

PA-01 Member of Congress Tracking Report - 07/28/19

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)	29.4%	+0.7%
Senator Pat Toomey (R)	88.8%	+0.1%
PA-01 Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R)	69.6%	+0.5%

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. The scored Senate vote was on the confirmation of the new Secretary of Defense. The House had a pair of scored votes, on the detainment standards and the two year budget.

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 Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution"

—Article VI of the [United States Constitution](#)

Votes of Interest -

Both Houses burned through a vast pile of bills in their efforts to clear their dockets to go home for their summer breaks. The House started their recess this weekend, and the Senate will work a few days next week before their August recess. Because of the number of votes taken, our recaps will be more brief than normal.

The House votes to implement humanitarian standards for detainees

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 3239](#)

If that bill number looks familiar, that's because we've had this legislation as our [call to action](#) here at MoCTrack for several weeks now. This bill addresses the awful conditions that migrants, detainees, asylum-seekers and children have been experiencing in our nation's custody. It mandates specific and improved new minimum standards for food, hygiene, sanitation, space and oversight.

In a vote taken on Wednesday, July 24, 2019, this measure passed, 233-195. Only one Republican voted in favor of this bill. **Fitzpatrick voted NO.**

The House extends TPS protections to Venezuela

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 549](#)

The TPS program - Temporary Protected Status - is a policy that grants legal US residency to people from specified nations where political crises, wars or natural disasters make their home nation unsafe. The Trump Administration is incredibly hostile towards the TPS program, and have tried to cancel the temporary protected status of hundreds of thousands of people from El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Honduras, Nepal and Sudan. That situation is now being adjudicated in the [courts](#). The vote in the House this week was to give TPS status to people from Venezuela, who are fleeing the food shortages, power failure and astronomical inflation and political uncertainty in their country. For more details, see this article in *The Hill* titled "[House passes temporary immigration protections for Venezuelans.](#)"

The vote for this bill was taken on Thursday, July 25, 2019. The measure passed 272-158. The Democrats were unanimous in their support of this measure, and they were joined by 39 Republicans. Independent Rep. Justin Amash also voted YES. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

The House puts off debt ceiling wrangling until 2021

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 3877](#), the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019

The debt ceiling has been a contentious issue a number of times this past decade, resulting in a government shutdown of several weeks back in 2013. Raising the debt ceiling allows the U.S. government to borrow more money, and this has been a major sticking point for the most "fiscally conservative" of the Republicans (*Editor's note: those are scare quotes. Since most Republicans back Trump's annual trillion dollar deficit, there's no such thing as a fiscal conservative anymore.*) This bill takes that touchy bit of business and tosses it past the next presidential election and into 2021. The parties agreed to set funding levels for government programs for 2 years in addition to raising the debt ceiling. For more on the details on this vote, see this article in *CNBC* titled "[House passes two-year debt ceiling and budget deal, sending it to the Senate.](#)"

The vote for this bill was taken on Thursday, July 25, 2019. The measure passed with significant bipartisan support, 284-149. On the YES side were 219 Democrats and 65 Republicans. And on the NO side were 132 Republicans and 16 Democrats. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

The House protects the pensions of many thousands of workers

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 397](#)

There are a large number of multi-employer pension programs that are on the verge of failure. These are plans where either actuaries weren't cautious enough in their planning and investments or where member companies have gone out of business, so there are no new employees paying into programs to recoup losses from bad investment years. This new bill will modify the government-run Pensions Benefit Guarantee Corporation so that multi-employer plans are now covered. For more on the details of this system and the legislation, please see this *Yahoo Finance* article titled "[House passes bill to stop coming 'tidal wave' of failing pensions.](#)"

The vote on this bill was taken on Wednesday, July 24, 2019. The measure passed, 264-169. Twenty-nine Republicans joined with a unified Democratic bloc in voting YES. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

The House votes to oppose the BDS movement

[House Vote](#) on [H.Res. 246](#)

BDS stands for "Boycott, Divest, Sanctions" and it is a movement that encourages people to take those actions against Israel because of their unfair treatment of Palestinians. This resolution that was under consideration says that the House of Representatives:

...opposes the Global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement (BDS Movement) targeting Israel, including efforts to target United States companies that are engaged in commercial activities that are legal under United States law, and all efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel... [and] reaffirms its strong support for a negotiated solution to the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulting in two states—a democratic Jewish State of Israel, and a viable, democratic Palestinian state—living side-by-side in peace, security, and mutual recognition.

For an in-depth explainer on the BDS movement and its underlying principles, please see the *New York Times* article titled "[Is B.D.S. Anti-Semitic? A Closer Look at the Boycott Israel Campaign.](#)" This is an intensely contentious and complex issue, and one that I hesitate to include in such a short format, for fear of trivializing it. The two sides of the issue, though, boil down to this: Anti-BDS activists say that the the BDC movement demonizes Israel, and delegitimizes Israel as a state. Accordingly, it is perceived by them as anti-Semitic. People who argue in favor of BDS as a tactic argue that since *Citizens United* says that money is speech, it is an infringement upon their First Amendment rights for the government to outlaw an individual's money is spent. Some [courts](#) have fallen on the pro-BDS side, finding that laws to outlaw BDS are unconstitutional.

This resolution was voted upon on Tuesday, July 23, 2019. The vote was taken under a suspension of the rules, meaning a 2/3 majority was needed to pass it., and it achieved that threshold easily, 398-17, with 5 MoCs voting "present". Most of the NO and Present votes came from the most progressive wing of the Democratic party, though they were joined by one Freedom Caucus member and the lone Independent. **Fitzpatrick voted YES.**

For more on this bill and the vote, please see this *CNN* article titled "[House approves resolution opposing Israel boycott movement in divisive vote.](#)"

The House passed a large number of bills by unanimous consent

The following bills are just a sampling of the many items that were passed without a vote being taken, because every member of the House agreed.

- [H.R. 34](#) - requires the Department of Energy (DOE) to integrate water considerations into its energy research, development, and demonstration programs and projects
- [H.R. 36](#) - addresses sexual harassment in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields by supporting sexual harassment research and efforts to prevent and respond to sexual harassment
- [H.R. 2507](#) - reauthorizes a program that screens newborn babies for specific genetic diseases
- [H.R. 1307](#) - establishes a centralized location to publish information on disaster assistance provided by federal agencies
- [H.R. 1058](#) - enhances activities of the National Institutes of Health with respect to research on autism spectrum disorder and creates new programs to assist those on the spectrum
- [H.R. 776](#) - reauthorizes the Emergency Medical Services for Children Program grant program
- [H.R. 434](#) - amends the National Trails System Act to provide for the study of the Emancipation National Historic Trail, a path that follows the migration route taken by newly freed slaves and other persons of African descent from the major 19th century seaport town of Galveston to the burgeoning community of Freedmen's Town
- [H.R. 2336](#) - redefines "family farmer" in the US Code, to go from assets worth "\$3,237,000" and increase it to "\$10,000,000"

The Senate finally passed the 9/11 Victims fund reauthorization

[Senate Vote](#) on [H.R. 1327](#)

For the past several weeks MoCTrack has been reporting on the passage of the 9/11 Victims fund reauthorization process. Our [first report](#) occurred when the measure passed the House, after an impassioned and scathing appearance from Jon Stewart. Then, [last week](#), the bill was set to be approved by unanimous consent in the Senate, but it was held up by Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who blocked that pathway. After that dramatic delay, the bill was hastily scheduled for floor debate and amendments.

First, Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) offered an amendment that would set a dollar amount limit on the total future benefits the program could disperse to the victims of the attacks. [That amendment](#) failed, 32-66; **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES** (to limit funding to the program). A [second amendment](#) was

proposed by Sen. Rand Paul, to sequester spending on the program. That amendment also failed, in a vote of 22-77. **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES** (to sequester funding).

The final vote on the reauthorization of the 9/11 victims fund was held on Tuesday, July 23, 2019. It passed 97-2. The only senators placing NO votes were the pair who offered failed amendments. **Casey voted YES** and **Toomey votes YES**.

Both of our Senators offered statements after the final vote. Do note that Senator Toomey has nothing to say about his two NO votes on amendments to limit the program.

□ **Senator Pat Toomey, @SenToomey, 07/23/19:**

“My statement on the Senate passing the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund Act:”

“ “

The heroes that responded to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, Shanksville, and at the Pentagon represent the very best of our country. Today's vote to strengthen the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund will ensure that the first responders, including Pennsylvanians, that develop illnesses from their service at these sites will continue to have access to important assistance. I look forward to President Trump signing this measure into law soon.

toomey.senate.gov

□ **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, 07/23/19:**

“It took far too long, but the @SenateMajldr finally allowed a vote to extend the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund. Proud to cast my vote to give these families the peace of mind they deserve.”

Breaking News Note - just as MoCTrack was going through editing, the story broke that President Trump's Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coates, will be stepping down from that position. The president announced via tweet that he would be nominating Republican Congressman John Ratcliffe of Texas to the post. Please read the following two segments on confirmation votes with the knowledge that now the third of the three senior-most military-intelligence positions in the administration is undergoing turnover.

The Senate confirms a new Secretary of Defense

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Mark T. Esper to be Secretary of Defense

This week the Senate confirmed a new Secretary of Defense. The vote was not divisive, but it does allow for an examination of how the Trump Administration has destroyed norms in dealing with Senate confirmable positions within the government.

There are roughly 1,200 positions in the Administration that require Senate confirmation. Of those, the [Washington Post](#) and the Partnership for Public Service are tracking over half of them, with an eye on the most important position in our nation's bureaucracy. Despite being well over halfway through his first term, the Trump Administration hasn't even bothered nominating people for over 130 positions. Only 463 have positions that are filled and confirmed. Previous administrations tend to fill most positions within a year of the inauguration.

Additionally, the President has relied upon leaving a record number of positions in an “acting” role, particularly when faced with resignations of confirmed staff. An [NPR](#) article from earlier this year looked at that issue, finding multiple cabinet positions and department leaders who had never been confirmed. They quoted the president, who said “I like 'acting' because I can move so quickly. It gives me more flexibility.” It also gives the president more power, because he has an increased ability to dismiss and change staffing when he relies upon administrators who are not confirmed.

These empty seats and temporary leaders are making our government less safe and less prepared to deal with emergencies. Using this confirmation as an example, let us take a look at the [Secretary of Defense](#). We are a nation at war, with forces deployed in over a dozen countries. From the departure of General Mattis at the end of last year to the confirmation of our new secretary, the position was vacant for nearly 7 months. Since the end of World War Two, it had never been in the hands of an acting secretary for more than 8 weeks prior to this vacancy. And with Mattis's departure, the position was first filled by his deputy Patrick Shanahan. But with Shanahan's departure a month ago after the revelation of [domestic violence](#) incidents, the "acting" title moved further down the chain, from his deputy (the current nominee), and then further down the chain to *his* second, as Mark Esper underwent confirmation proceedings. Prior to the Trump Administration, the "acting" secretary had never dipped below the confirmed deputy to the departing secretary. How would a person who was fourth down the line and unconfirmed in the role, catapulted into the national spotlight deal with a situation should we face a military crisis?

The confirmation vote on Mark T. Esper to be Secretary of Defense took place on Tuesday, July 23, 2019. He was confirmed in a vote of 90-8. The NO votes consisted of five Democratic presidential nominees (Booker, Gillibrand, Harris, Klobuchar and Warren) and three other Democrats (Ed Markey of Massachusetts, and Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden of Oregon). **Casey voted YES** and **Toomey voted YES**.

The Senate confirms a new chairman of the Joint Chiefs

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Mark Milley

According to the [U.S. Code](#), "the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense."

The choice of a new Chair of the Joint Chiefs came as somewhat of a surprise, as the current chair, Marine Corps Gen. Joe Dunford, was not expected to leave office until later this year. [Defense News](#) explains:

In late 2018, the expectation was that either Milley or Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein would be the choice of next chairman. Goldfein was reportedly backed by Dunford and then-Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, but Milley appealed to Trump — so much so that the president [announced his choice in December](#), a shock given that Dunford had nine months left of service before he was due to retire.

The confirmation vote on Gen. Mark A. Milley to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs took place on Thursday, July 25, 2019. He was confirmed in a vote of 89-1. Democrat Jeff Merkley of Oregon placed the only NO vote. **Casey voted YES** and **Toomey voted YES**.

The Senate confirms a new head of the FAA

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Stephen M. Dickson to be Federal Aviation Administration Administrator

After leaving the position vacant since the start of his administration, President Trump now has a head of the FAA. You may remember at one point the president wanted to nominate his [personal pilot](#) for the role. The [Washington Post](#) quoted an anonymous former FAA official who observed, "he wanted his guy there. There's no question about that. It became something of a standoff."

But having this position filled is critical, in light of the fact that the head of the FAA oversees safety and regulation of our airline and aerospace sector, and the whole administration is facing criticism over the manner in which they dealt with the grounding of Boeing's 737 Max 8 airplanes after two horrific accidents. So this week's confirmation comes at a critical time for the agency, which is also dealing with the burdens of "implementing the Next Generation Air Transportation System, the advent of commercial space operations, expanding integration of unmanned aerial vehicles into the National Airspace System and managing an emerging air taxi market," according to industry publication [Rotor and Wing International](#).

The nominee, Mr. Dickson, "is a 1979 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, a former F-15 fighter pilot and holds a law degree from the Georgia State University College of Law." He also served as vice president of flight operations at Delta, also per *Rotor and Wing International*.

The [Daily Herald](#), a Chicago area newspaper, reported on the main controversy that came up during Mr. Dickson's confirmation hearings. While Mr. Dickson was an executive at Delta, a whistleblower came forward with numerous issues, including pilots over-relying on automated software in flight. In response, Delta retaliated against the whistleblower, ordering psychiatric evaluation and revoking her flight status. That was later overturned after further investigation. During the confirmation hearings, Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) called this situation "an absurd retaliation" and then added, "it's very clear that Mr. Dickson did know, was involved with this pilot, did know what was happening and failed to disclose it to this committee. We certainly can't have organizations threaten pilots with this kind of retaliation."

In a vote taken on Wednesday, July 24, 2019, Mr. Dickson was confirmed 52-40. This was a party line vote. **Casey voted NO and Toomey voted YES.**

Judicial confirmation #1

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Brian C. Buescher to the USDC in Nebraska

This Trump Administration judicial nominee fits a mold we have seen before - he is a younger white male member of the Federalist Society, with extensive corporate background, outspoken conservative ideologies and close ties to Republican political interests.

[Bloomberg Law](#) reports that the nominee is "a partner at Kutak Rock in Omaha, where he leads the firm's agribusiness litigation team. Buescher has been at Kutak Rock since graduating from Georgetown University Law Center in 2000." But it is the [Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights](#) who puts the nominee's full background into perspective. They point to specific instances in Mr. Buescher's past that make him manifestly unfit for the judiciary.

Under the subject heading "Anti-LGBTQ Agenda", the Leadership Conference memorandum points to a campaign video made by the nominee where he stated "I believe marriage is between a man and a woman, and that's the way the government should act." Then, under the heading, "Hostile to Women's Reproductive Freedom" the Leadership Conference points to this public statement made by the nominee in 2014:

No doctor or no other professional should be required to provide abortion services because, quite frankly, they're just immoral.... I am an avidly pro-life person. And I will not compromise on that issue. That's just simply my moral fabric and that's what I'll do as attorney general. When regulating abortion, my view is this, we should regulate abortion as much as we possibly can. I'm in favor of banning abortion

Finally, the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights provides a CV for the nominee in terms of his partisan affiliations that is simply chilling, and leads one to question how anyone could think this nominee could judge cases in an apolitical fashion:

Mr. Buescher is a political operative and partisan warrior. His ideological views were most prominently on display in 2014 when he ran unsuccessfully to be the Nebraska Attorney General, but he has worked behind the scenes for years on behalf of Republican candidates and causes. According to his Senate questionnaire, he has worked as a campaign volunteer on 14 different Republican campaigns, and he has contributed thousands of dollars to Republican candidates. In addition, he has served as a Nebraska Republican Party State Central Committee member, Nebraska Republican Party Convention Delegate, Nebraska Republican Party Finance Chair, Nebraska Republican Party Rules Committee Chair, Nebraska Republican Party Resolutions Committee Chair, Nebraska Republican Party Volunteer Legal Counsel, Douglas County, Nebraska Republican Party Chair, Omaha Young Republicans Chair, and treasurer of the University of Nebraska College Republicans. Such deep political connections would, at a

minimum, cast significant doubt on whether Mr. Buescher would be able to check his politics at the courthouse door if he became a judge.

Mr. Buescher's confirmation vote was taken on July 24, 2019, and he was confirmed confirmed, 51-40. This was a pure party line vote, with all Republicans present voting YES and the Democrats and INdependents present voting NO. **Casey voted NO** and **Toomey voted YES**.

Judicial confirmation #2

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Wendy Williams Berger to the USDC in Florida

This is a seat that has been held open since the Obama Administration. Despite blue slips being returned by both Florida senators on the Obama nominee, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell chose to leave this seat vacant while President Obama was in office through the current day.

The nominee, Wendy Williams Berger, started her career as a prosecutor in Florida. From there, according to [The Vetting Room](#), "in 2001, Berger joined the Office of Gov. Jeb Bush, advising him on legal issues and serving as his clemency aide. In this role, Berger advised Bush on clemency petitions, monitored death row cases, and prepared death warrants for the Governor's signature."

The nominee has served as a judge previously, first in the Florida state court system (from 2005-2012) and since then she has served on the Fifth District Court of Appeal. [The Vetting Room](#) made the following observation about her time as judge:

In the course of Berger's time as an appellate judge, she has been reversed by the Florida Supreme Court in approximately 15 cases. Similarly, Berger has been reversed 17 times during her tenure as a trial judge. Judging against the panoply of cases she has handled, this means that Berger's rulings have been reversed in approximately 8-10% of her cases, a slightly higher level of reversal than other nominees profiled on this blog.

In a vote taken on Wednesday, July 24, 2019, the Senate confirmed Judge Berger, 54-37. 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**.

MoC Twitter Action

In the full PA Statewide version of this report, we had a segment of the Twitter Action portion of MoCTrack devoted to the vote on H.R. 3239 and the crisis related to the standards under which detained migrants and children are being held by the Trump Administration. Even though many of his PA House colleagues are tweeting about the humanitarian crisis, Rep. Fitzpatrick did not tweet about that bill (where he voted NO) nor about this crisis at all. Instead, he held a scripted/filtered telephone town hall in which he said that reports coming up from the border, many of which were being made by his House colleagues, are "hearsay" and the reports might even be "overblown." If you'd like to read more about the telephone town hall, I live tweeted it, and that thread is available [here](#).

Instead of reporting all that we're going to use the space that would have gone to Rep. Fitzpatrick if he had spoken of his vote on the humanitarian border bill, and give it over to PA Statewide Indivisible activist and organizer Laura Rose, who created [this amazing thread](#) in response to Fitzpatrick's vote.

1/ This morning, the House passed H.R. 3239, the Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Custody Act. Here in #PA01, we eagerly awaited news of how @repbrianfitz voted. We've been asking him this question for more than a year. #NeverAgainIsNow



2/ H.R. 3239 will end family separation, ensure children have access to legal counsel, provide funding to non-profit assistance centers & other providers caring for migrants released from DHS custody & improve conditions, by setting minimum standards for detainees. #DontLookAway

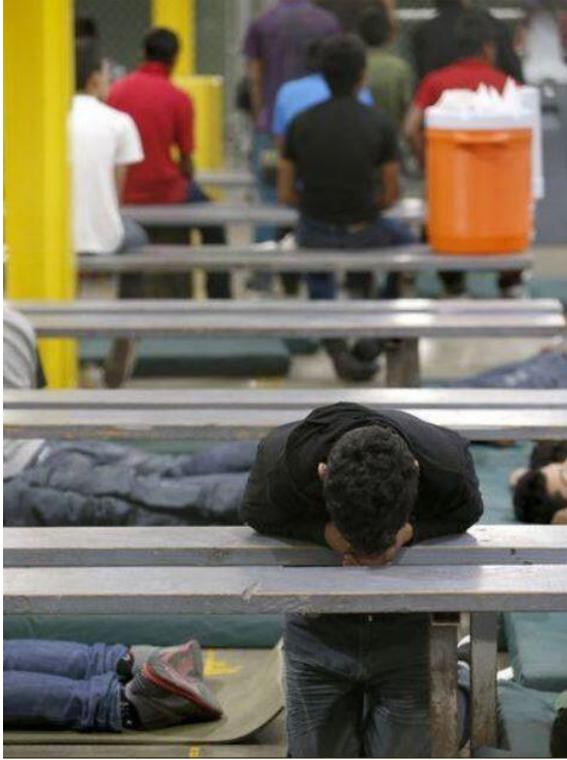
3/ Guess what? @RepBrianFitz voted against it. He voted NO to on a bill literally called Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Custody Act. He talks a good game, but now our #PA01 congressman finally shows his true colors. /3
#NeverAgainIsNow

4/ Let's set some of Brian's recent quotes to pictures, shall we? Lets all see how his golden words match the reality at the border. Unless otherwise noted, these quotes come directly from his July 7, 2019, Op-Ed in the @CourierTimes
tweeted with a link to Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick's Op-Ed titled "[Bringing our Community Together on Immigration](#)"

5/ "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."
@RepBrianFitz
#NeverAgainIsNow #DontLookAway



6/ "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, & people, and protect children brought here through no fault of their own."
@RepBrianFitz



7/ "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."
@RepBrianFitz #NeverAgainIsNow



8/ "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."
@RepBrianFitz #NeverAgainIsNow #DontLookAway



9/ "I agree with a lot of what the President does from a policy standpoint, from tax reform, immigration, when it comes to border security."

@RepBrianFitz on the Dom Giordano Show #NeverAgainIsNow #DontLookAway



10/ "You know, myself and Lindsey Graham have been talking, speaking to each other at length about this. We're in complete agreement about what the cause of the problem is and what we need to do to fix it."

@RepBrianFitz on the Dom Giordano Show #NeverAgainIsNow #DontLookAway



So if you're looking for humanity, basic decency, and a commitment to human rights, don't look to @RepBrianFitz in #PA01.

The only way we will see that in our elected representative is when we have a new one. VOTE HIM OUT in 2020. *-end of tweet-thread from Laura Rose*

Twitter Action - The Mueller Hearings

□ **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, 07/25/19:**

"Yesterday, Special Counsel Mueller described a democracy in crisis: an attack on our nation by a foreign adversary, a campaign willing to accept help from that foreign adversary a President taking repeated steps to interfere into the subsequent investigation and the same foreign adversary ready to attack our nation again in 2020. Instead of focusing on the substance of this crisis, much of the pundit

class spent yesterday and today critiquing the hearing as if it were a Broadway show. Shame on them. Our nation owes Special Counsel Mueller our gratitude for his lifetime of service. We should all commend his work and commitment to our nation.”

Twitter Action - Robocalls

- PA-01’s Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, @RepBrianFitz, [07/25/19](#):

“Congress just passed the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act! For too long, residents of Bucks and Montgomery counties have been harassed by robocalls that are both annoying and dangerous. This bill would impose stronger penalties on scammers who seek to steal sensitive information.”



Twitter Action - MoCs on Legislation

- Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, [07/26/19](#):

“To make the #ADA goal of economic self-sufficiency a reality for people with disabilities, I introduced the Disability Employment Incentive Act (S. 255) to encourage businesses to hire more p/w disabilities. #ada29 #pwd” *tweeted with a [link to the bill](#)*

- Senator Pat Toomey, @SenToomey, [07/26/19](#):

“The ill-conceived RFS forces U.S. motorists to buy billions of gallons of corn ethanol yearly. This federal mandate drives up the price of gas & food, damages engines, & harms the environment. I hope my colleagues will join my & @SenFeinstein's effort.” *tweeted with the MoC's [website statement](#)*

Tweet of the Week

- Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, [07/25/19](#):

“Republicans in Washington have been lying about their position on protections for pre-existing conditions for a decade. I’m sick of it. How can you say you support pre-existing conditions if you support the lawsuit to overturn the entire law?” *tweeted with embedded video*

- Senator Pat Toomey, @SenToomey, [07/20/19](#):

“50 years ago today, humanity waited with baited breath as mankind took its first steps on a world beyond our own. The awe inspiring sight of Neil Armstrong descending to the lunar surface remains one of mankind's most astounding and inspiring accomplishments. #Apollo50”



□ PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, @RepBrianFitz, [07/23/19](#):

"The BDS movement is harmful and deeply misguided. This evening, the House voted to condemn this movement and to reaffirm America's strong relationship with Israel. Thank you to my friends @RepLeeZeldin and @RepSchneider for spearheading this effort." *tweeted with [related article](#)*

Casey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Linda Houk

"How the hell can you say that you support protections when you have all the power and a bill did not pass that would support the Affordable Care Act?... You've had eight years of bellyaching about it, and you haven't done a damn thing about it."

— from an article in *Kaiser Health News* titled "[GOP Senators Distance Themselves From Grassley And Trump's Efforts To Cut Drug Prices](#)"

"It just doesn't correspond with what we think of as America. In all of these places, I felt like I was in a prison."

— the senator's comments on a detention facility, from an article in *Trib Live* titled "[Visits to border detention centers widen Congressional divide](#)"

"No child should have to imagine the horror of being ripped away from their parents because their family is struggling economically."

— from an article in *WAMU* titled "[Don't Have Lunch Money? A Pennsylvania School District Threatens Foster Care](#)"

"Robocalls calls are more than a nuisance, they turn a conversation into a heist by threatening our aging loved ones and stealing their hard-earned savings."

"Con artists are feeling more emboldened than ever, spoofing law enforcement phone numbers and threatening seniors and others with arrest in order to scare them into immediately handing over funds. We must make it harder for thieves to use robocall and spoofing technology in the first place, but also get everyone in the community involved in knowing how to spot a scam and stop money from ever exchanging hands."

— from an article in *Explore Jefferson* titled "[Officials Addressing Ongoing Issues with Scam Calls Targetting Seniors](#)"

"This isn't something extra our government is providing for them... This is our government keeping their promise. These miners kept their promise."

— from an article in *Erie News Now* titled "[Casey, coal miners urge Congress to extend Black Lung Disability Trust Fund](#)"

"We've got to get the coal excise tax rate up so it can fund the trust fund...They kept their promise to their companies, to their families, in some cases, served in wars like Vietnam, kept their promise to their country—it's about time our government kept its promise to coal miners."

— from an article in *My Wabash Valley* titled "[Black lung sufferers implore Congress to save benefits fund](#)"

“These grants can be used to clean waterways and help localities meet federal mandates as they restore the Chesapeake Bay... Aging and defunct stormwater systems have led to burdensome stormwater fees for many Pennsylvanians who would benefit greatly from some economic relief as they rebuild their communities after storms.”

— from an article in *Pennsylvania Business News* titled [“Sen. Casey urges Senate committees to fund “vital” programs for south central Pennsylvania”](#)

Fitzpatrick in the News

“Republicans and Democrats can both agree that any efforts to delegitimize the state of Israel must be condemned. I am proud to join members of the Problem Solvers Caucus in strongly supporting this resolution to express our shared support for Israel and opposition to the deeply misguided BDS movement.”

— from an article in the *Jewish Journal* titled [“Congress to Vote On Anti-BDS Resolution”](#)

“Student loan defaults have damaging consequences for borrowers that can last a significant period of time. An investment in one’s education should not lead to long-term financial distress, and borrowers deserve more efficient access to the tools already at their disposal under the law.”

— from a *Fox News* article titled [“Bipartisan House group introduces bill to help those with crippling student debt”](#)

“Opportunities for the establishment of the rule of law are rare and success requires that the United States act quickly when reformers come to power and seek to root out corruption.”

— from an article in *Think Progress* titled [“New legislation would help the US crack down on corruption abroad”](#)

“To counter the weaponization of corruption, the United States must double down on its work to promote the rule of law abroad.”

— from an article in the *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project* titled [“US Bipartisan Bill Targets Foreign Corruption, Russia”](#)

“Clean energy presents an enormous opportunity to grow our economy, reduce carbon emissions, and bolster our national security. Entrepreneurship in clean energy must be incentivized for these reasons, and I strongly support enhanced investment in the clean energy sector to promote American prosperity.”

— from an article in *Lake County News* titled [“Thompson, Cook, Fitzpatrick introduce Renewable Energy Extension Act”](#)

“We welcome all entrants into the race and encourage as much participation as possible. The more people that participate in our government, the healthier our democracy. We will not be engaging in campaign communications until the congressional campaign begins after the 2019 elections conclude.”

— from a *Bucks County Courier Times* article titled [“Ivyland Borough councilwoman, Bucks County official joins congressional race”](#)

The entrance of the third Democratic candidate hoping to run against Rep. Fitzpatrick and his quote above feels like a good opportunity to remind readers that MoCTrack does not cover the horse-race aspects of elections. While we do include portions of legislators’ speeches and quotes that deal with policy, we try to keep our coverage to legislation, as opposed to electioneering.

Toomey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Elayne Baker

“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.”

— [the senator’s comments on a new bill to create a real-time paycheck system for government employees, allowing them to avoid overdraft fees, from *Boston.com*’s article titled “Ayanna Pressley and Elizabeth Warren want the government to clear your paycheck faster”](#)

“As out-of-work steelworkers, like those at NLMK in Sharon, can attest, the administration’s protectionist steel tariffs have not resulted in the promised financial gains even for steel companies. This outcome demonstrates that imposing arbitrary taxes on imported products can distort prices, disrupt supply chains, destroy jobs, and increase prices for consumers without sufficiently offsetting benefits.”

— [from a *Pittsburgh City Paper* article titled “U.S. Steel’s market value drops \\$5.5 billion thanks to Trump’s tariffs”](#)

“The taxpayer should not bail out failing industries, businesses, or banks. The same applies to state and local governments that overspend and mismanage their budgets into bankruptcy. Now some in Washington are pushing for the Federal Reserve and other federal agencies to spend billions to clean up these mistakes — which is unfair. This legislation protects American taxpayers by ensuring their dollars aren’t used to bail out state and local governments.”

— [from a *Pennsylvania Business Report* article titled “Sens. Toomey, Young, Cotton introduce bill to prevent government bailouts”](#)

Lastly, Senator Toomey’s contributions to a Senate Finance Committee bill mark-up on prescription pricing legislation was highlighted in a report from *Fierce Healthcare* titled “[Senate committee advances drug prices bill, but GOP opposition could doom effort.](#)” Senator Toomey is the sub-committee chairperson who leads the group that oversees healthcare legislation in the Senate, so the opposition mentioned in the article’s title comes at his direction. Since the details of from this article are too complex to fit in a tag after the senator’s quote, a portion of the article that gives context is included below:

The 19-9 vote of the Senate Finance Committee Thursday means that the legislation called the Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act now moves to the full Senate. However, the GOP opposition highlighted throughout the bill markup could create obstacles for getting enough Republican support for a vote on the Senate floor.

A major point of contention during the markup was a provision that creates a mandatory rebate a drugmaker must pay to Medicare Part D if they increase the price of a drug beyond inflation.

Starting in 2022, manufacturers must provide the rebates to Medicare for each six-month period where the list price rises above inflation, according to the bill. The penalty is only limited to brand-name and biologic drugs, not generics or biosimilars, but the provision has garnered major resistance from the pharmaceutical industry.

“It replaces the successful, market-based structure of Medicare Part D with Medicaid-style price controls that result in money going to the federal treasury instead of seniors,” said Steve Ubl, president of the pharma trade group Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, in a statement when the bill was introduced earlier this week. Medicaid uses a similar approach by charging rebates for drugs that go up too high, but Republicans opposing the bill’s provision charge that Medicare Part D is different than Medicaid.

“There is no ability for plans to pit against each other as Medicare Part D does and uses,” said Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pennsylvania, who proposed an amendment to strike the inflation penalty provision.

The committee voted 14-14 on Toomey's amendment to get rid of the provision, and a tie vote means the measure is defeated.

Committee Corner

Much of this week's media coverage related to committee hearings involved the testimony of Special Counsel Robert Mueller in front of the House Judiciary and Intelligence Committees. We have three Pennsylvania MoCs in those groups, all three on the Judiciary Committee. Below you will find information on where you can see their contributions to the hearing, as well as an excerpted question from each.

□ PA-04's Rep. Madeleine Dean

Her portion of the hearing is available on [Youtube](#), at 4:59:18.

"I wanted to ask you about public confusion connected to Attorney General Barr's release of your report. I will be quoting your March 27th letter. Sir, in that letter, and at several other times, did you convey to the Attorney General that the introductions and executive summaries of our two volume report accurately summarizes this office's work and conclusions?"

□ PA-05's Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon

Her portion of the hearing is available on [Youtube](#), at 4:28:45.

"I want to ask you some questions about the president's statement regarding advance knowledge of the Wikileaks dumps... you asked the president over a dozen questions about whether he had knowledge that Wikileaks possessed the stolen emails that might be released in a way helpful to his campaign, or harmful to the Clinton Campaign, is that correct?"

□ PA-14's Rep. Guy Reschenthaler

His portion of the hearing is available on [Youtube](#), at 4:12:52.

"Didn't you publish a lengthy report, unfairly airing the target's dirty laundry, without recommending charges?"

In the aftermath of these Mueller hearings, the topic of election security was revived, with Democratic senators bringing up election security bills that passed the House, and Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell refusing to allow those bills to be considered. For more on that story, please see this article in *The Hill*, titled "[McConnell blocks two election security bills.](#)"

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

Laura Rose

Linda Houk

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!