate minimum wage requirements for tipped, newly hired, and disabled employees. After a specified period, these employees shall be paid the same minimum wage as regular employees.

[The Hill](#) reports that this plan for raising the wage was the result of a compromise between different wings of the Democratic caucus:

The legislation represented a long-evolving compromise between liberal and centrist Democrats who were initially at odds over how large the wage hike would be, how long it would take to phase it, and whether it would rise at the same level across the country or allow for regional flexibilities.

Liberals won the battle for enacting a wage hike to \$15 across the country, while centrists succeeded in lengthening the phase-in period from five to six years. The legislation also includes an amendment favored by centrists requiring that the economic impact be studied as the early stages of the wage hike is implemented.

Prior to the final vote on the bill, the Republicans offered a [Motion to Recommit](#), a tactic we have often discussed here at MoCTrack. It is when the minority party offers a last ditch attempt to either modify the bill on the floor, or just send it back to committee and avoid a final vote. In this case it was **PA-09's Rep. Dan Meuser** who offered the motion. [Congress.gov](#) explains its contents:

The instructions contained in the motion seek to require the bill to be reported back to the House with an amendment adding a section pertaining to Small Business Survival which shall not apply to an enterprise that employs fewer than 10 individuals and whose annual gross volume of sales made or business done is less than \$1,000,000.

This portion of Congressional action can be viewed on this [C-SPAN clip](#). The motion to recommit failed, in a 210-218 vote. Fourteen Democrats crossed party lines to vote with Republicans for the motion. The only Pennsylvanian to do so was **PA-07's Rep. Susan Wild**.

The vote on the final bill was placed on Thursday, July 18, 2019. The legislation passed, 231-199. Nine lawmakers voted across party lines, with three GOP MoCs voting YES with the Democrats, and six Dems voting NO with the Republicans. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

The House passes contempt charges for major Trump administration officials

[House Vote](#) on [H.Res. 497](#), to find William Barr and Wilbur Ross in contempt of Congress

This vote is a small part of the ongoing battle between the House and the Trump Administration over the manner in which the Legislative and Executive branches are permitted to interact. This protracted exchange is now spanning multiple lawsuits. [The New York Times](#) explains:

It is not unusual for Congresses and White Houses of opposing parties to face off over oversight demands, haggling over documents and witnesses. But there is scant precedent for the volume and intensity of the disputes between this Democratic House and Mr. Trump, whose administration has taken a dim view of Congress's authority to compel executive branch cooperation.

On Friday, July 12, the Trump Administration has stated in court that it is their legal position that Congress has [no right at all to provide oversight](#) on the president's actions. That assertion was made to a district court over whether or not Congress should be able to subpoena the president's tax records from a third party, despite clear and upheld law affirming their right to do so. And all throughout the attempts to gain testimony from former White House aide Hope Hicks, attorneys (some were her personal attorneys, and some from the Department of Justice) made claims of "absolute immunity" from answering questions directed by Congress. The Hicks testimony was sought in the aftermath of the Mueller Report.

The next front in this battle has put the House on the offensive, as they decided to put Attorney General William Barr and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross in contempt of Congress. [Reuters](#) notes that this action was "a response to the cabinet members' failure to produce documents requested by House Democrats as part of an investigation into whether the Trump administration attempted to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census that would discriminate against racial minorities."

Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Mary.), chairman of the House Oversight Committee, explained the rationale for this vote, via an article in [Politico](#):

I do not take this decision lightly. Holding any secretary in criminal contempt of Congress is a serious and sober matter, one that I have done everything in my power to avoid. But in the case of the attorney general and Secretary Ross, they blatantly obstructed our ability to do congressional oversight into the real reason Secretary Ross was trying, for the first time in 70 years, to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census.

The vote to put the two cabinet level officials in contempt was taken on Wednesday, July 17, 2019. The measure passed, 230-198. The Republicans were united in voting against this action. They were joined by four Democrats (Jared Golden of Maine, Jeff Van Drew of New Jersey, Anthony Brindisi of New York and **PA-17's Rep. Conor Lamb**) Independent Justin Amash voted YES, with the majority of the Democrats. **Fitzpatrick voted NO.**

The House has not forgotten the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 2037](#), the Saudi Arabia Human Rights and Accountability Act

This is a bill that would impose sanctions upon the people who ordered or were a part of the awful murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was last seen entering the Saudi embassy in Turkey.

The process by which these sanctions would be enacted is under the [Global Magnitsky Act](#), named for a Russian lawyer who uncovered a massive tax fraud in his home country, and was ultimately tortured and murdered by his government. His former client, Bill Browder, has spent the years since that murder traveling the world, and attempting to get as many countries as possible to pass their own versions of the Magnitsky Act. President Obama signed the United States version of the legislation into law in 2016.

The [Washington Post](#) offers some key insights on how this effort measures up against similar attempts to address this issue from the Senate:

The Khashoggi bill, introduced by Rep. Tom Malinowski (D-N.J.), closely resembles part of Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman James E. Risch's (R-Idaho) recently introduced proposal to deny visas to Saudi officials responsible for Khashoggi's slaying. Both efforts are in keeping with the spirit of last year's attempt by former senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) and Sens. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) and Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.) to invoke the Global Magnitsky Act and force President Trump to name and sanctions officials involved in Khashoggi's killing. Trump never responded, despite being legally bound to deliver a report within 120 days.

The House voted on this bill on Monday, July 15, 2019. The effort passed with broad support, 405-7. The seven NO votes were all placed by Republicans in the Freedom Caucus. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

The House votes to block Trump's Middle East Arms Sales

[House Vote](#) on [S. J. Res. 36](#), [House Vote](#) on [S. J. Res. 37](#) and [House Vote](#) on [S. J. Res. 38](#)

This is one more step in the protracted and convoluted struggle between the Legislative and Executive branches over their constitutional roles related to war powers. This is the most basic recap possible.

- Saudi Arabia's military actions in Yemen have created the [world's worst humanitarian crisis](#), and the US has been involved by fueling planes and selling arms to the Saudis
- During the 115th Congress, Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) introduced a concurrent resolution that would direct the president "to remove United States Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen that have not been authorized by Congress." In a bizarre move, the [House](#) leadership added language to clock Rep. Khanna's resolution and forbid any further discussion of War Powers into a must-pass Farm Bill-related resolution
- Also during the 115th Congress, the [Senate](#) voted 56-41 on a measure that said "Congress hereby directs the President to remove United States Armed Forces from hostilities in or affecting the Republic of Yemen." Then-House Speaker Paul Ryan refused to allow that to come to the House floor for a vote
- In [February](#), the House passed a new version of Rep. Khanna's resolution to remove the US from involvement in Yemen
- In [March](#), the Senate passed a similar resolution, written by Sen. Bernie Sanders
- In [April](#), the House passed Bernie Sanders's Senate resolution
- The President [vetoed](#) that resolution on April 16, 2019.
- On May 2, 2019 the [Senate](#) failed to overcome Trump's veto
- Just as the Congress was going away for a week out of DC, the Trump Administration declared a [new fake emergency](#), so they could bypass Congress to sell \$8 billion of arms to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates
- In June, the [Senate](#) voted to block those arms sales via three resolutions

And that brings us to the current week. The House was voting on the three separate resolution that, combined, block all of the arms sales that the Trump Administration is trying to push through. [The New York Times](#) reports that House Foreign Affairs Chairman Elliot Engel (D-N.Y.) said, "If the administration wants to sell these weapons, they should follow the law — not misuse it — and come to Congress."

The votes on the three resolutions took place on Wednesday, July 17, 2019, and each passed. The vote on the first two resolutions were 238-190; while the third had one fewer YES vote, as one Democrat had left the chamber. The Democrats were unanimous in voting YES, and they were joined by four Republicans and Independent Rep. Justin Amash. **Fitzpatrick voted NO.**

Judicial Confirmation #1

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Peter Joseph Phipps to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals (**that's us, PA!**)

If this name look familiar, that's because this nomination is a promotion for Mr. Phipps, who was previously nominated by the Trump Administration. [Courthouse News Service](#) explains:

Tuesday marked the second time in less than a year that the Senate confirmed Judge Peter Phipps to a seat on a federal court. President Donald Trump nominated Phipps to a seat on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania in February 2018 and the Senate unanimously confirmed the longtime Justice Department attorney to the court that October. Trump then tapped Phipps for a promotion in May, nominating him to a position on the Third Circuit.

While [Senator Casey](#) had not opposed Mr. Phipps nomination to the lower court, he did not return a blue slip for the nominee for this Court of Appeals position, citing Mr. Phipps' lack of experience. But as we know from a slew of previous Trump nominations, blue slips mean little to Judiciary Chair Lindsay Graham and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and lack of experience is of no concern to the GOP.

The [Alliance for Justice](#), in their list of reasons to object to this nominee cited:

- During his initial confirmation hearing for the district court, Phipps joined many of Trump's nominees in his refusal to answer whether he believed *Brown v. Board of Education* was correctly decided.
- Phipps is President Trump's fourth white, male nominee to the Third Circuit. An Obama nominee, Rebecca Ross Haywood, would have been the first African-American woman judge in the circuit, but she was blocked when Sen. Pat Toomey did not return his blue slip on her nomination.
- As an attorney for the Department of Justice, Phipps worked on cases with serious repercussions for LGBTQ rights, reproductive rights and racial equity. In the case of an individual's discharge from the military under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" rules, which banned openly lesbian, gay, and bisexual service members, Phipps defended the discharge, grilled the service member about her moral standards, and invoked arguments suggesting LGBTQ service members harm unit cohesion.

The vote on Mr. Phipps was taken on Tuesday, July 16, 2019. He was confirmed, 56-40. The Republicans were united in voting YES. They were joined by three Democrats (Doug Jones of Alabama, Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona and Joe Manchin of West Virginia). **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES**.

I'd like to give the last word here to a segment of reporting from the [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#), who contacted [Kadida Kenner](#), one of Indivisible's best and most knowledgeable Pennsylvania allies, for comment on this vote:

Why Courts Matter PA opposed confirmation, saying it was troubled by Judge Phipps' lack of judicial experience, his "extreme conservative ideology," and his handling of cases involving gay rights, including one in which he suggested gay service members harm unit cohesion. The confirmation "is an affront to the citizens of Pennsylvania who have advocated against the Trump administration's string of problematic judicial nominees with extreme ideologies making them unfit to be impartial arbiters for all," said the advocacy group's campaign director Kadida Kenner.

Judicial Confirmation #2

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Clifton L. Corker to the USDC in Tennessee

Clifton Corker (no relation to GOP Sen. Corker) is one of the less objectionable Trump nominees if one only looks at his employment history, which includes work as a volunteer defender and judicial experience. What makes him an objectionable nominee is the detail about his political philosophy as revealed by his writings. [The Vetting Room](#) explains:

As a college student, Corker frequently wrote articles and letters to the editor for *The Breeze*, the JMU college paper. In these writings, Corker takes strongly conservative positions, frequently employing hyperbolic language to lampoon the perceived weaknesses of ideological opponents. For example, in one piece, Corker writes that the "evil spirit of liberalism is beginning to ooze out of the hearts and minds of those it holds captive, seeking to add more to its chains of slavery." In another piece, Corker defends Col. Oliver North as "the victim of a prosecutor with an unlimited budget" and describes the U.S. Congress as the "enemy" for investigating North and interfering with the Reagan Administration's foreign policy. In another column announcing a debate over the Reagan

Administration's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), Corker takes the first paragraph to dismiss the designation of Nov. 9-16 as Nuclear Awareness Week and Gay Rights Week, noting "This leads me to question as to whether it is the gays who want more nuclear awareness or the nuclear awareness persons who want more gay rights?"

In other articles, Corker praises the Supreme Court candidacy of Robert Bork, arguing that "[w]omen's rights will not suffer at all" by recognizing that, unlike with race, there are "reasonable differences between genders," and criticizes the push for divestment from South Africa due to apartheid, arguing that current sanctions "are neither helping blacks nor aiding in the abolishment of apartheid."

Additionally, Mr. Corker is one of the growing number of Trump Administration judicial nominees who [declined to affirm](#) the Supreme Court ruling in the court case *Brown vs. Board of Education*, that seminal decision that ordered the desegregation of America's public school system. *Esquire* included Mr. Clifton in their article titled "[The Conservative Effort to Salt the Judiciary With Larval Scalias Is Close to Complete](#)" - and that title pretty much says it all.

In a vote taken on Thursday, July 18, 2019, the Senate confirmed Mr. Corker 55-39. The Republicans were united in voting YES. They were joined by three Democrats (Doug Jones of Alabama, Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona and Joe Manchin of West Virginia). **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES**.

The Senate confirms a new Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Lynda Blanchard as Ambassador

There is a longstanding tradition in Washington that campaign donors are often named to ambassadorial positions. That is certainly the case with this nominee, who ran an evangelical organization, 100X Development Foundation. [NBC News](#) reports:

John Blanchard, a Montgomery, Alabama, real estate magnate, donated \$553,500 to Trump's inauguration fund under the name Joe D. Blanchard. He and his wife, Lynda "Lindy" Blanchard, have given more than \$2.6 million to Republicans since 2015. In January 2018, the Blanchards collectively donated \$250,000 to the Trump Victory Political Action Committee, a joint-fundraising effort by Trump's re-election campaign and the Republican National Committee. The couple also wrote four separate checks for \$2,700 to Trump's re-election campaign on the same day, the maximum permitted for individual contributions.

That same *NBC News* article outlines some of the deeply objectionable social media posts made by the nominee. Some of that content includes the following Facebook shares:

- "The Clinton 'Body Count' EXPANDS – 5 Mysterious DEATHS in the Last 6 Weeks," pushing a baseless decades-old conspiracy theory that alleges Bill and Hillary Clinton murdered former friends and enemies.
- "WATCH: Jaws Drop When Lib CNN Host Betrays Hillary With Shock Message on Live TV," an article which has since been taken down from the far-right Conservative Tribune, a website known for false news
- "Hillary caught on camera breaking North Carolina election laws?" In the post, Blanchard asked, "Did this really happen????"

In a vote taken on Thursday, July 18, 2019, the Senate confirmed Ms. Blanchard 54-40. Republican Susan Collins of Maine joined most of the Democrats in voting NO. Three Democrats (Doug Jones of Alabama, Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona and Chris Murphy of Connecticut) voted YES. **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES**.

Update on the bill to permanently reauthorize funding for 9/11 victim programs

[Last week](#) MoCTrack covered the [House Vote](#) on [H.R 1327](#), the Never Forget the Heroes Act. This bill would permanently reauthorize funding for programs that assist victims of the 9/11 attacks, and includes

coverage of health care costs for first responders.

This week, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York attempted to pass the bill in the Senate by unanimous consent, a move that was supported by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. But Kentucky Republican Rand Paul thwarted this move. [CNN](#) reports what Sen. Paul had to say when he blocked the passage of the bill:

"It has long been my feeling that we need to address our massive debt in this country -- we have a \$22 trillion debt, we're adding debt at about a trillion dollars a year. And therefore any new spending that we are approaching, any new program that's going to have the longevity of 70, 80 years, should be offset by cutting spending that's less valuable. We need to at the very least have this debate. I will be offering up an amendment if this bill should come to the floor, but until then I will object,"

This does not permanently table the bill, but it does delay its passage. Now, instead of a simple up or down unanimous consent process, the bill will have to be scheduled by McConnell, and debate and amendments will begin after that. Former *Daily Show* host Jon Stewart had some [sharp words](#) for Sen. Paul in the aftermath of this delaying action.

Our MoCs respond to the President's racist comments directed at four MoCs, and its aftermath

This section was compiled in collaboration between @ElastigirlVotes and @BucksCoKierstyn

- **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, 7/18/19:**
"America must always stay true to the inscription on the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" and not give in to those who would replace those ideals with racist tropes, like 'send them back'"
- **Senator Pat Toomey, 07/18/19 via his [website](#):**
"President Trump was wrong to suggest that four left-wing congresswomen should go back to where they came from. Three of the four were born in America and the citizenship of all four is as valid as mine. I couldn't disagree more with these congresswomen's views on immigration, socialism, national security, and virtually every policy issue. But they are entitled to their opinions, however misguided they may be. We should defeat their ideas on the merits, not on the basis of their ancestry."
- **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, @RepBrianFitz, 07/16/19:**
"The language and tone being used by so many in our country needs to change. The Hatfield versus McCoy brand of politics must end. Democrats and Republicans need to start treating each other respectfully and like human beings. We are all created in the image and likeness of God."

Let's talk about Fitzpatrick's messaging this week

If you have been following national media this week, you'd see that Rep. Fitzpatrick has been near universally commended for his vote, as one of four Republicans to break party lines, to censure President Trump for his racist remarks. But that doesn't come close to telling the whole story of the messaging that "Our Independent Voice" has deployed this week. PA Statewide Indivisible Grassroots Organizing Chair Laura Rose issued a thread on Twitter that sums it up. Please read on to get the full picture of what Fitzpatrick has said and done this week in the wake of his vote.

Laura Rose's comments are taken from [this thread](#) - she can be found at [@Lauratron1000](#):

It's been a busy week. I'm finally able to turn my attention to @repbrianfitz. He's one of four republicans who voted yes to condemn Trump's racist attacks on four congresswomen of color. /1
#PA01 #PhotoOpFitz

People lined up pretty quick to congratulate him & he got some very good press (let's leave aside that voting to condemn racism should be a total no-brainer for every sitting member of congress). /2 #PA01 #PhotoOpFitz

I wanted to wait a few hours to thank him because, well, I know him to be a fence-straddling, two-stepping, backpedaling "bipartisan" wonder boy. I thought it was too good to be true. /3 #PA01 #PhotoOpFitz

And he didn't disappoint. Notice how he "both sides" the issue, framing it as "language & tone used by so many in the country." This isn't a condemnation of Trump telling 4 of Fitz's colleagues to go back to their own countries. It's meaningless gibberish disguised as homily. /4 And he didn't disappoint. Notice how he "both sides" the issue, framing it as "language & tone used by so many in the country." This isn't a condemnation of Trump telling 4 of Fitz's colleagues to go back to their own countries. It's meaningless gibberish disguised as homily. /4



Brian Fitzpatrick  @Re... · 3d 

The language and tone being used by so many in our country needs to change. The Hatfield versus McCoy brand of politics must end. Democrats and Republicans need to start treating each other respectfully and like human beings. We are all created in the image and likeness of God.

 1,350  454  3,239 

The Hatfields and the McCoys? Really? Maybe he was trying to be folksy, but Fitz may as well be chiding the Montagues and Capulets. And don't even get me started on how we're all created in the image of God. Even asylum seekers, Brian? /5



Hours later, @repbrianfitz decides to chide Mayor Kenney. It's laughable seeing as Fitz never once denounced Trump's dangerous rhetoric (that actually endangers 4 sitting congresswomen) as "unbecoming of a public official." /6



And then the dog whistle. Omar! BDS! Israel! Well, I guess that worked in Fitzpatrick's smear campaign against @ScottWallacePA , so why re-invent the wheel, right? /7 #PA01 #PhotoOpFitz



It was disingenuous then, and it's damned dangerous now. But Brian can't lose votes with red meat #PA01 crowd, so, ta-da! /8

Antifa! Run children! Hide yourselves! BTW, I have never once heard Fitz condemn white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups. I have also never once heard him condemn this administration's cruel detainment of children, even when they died in federal custody. /9



Brian Fitzpatrick @Re... · 9h

Antifa is a danger to the safety and wellbeing of the general public. Designating Antifa as a domestic terrorist organization would be a significant step to protect journalists and all Americans who exercise their First Amendment rights. See my letter to AG Barr



140 200 685

So there's your bipartisan wonder boy. Your Problem Solvers Caucus pitchman. Your independent voice. I don't know about the rest of #PA01, but I ain't buying what he's selling. /end

Casey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Kathy Sites

"These people have been through hell just to get here. We've got to make sure through our dollars and work that every possible effort is made to make sure that those children can be screened and taken care of and provide quality health care by folks who know a lot about pediatrics and quality health care for children. We have a lot of work to do to hold this administration accountable that they treat families with dignity and respect and provide quality health care when they arrive."

— the senator's remarks following a visit to detention centers at the border as reported in a [Penn Live](#) article titled "[Bob Casey visits detention centers: 'These families have been through hell'](#)"

"I was pleased to meet with members of the American Federation of Teachers from Pennsylvania, including educators from the Neshaminy School District, to discuss our mutual support for funding public education and supporting the public service loan forgiveness program."

"I'm proud to have long been a supporter of strengthening funding for public education and will continue to do so. I look forward to working with Pennsylvania's finest educators to ensure the next generation of Pennsylvanians have a bright future."

— the senator's comments after meeting with educators from Neshaminy School District on the American Federation's Day of Lobbying to discuss program funding issues, from the [Doylestown Intelligencer](#) article titled "[Neshaminy teachers talk education with federal lawmakers](#)"

“Phipps is a person of strong character, great intellect and integrity, but I do not believe Phipps’ brief time on the federal bench gave him the experience necessary to sit on the appeals court.”

— [the Senator explains his vote against the confirmation of a judicial nominee, from the *Courthouse News* article titled “Senate Confirmation Flips Makeup of Third Circuit”](#)

“These scams are requiring an investment of time and resources from officers across the country. Instead of focusing only on what they do best — keeping our streets and communities safe — local law enforcement must spend precious time keeping the phone lines safe.”

— [from an article reported by *WKBN* in Youngstown titled “Pennsylvania senator taking aim at robocallers”](#)

“The perpetrators of these crimes must be pursued and prosecuted to the full extent of the law and they should be behind bars. This bill will create another line of defense against scammers by giving bank tellers, cashiers and others tools to spot a scam and prevent someone from ever handing over cash to a stranger on the phone.”

— [from an article on *fox43.com* titled “Lawmakers and regulators try to stop illegal robocalls”](#)

Fitzpatrick in the News

Representative Fitzpatrick did a [13 minute interview](#) on WPHT 1210 with Dom Giordano. What follows are a collection of quotes from that interview:

- “I agree with a lot of what the President does from a policy standpoint, from tax reform, immigration, when it comes to border security. What I disagree with the President on is his tone. I am a Ronald Reagan Republican and that’s the area I grew up in.”
- “There should be a resolution put on the floor condemning [Rep. Ilhan Omar’s] remarks. And that, by the way, was supposed to happen. Her comments are absolutely reprehensible, no question about it.”
- “If the GOP is ever going to win the House back and expand, we have got to start talking to people in the suburban areas where these issues matter. We can deal with these individual cases on an individual basis, but discrimination is very real. It is a very real thing, I have personally witnessed it, and it’s something we need to accept and work to fix.”
- “I believe in the beliefs and the approach of Ronald Reagan. Part of what a leader is, in my view, is not only do you have to have your policy right, and not only do you have to be a great listener and surround yourself with people who think differently than you, but you’ve also got to lower the temperature and bridge the gap.”

“The House’s action on our amendment is demonstrative of the strong bipartisan support for public safety telecommunicators in Congress. As a former FBI supervisory special agent, I understand the life-saving services they provide each and every day. I look forward to continuing my work alongside Congresswoman Torres to get our 911 SAVES Act over the finish line.”

— [from an article in the *Norman Transcript* \(of Norman, Oklahoma\) titled “Provision to reclassify 911 dispatchers passes on House floor”](#)

“Corruption stemming from hostile foreign actors like Russia harms the promotion of democratic reforms in countries where they are needed. To counter the weaponization of corruption, the United States must double down on its work to promote the rule of law abroad and act quickly when reformers come to power.”

— [from an article on *WBSM 1420’s* website titled “Keating introduced legislation to counter Russian corruption”](#)

“For 10 years, American workers have been disadvantaged by a stagnant minimum wage that today is woefully too low in any region of the country. The cost of living is vastly different among various regions throughout the United States. In order to ensure Americans truly receive fair wages, the minimum wage

must be reflective of where they work, live, and pay taxes.”

“[Raise the Wage] is yet another politically motivated messaging bill that has no chance of enactment and was not properly designed to provide sustainability for workers or businesses. My Fair Wage Act will acknowledge cost-of-living disparities in regions across the United States and will take a holistic approach to enhancing the minimum wage in the United States.”

“I am confident compromise legislation will be mindful of regional cost of living disparities and address the concerns of small businesses across the country. The ultimate solution must reflect regional cost of living variances. Fifteen dollars per hour in Birmingham is not the same as fifteen dollars per hour in Brooklyn.”

— from an article in the [Bucks County Courier Times](#) titled “[Fitzpatrick drafting Fair Wage Act, supports Raise the Wage in House vote Thursday](#)”

“I was thrilled to meet with educators from the Neshaminy School District and I stand with them in our joint mission to provide a world class education to our students, protect our kids from violence and bullying, and provide the necessary psychological and emotional support services that our children need. Our educators are true public servants and heroes, and I’m honored to work with them on these critical issues.”

— from an article of the [Bucks County Courier Times](#) titled “[Neshaminy teachers talk education with federal lawmakers](#)”

Toomey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Elayne Baker

“So, I’ve re-introduced my legislation which would withhold important categories of federal funding for cities that choose to endanger all of us this way. And, I’m going to insist on a vote. I’m going to take another run at getting this done.”

“These policies -- like the ones in Philadelphia and San Francisco -- make it harder to stop illegal immigration and keep dangerous criminals off the streets. Sanctuary cities extend a special protection to illegal immigrants even when federal immigration officials identify them as a threat to public safety. This is simply inexcusable, and I urge my colleagues to help pass this commonsense measure.”

— from a press release on the [Americans for Better Government](#) website, titled “[Senator Pat Toomey re-introduces bill to end sanctuary cities](#)”

“I don’t see the need for it. The private system has committed and would be obligated to be available to all regulated financial institutions...I’m not in favor of the government going into the car business ... [or any kind] of other businesses where the private sector provides services.

— from an article in [Politico](#) titled “[Big banks prepare to battle the Fed on faster payments](#)”

“We have Pennsylvanians, especially in the eastern part of the state, who actually did go to New York City and responded to the collapse of the trade towers... The Senate was always going to do this. Mitch McConnell is under a lot of conflicting pressures at any point in time about what goes on the Senate floor and when.”

— from an article in [Erie News Now](#) titled “[Supporters push McConnell for vote on 9/11 victims fund before August recess](#)”

“I don't want to presume in advance that we've got to prevent the development of some new innovation. Maybe there could be some innovation in this space that would provide security and that would dramatically lower the cost of transactions. It sounds like they're suggesting it's not about getting data. If that's not the real motivator here, what is? That's a real question for me.”

— from an article in [Newsmax](#) about Facebook’s proposed new digital currency, titled “[GOP Sen. Toomey Willing to Give Libra Coin a Chance](#)”

Learning about Legislation - Types of Legislation, Meaning of Abbreviations

With all of the different types of legislation of display this week (regular bills, House resolutions, Senate Joint resolutions...), it feels like a good time to review what the prefixes in front of bill numbers actually mean and why you need to know the difference between them. Let's turn to [Govtrack](#), as they provide the best explanation.

There are four types of legislation that move through Congress: bills and three types of resolutions. Generally, bills are legislative proposals that, if enacted, carry the force of law, whereas resolutions do not. Though, this is not always true.

Bills are what we most commonly think of when we think of Congress drafting and voting on things. A Bill starts either in the House of Representatives or in the Senate. Bills that start in the House are designated "H.R." plus a number. (Note: that that stands for House of Representatives, not House Resolution as is often thought.) These are bills proposed by congressmen/women and considered first by the House and later by the Senate. Bills can also start in the Senate, when they are proposed by Senators — they get considered by the Senate first and the House after. Those are designated "S." plus a number. The numbering is done independently, so there is both a H.R. 1 and an S. 1.

The difference between "H.R." and "S." is entirely procedural. It has no bearing on law. (Except that the Constitution requires that appropriations bills, that is, those that direct spending, originate in the House. So, all appropriations bills are "H.R." bills. When the Senate wants to originate an appropriations bill, sometimes they do some creative procedural actions to take a failed House bill and replace its text with the appropriations they want. Thus technically the bill originated in the House, even though the text of the bill really came from the Senate. They did this with the stimulus bill a year ago.)

By and large, resolutions are not used to enact law. There are three types of resolutions: simple resolutions, joint resolutions, and concurrent resolutions. Simple resolutions are usually used for each chamber to set their own rules, like how much time is used for debate, things like that, or to express the sentiment of a chamber, like congratulating a football team or denouncing violence. They are voted on only in their originating chamber only and don't have the force of law.

Concurrent resolutions are similar, but are used for rules that affect both chambers of Congress, such as when Congress will adjourn at the end of their two-year sessions, or to express the sentiments of both chambers. Concurrent resolutions are voted on by both chambers, but are not signed by the President and do not carry the force of law.

Joint resolutions are more interesting. They have two uses, and why they have these uses is a matter of history. First, joint resolutions can be used to enact law in exactly the same manner as a bill. This is rare. Even more rare is their second use. Joint resolutions are how Congress begins the process of a constitutional amendment. These types of joint resolutions must be passed by both chambers and then ratified by 3/4ths of the states, but, as the Constitution says, they need not be approved by the President, in order to amend the Constitution.

Each type of resolution comes in a House form and a Senate form: H.Res and S.Res for House and Senate simple resolutions, H.J.Res and S.J.Res for House and Senate joint resolutions, and H.Con.Res and S.Con.Res for House and Senate concurrent resolutions. As with bills, whether it is a House or Senate resolution is just a matter of congressional procedure and doesn't affect its legal status.

Call to Action - Updates on two past CTAs that need further support

The House and the Senate are each backing different bills to impact the conditions under which migrants, asylum-seekers and children are being detained by our government. Both of these bills are worthy of support, and have had status changes.

SENATE BILL: the **Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act**

- For full information on the bill, see the [original Call to Action](#).
- Update: First off, we now have a bill number. The clerk has registered this as S. 2113. Second, the bill now has 39 co-sponsors (up from last week's 31). That number includes 37 Democrats and the 2 Independents. Senator Casey is one of the original bill sponsors.
- What we need YOU to do: **CALL SENATOR TOOMEY**.
- Script: "I am calling today because I want Senator Toomey to support the S. 2113, 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. 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. I would like Senator Toomey to join on as a co-sponsor of S. 2113."

HOUSE BILL: **Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs & Border Protection Custody Act**

- For full information on the bill, please see the original [Call to Action](#)
- Update: as of Friday, July 19th this bill has moved out of committee and has been ordered reported. That means that it can be scheduled for a full floor vote at any time.
- What we need YOU to do: **CALL REPRESENTATIVE FITZPATRICK**
- Script: "I am calling today because I want Rep. Fitzpatrick to support the H.R. 3239, the Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Custody Act. We have all seen reports of the increasing abuses and indignities being forced on detained migrants and asylum-seekers. Children have died in custody, for lack of basic medical care. This bill outlines basic minimum humanitarian standards.. Our nation is better than the care that we have provided until now. We need to do better. I would like Representative Rep. Fitzpatrick to join on as a co-sponsor of H.R. 3239."

Please make those two phone calls this week! And if you want to take an extra step, call Senator Casey to thank him for supporting S. 2113, the Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act.

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.patotogether.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!