

PA-01 Member of Congress Tracking Report - 05.17.20

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. We want to offer a big thank you to Pennsylvania Statewide Indivisible and Demcast 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)	29.8%	0.0%
Senator Pat Toomey (R)	87.9%	0.0%
PA-01 Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R)	64.5%	0.0%

Nate Silver's [FiveThirtyEight website](#) assesses the voting records of our MoCs to provide this index, by comparing any bills where President Trump has stated a position, and comparing the vote of the legislator to that opinion. FiveThirtyEight has (still) not scored votes since late March.

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.

Votes of Interest

The House Passes the HEROES Act, a starting point for Phase Four Negotiations

[House Vote](#) on [H.R. 6800](#): HEROES (Health & Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions) Act

The negotiations that resulted in the first three coronavirus response packages were held entirely behind closed doors, with the final legislative product having been hammered out and agreed to before the packages were made public. This enabled each of those votes to receive bipartisan support. But there were major recovery aspects left out to those bills, most notably funding for municipalities and states.

With Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell laying out his baseline negotiating position for the phase four response by stating that he favors making [states and municipalities declare bankruptcy](#), the Democratic leadership decided the best way to respond was by making their negotiating starting point an expansive, progressive legislative package of their own - the HEROES Act. No one expects this bill to pass the Senate - this is simply a marker, laying out all of the programs that the Democrats would like to include if they were in control.

The HEROES Act is over 1,800 pages long, and has over \$3 trillion in funding and programs. It includes:

- \$500 billion in direct assistance to state governments
- \$20 billion to tribal governments
- \$20 billion to U.S. territories
- \$375 billion to local governments
- \$200 billion earmarked for hazard pay for essential workers
- An extension of the \$600-per-week boost in Unemployment Compensation through 2020
- \$75 billion for coronavirus testing and contact tracing
- Student debt forgiveness of up to \$10,000 in debt relief per individual

- Protection from eviction and foreclosure for renters and homeowners (\$175 billion in funding for programs to effectuate that goal)
- \$66 billion for farmers, farmers markets and local food outlets
- Another \$1,200 payment to individuals (up to \$6,000 per household)
- \$25 billion in assistance to the Postal Service
- \$3.6 billion in election security grants to states
- A 15% increase to the maximum SNAP benefit to address rising food prices
- A revamping of the new employee retention tax credit to encourage employers to keep employees on payroll
- Subsidies for COBRA, to help people who lose their jobs pay for the increased cost of maintaining their health coverage
- New OSHA rules for creating safe work spaces and employee testing programs, as well as rules to protect workers who report coronavirus related workplace-safety issues

Vote date: Friday, May 15, 2020

Vote Tally: 208-199

Party Breakdown: One Republican, Peter King of New York, joined the majority of the Democrats in voting YES. Fourteen Democrats, including ● **PA-07's Rep. Susan Wild** and ● **PA-17's Rep. Conor Lamb** voted NO along with most Republicans and Independent Justin Amash. Some Democratic objections to the HEROES Act (like those of Pennsylvania's own Reps. Wild and Lamb) were more about procedure than content, with many lawmakers wanting to be able to vote on a bipartisan final product. Other Democrats, like Washington's [Rep. Pramila Jayapal](#), felt that this bill just did not go far enough to help struggling families.

Additional Reading:

- ["House passes \\$3 trillion coronavirus relief bill dubbed HEROES Act,"](#) from *Business Insider*
- ["What's in the House Democrats' \\$3 trillion coronavirus relief bill?"](#) from *CBS News*
- ["Next coronavirus aid package expected to become reality 'in June at the earliest,' as House passes its bill,"](#) from *MarketWatch*

Representative Fitzpatrick voted NO.

● **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick** was the only member of the Pennsylvania House delegation to provide no official website statement, Facebook post or tweet about the HEROES Act as of late Saturday, May 16, 2020. He did not make a floor speech about the bill, either. He did offer this vague tweet on [05/14/20](#) that could be in reference to the then-upcoming vote:

"Millions of Americans have filed for unemployment since this pandemic began. Job losses mean not only loss of a paycheck but also loss of health coverage and other employer-provided benefits.
@AFLCIO @CWAUnion@unitehere @transportworker

Additional aid must be tied to retaining jobs, pay, and benefits for workers. We must ensure that federal aid to businesses ultimately ends up in workers' pockets and supporting paychecks.
@AFTunion @NEAToday @GoLUPAT @MachinistsUnion @afa_cwa"

The House Allows Voting by Proxy

[House Vote](#) on [H.Res. 965](#): Authorizing remote voting by proxy in the House of Representatives and providing for official remote committee proceedings during a public health emergency due to a novel coronavirus

The House approved a measure that allows individual Members of Congress to place votes on behalf of up to ten colleagues who stay home, in an attempt to create an environment more conducive to social distancing in the House chamber. There was an attempt to vote on this rules change last month, but Speaker Pelosi withdrew that bill in an attempt to get bipartisan support. As that GOP agreement was not forthcoming, the measure was re-introduced and passed by a thin margin.

Anyone who has watched C-SPAN or other video of votes knows just how crowded the House floor gets, and how it does not conform to the standard of our new COVID reality. But House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy was adamant that no changes be made, and stated, per [NPR](#), "We can continue to work in a safe and effective manner without overturning 230 years of constitutional and legislative tradition."

The text of the passed resolution makes clear that this proxy voting plan is not permanent, but to be used when "a public health emergency due to a novel coronavirus is in effect." Additionally, it outlines how ballot cards may be used (instead of having everyone touch the same electronic voting mechanism), and implements a study on remote voting.

Vote date: Friday, May 15, 2020

Vote Tally: 217-189

Party Breakdown: All the Republicans and Independent Justin Amash voted NO. They were joined by three Democrats - Tom O'Halleran of Arizona, Elaine Luria of Virginia and Rick Larsen of Washington

Additional Reading:

- "[It's a work from home Congress as House approves proxy vote](#)," from *PBS NewsHour*
- "[House approves voting by proxy during coronavirus pandemic](#)," from *ABC News*
- "[With Historic Vote, House Will Allow Proxy Voting, Remote Hearings During Pandemic](#)," from *NPR*

Representative Fitzpatrick voted NO.

The Senate Renews Controversial Patriot Act Provisions

[Senate Vote](#) on [H.R. 6172](#): USA FREEDOM Reauthorization Act of 2020

[NPR](#) ably recaps this measure, so we will refer to their article on this reauthorization of portions of the Patriot Act:

Members of Congress wrote expiration dates into surveillance laws so that action would be required to sustain them over time.

When the clock ran out in March on one part of FISA, so did authorities' ability to use elements including the so-called "business records," "lone wolf" and "roving wiretap" provisions in counterterrorism or espionage investigations.

The bill passed by the Senate on Thursday would restore those powers, albeit with new restrictions backed by a coalition of civil libertarian Republicans and Democrats.

Senators also added reforms inspired by the revelations about problems discovered with the use of FISA during the Russia investigation. One increases the penalties that a federal official could suffer for providing false information to the secret court that oversees surveillance.

Vote date: Thursday, May 14, 2020

Vote Tally: 80-16

Party Breakdown: FISA/Patriot Act/surveillance related votes often provoke interesting breakdowns between the parties, and this was no different. We have often seen breakdowns with up to 1/3 of each party breaking from their majority, but this appears to have been slightly less divisive after the new reforms were added to the bill text.. Only two Republicans - Rand Paul of Kentucky and Richard Burr of Virginia - voted NO. The Democrats were closer to that typical 1/3-2/3 split, with 31 Democrats voting YES and 14 voting NO.

Additional Reading:

- "[Senate Passes Surveillance Bill With New Protections, But Political Fate Uncertain](#)," from *NPR*
- "[Senate Approves Surveillance Bill With Sharper Privacy Safeguards](#)," from the *New York Times*
- "[The Senate voted to let the government keep surveilling your online life without a warrant](#)," from *Vox's Recode*

Bob Casey voted YES and Pat Toomey voted YES.

Bureaucratic Confirmation #1

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Troy Edgar to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security

Nearly a year after his nomination by the Trump Administration, Troy Edgar was confirmed to the top financial position within the Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Edgar has served in both the private and public sector, in the Navy, as a mayor in a small California city, and as an executive at accounting firm Price Waterhouse Cooper, and at Boeing.

It was during his time as mayor of Los Alamitos that Mr. Edgar passed the Los Alamitos Anti-Sanctuary Ordinance 2018-3. This measure made it so that schools, hospitals, courthouses, and libraries would be places in the township where authorities could enforce immigration actions. Typically, those areas are kept free from such actions. This anti-sanctuary city/state action during his tenure accounts for the Democratic opposition to his nomination.

Vote date: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 **Vote Tally:** 62-31

Party Breakdown: All the Republicans voted YES, as did ten of the Democrats and the one Independent (Angus King of Maine) present. Thirty-one Democrats voted NO.

Additional Reading:

- ["Troy Edgar Confirmed as DHS CFO,"](#) from *GovConWire*
- ["Former Los Alamitos mayor is now CFO for Dept. of Homeland Security,"](#) from the *OC Register*
- ["State Department looks to stop corruption thriving because of the pandemic,"](#) (confirmation is a small piece of this article) from *Federal News Network*

Bob Casey voted NO and Pat Toomey voted YES.

Bureaucratic Confirmation #2

[Senate Confirmation Vote](#) on Brian Montgomery to be Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

Brian Montgomery is an experienced bureaucrat who has served in the Department of Housing and Urban Development under three administrations (George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and now Donald Trump). He's been serving as the number two at HUD in an acting role since January 2019, when his predecessor retired. Prior to his time at HUD, he was a deputy assistant to the president under George W. Bush, and he served on the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 Oversight Board during the Great Recession.

Objections to Mr. Montgomery mostly revolved around his willingness to implement Trump Administration policies to undermine policies of equality in housing, and housing assistance. During Mr. Montgomery's confirmation hearing in the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs (where Pennsylvania's own Sen. Pat Toomey is a member), Ranking Member Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) made the following [statement](#), which lays out the grounds for opposition to Mr. Montgomery's confirmation:

HUD provides housing assistance to 4.7 million low-income families and supports homeless services across the country. It also enforces the Fair Housing Act, insures more than 8.1 million mortgages, and administers billions in assistance to communities hit by natural disasters... But President Trump's administration doesn't seem to understand that.

...HUD wants to undermine the enforcement of the Fair Housing Act based on disparate impact, and to weaken protections for transgender individuals' who need shelter.

Last week, HUD promoted a political appointee with a history of racist and sexist writings to the second highest position at Ginnie Mae, which guarantees \$2.1 trillion in mortgage-backed securities.

And just a few months ago, HUD proposed changes to the FHA program that could make it harder for millions of families to afford to buy a home.

Each of these actions is deeply troubling on its own. Taken together, it's pretty clear that not only is President Trump's administration not doing anything to help families afford a home, but that they're actively making it harder.

Both [another nominee to a different position] and Mr. Montgomery have played a role in some of these policies and decisions...

Vote date: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 Vote Tally: 61-32

Party Breakdown: All the Republicans voted YES. They were joined by nine of the Democrats and the one Independent (Angus King of Maine) present. Thirty-two Democrats voted NO.

Additional Reading:

- ["Months later, Montgomery finally gets Senate confirmation,"](#) from the *Dodd Frank Update*
- ["Brian Montgomery confirmed to officially serve as deputy secretary of HUD,"](#) from *Housing Wire*
- ["Montgomery Confirmed As HUD Deputy Secretary,"](#) from *National Mortgage Professional Magazine*

Bob Casey voted NO and Pat Toomey voted YES.

Unanimously passed legislation

The following bills were passed through unanimous consent or voice vote (which presumes unanimity, as any member can object to the voice vote and ask for a roll call). This list excludes bills related to post offices, stamps, memorials, awareness weeks and other ceremonial activities.

- [S.2746](#) - Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act
- [S.3434](#) - COPS "Confidentiality Opportunities for Peer Support" Counseling Act
- [S.3607](#) - Safeguarding America's First Responders Act
- [S.3744](#) - Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act
- [H.R.943](#) - Never Again Education Act
- [S.2661](#) - National Suicide Hotline Designation Act
- [S.249](#) - A bill to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization

Twitter Action - the President visits Pennsylvania



PA-12's Rep. Keller, PA-09's Rep. Meuser, President Trump, PA-01's Rep. Fitzpatrick and PA-10's Rep. Perry

🌐 **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, [05/14/20](#):**

"Welcome to Pennsylvania, Mr. President. I hope you wore a mask while you were here.

And since you visited, in a blatant attempt to rewrite your disastrous response to the #COVID19 pandemic, let me be clear: between downplaying the outbreak and failing to meet the needs of the health care system, you've failed Pennsylvania and people across the country.

We need tests. We need PPE. And we need you to #ProtectOurCare and #DropTheLawsuit to rip coverage from millions of Americans, including hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians, which will only throw the health care system into chaos.

Further, decades of disinvestment in state & local governments has left us unable to do the basic things that many other countries are doing for their citizens during this pandemic. What we need is localities equipped to respond to the needs of the people, in good times & in bad.

The risks associated with coronavirus are particularly dangerous for older adults in Pennsylvania and nationwide, folks who rely on the programs you're trying to decimate. In PA alone, according to @ProtectOurCare, nearly 5.3 million Pennsylvanians have a pre-existing condition, including 643,000 children. The protections the ACA provides for people with a pre-existing condition are as important as ever.

Mr. President, if you really want to show you care about the health of Pennsylvanians, then you'll file a brief with SCOTUS supporting the ACA, establish a special enrollment period through <http://Healthcare.gov> and reverse your plans to cut Medicare and Medicaid."

● **Senator Pat Toomey, @SenToomey, 05/14/20:**

"I'm glad @realDonaldTrump is visiting Owens & Minor today to highlight the great work of Pennsylvanians supplying the PPE needed to save lives, protect front-line workers, & the strong guidance his admin is providing on safely reopening our economy." *shared with a link to an [Allentown Morning Call article](#)*



Trump heads to the Lehigh Valley today, where he'll highlight a firm inv...
President Donald Trump thrives on getting out of the White House, but
his visit to the Lehigh Valley Thursday, at the Owens & Minor Inc. ...
[mcall.com](#)

127

500

90



● **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, @RepBrianFitz, 05/14/20:**

The Congressman simply shared a link to his [official website statement](#) about the Trump visit. The text of that statement is as follows:

"Today, May 14th, 2020, Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-01) met with President Trump in Allentown, PA, where they discussed Fitzpatrick's three part legislative response to COVID-19 to ensure that we will never go through this again: The Made in America Emergency Preparedness Act, the Never Again Small Business Protection Act, and the Never Again International Outbreak Prevention Act.

Fitzpatrick urged President Trump to adopt all three pieces of this bipartisan legislative package and to hold China 100 percent accountable for all economic losses, as part of his COVID-19 response plan."

Tweet of the Week

● **Senator Bob Casey, @SenBobCasey, 05/16/20:**

"Now more than ever, we must make our health a priority. As we close out National Women's Health Week, remember to practice compassion toward yourself and take time for your physical, mental and emotional health. For tips on how to do so: @womenshealth #nwhw

This pandemic disproportionately impacts women & girls, deepening pre-existing inequalities and exposing vulnerabilities in social, political & economic systems. This #NationalWomensHealthWeek reminds us that #COVID19 recovery efforts must account for these gender discrepancies."

● **Senator Pat Toomey, @SenToomey, [05/13/20](#):**

“During these difficult times, there are so many people to be thankful for. This week I'm particularly grateful for the police officers who are donning their uniform & serving our communities. I'm proud to be cosponsoring a resolution making this #PoliceWeek.”



● **PA-01's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, @RepBrianFitz, [05/16/20](#):**

“Congrats to Bucks County's own @RepPolinchock for building a broad bipartisan coalition in advancing his bill, H.B. 2412. This is an example of how we can both protect public safety and safely engage in economic activity. We can and must accomplish both.”

Casey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Linda Houk

“The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented rise in unemployment and a subsequent increase in demand for food assistance. At the same time, social distancing guidelines and stay at home orders have made it challenging — and unsafe — for many individuals to travel to purchase food. This is especially true for seniors and immunocompromised individuals who are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, as well as individuals with disabilities and families who lack reliable transportation. We believe that no individual or family should be disadvantaged simply because they rely on SNAP benefits to access the food they need.”

— from a [05/15/20 article in the Philadelphia Sun](#) titled “[Casey leads bipartisan push to expand delivery for SNAP recipients during pandemic](#)”

“We can't forget that some of the victims aren't in the hospital with COVID-19, but in their homes covering from the anger and rage of abusers from which they cannot escape. It is imperative that each of us look out for the most vulnerable among us, the children whose families have been shaken by the pandemic and who themselves are suffering at the hands of others because of it.”

— from a [05/15/20 article in NorthCentralPA.com](#) titled “[State officials warn of possible surge in unreported child abuse](#)”

“We all share the goal of re-opening our economy and getting people back to work as soon as we reasonably can. I support the approach outlined by Governor Wolf, which is based on safety and science and consistent with the guidance of leading public health experts.

A rushed, premature re-opening would risk undoing the progress Pennsylvania has made in the last two months, and we can't afford that. The fastest way to get our economy moving again, and get people back to work, is to defeat this virus”.

— from a [05/14/20 article on the Fox 43 website](#) titled “[Sen. Toomey, Rep. Smucker take GOP's push to reopen Pa. digital](#)”

“Some Americans can safely stay home and practice social distancing, but our Nation's coal miners are bravely going to work every day to continue powering our country. The bipartisan COVID-19 Mine Worker Protection Act would put in place enforceable workplace safety standards to protect miners from COVID-19 on the job and would make clear that miners cannot be retaliated against for reporting health and safety concerns related to COVID-19.”

— from a 05/14/20 [WVVA](#) article titled “[Manchin, Durbin, Kaine, Brown, Casey, Capito, Warner Introduce Bill To Protect Miners From Covid-19 Exposure](#)”

"I don't think [another relief package being denied is] the response the American people want. I don't think that's the response that our workers deserve to just throw up your hands and say we're done legislating because we passed several bills prior to this."

— from a 05/14/20 article on the [WBRC 13](#) website titled “[Proposal for essential workers to receive hazard pay from federal government](#)”

Fitzpatrick in the News

Compiled with the assistance of volunteer CC

"I applaud the USDA for finalizing an important rule to help protect dogs from abuse at the hands of irresponsible breeders. But there is much more we must do to ensure that this kind of abuse never happens again. This includes getting the WOOF Act and the Puppy Protection Act signed into law."

— from an article on [I Heart Dogs](#) titled “[USDA Cracks Down On Puppy Mills With Stricter Reforms For Breeders](#)”

"The commitment of an additional 200 cases is a big step in the right direction to combating this pandemic and getting our hospitals and patients the resources they need, but this alone will not be the end-all-be-all. I must stress that this is a clinical drug that has shown to speed up the rate of recovery but it's not the cure."

As we fight to combat this virus, the distribution process must be more transparent. I applaud Secretary Levine for adopting a transparent system for the initial distribution of the drug and thank all the elected officials that joined with me to push for transparency. As we work to address this issue on the federal side, my staff and I will continue to have future conversations with HHS on the distribution process and will continue to work to ensure the men and women on the front lines have the tools they need to save lives."

— from a 05/14/20 article in the [Doylestown Intelligencer](#) titled “[200 more cases of COVID-19 drug coming to Pa., Fitzpatrick reports](#)”

"Since its establishment, the LWCF has made numerous contributions to our economy, creating jobs in local communities and promoting recreational activity. Providing robust funding for the LWCF would help relieve the backlog of maintenance projects at our national parks and other public lands, allowing millions of Americans to continue to enjoy their beauty."

— from a 05/13/20 blog post in the [Ripon Advance](#) titled “[Fitzpatrick calls for full funding of Land and Water Conservation Fund](#)”

Toomey in the News

Courtesy of contributor Elayne Baker

Toomey said the “unprecedented and draconian step” to close the economy was to slow the spread of COVID-19 so as not to overwhelm hospital capacity.

"It was probably the right thing to do," Toomey said.

But it's been clear for the past several weeks, "we are not going to overwhelm the capacity of Pennsylvania hospitals. I'm not sure about the rest of the country. In Pennsylvania, we have got a lot of capacity to spare," Toomey said. "That essential reason for the shutdown no longer exists."

“Some of those businesses will fail and they will never be able to come back. Those are livelihoods that are going to be really badly setback for who knows how long,” the senator said. “It’s been my view for sometime now that Pennsylvania is ready to reopen...I think it’s time to move this along.”

“It’s my hope we will be able to accelerate this process.”

— an excerpt from the [Lehigh Valley Live](#) article from 05/15/20 titled “[Pa. should accelerate reopening businesses, Sen. Pat Toomey says](#)”

“We really should be moving ahead most everywhere in the state.. .there’s no question in my mind that many businesses can and should be able to be open. By all means, Lehigh and Northampton counties should be well along the reopening process,”

— from a 05/15/20 [Allentown Morning Call](#) article titled “[Pat Toomey rips Wolf administration, says Lehigh Valley, other areas should be allowed to begin reopening](#)”

“Well, in my opinion Maria, it’s the most important thing is to remember why we shut it down in the first place. It was a very clear, well articulated reason that we took the unprecedented and draconian step of saying that you can’t earn a living. And that was to prevent the disease from spreading so rapidly that so many people would get sick all at once that we would overwhelm our hospitals capacity. That was the reason.

It’s now abundantly obvious, in fact, has been for weeks in my state of Pennsylvania, that there is no danger of that. We have empty hospitals. We have no hospitals that are exceeding their capacity. We have ventilators on the shelf, ICU beds that are empty, hospitals with plenty of room.

In addition, we’ve got declining rates of positive tests. We have declining numbers of death and in Pennsylvania 69 percent of all COVID fatalities are inside the walls of nursing homes.

So Maria, the reason for the shutdown has passed and the rational thing to do now is protect the vulnerable people, senior citizens, people in living in nursing home settings, people with underlying health problems, that’s a -- they’re at a serious risk and we need to protect them, but the vast majority of people are not in that category and we need to get on with letting people earn their living.”

— an interview excerpt from a 05/14/20 [Real Clear Politics](#) piece titled “[Sen. Toomey: ‘The Reason For The Shutdown Has Passed’](#)”

“It would be instructive to have a demographically dispersed picture of who actually has had this coronavirus infection and has developed antibodies...”

It’s been my view for some time now, that Pennsylvania is ready to reopen. Our governor, of course, has taken some modest steps. I think by our rough estimates, more than half of Pennsylvania is still effectively in a lockdown, and I think it is time we move this along. And I see that the number of cases is going down.”

— from a 05/14/20 article in [The Daily Item](#) titled “[Toomey calls for comprehensive antibody testing](#)”

“I think the goal is that we make sure that we always have access to adequate supplies. Priority number two is it should be available to us at the lowest possible price. Why should you pay more? So I think that means diversification of our supply sources. The last country that you want to be dependent on are countries that are potential adversaries, and China is a potential adversary, let’s be clear about it.”

— from a 05/13/20 [WFMZ 69 Allentown](#) article titled “[WH Advisor Peter Navarro and Senator Pat Toomey talk President Trump’s visit to Lehigh Valley](#)”

“It is wrong for Governor Wolf to withhold federal taxpayer funds from the CARES Act in an attempt to coerce compliance with his increasingly misguided lockdown policy. The CARES Act does not authorize this behavior. This development underscores the problem when one level of government sends money to

a different level of government to be spent as the latter entity chooses. Money can be spent or withheld inappropriately and it is very difficult for taxpayers to know whom to hold accountable.

"The intent of the draconian shutdown of our economy was to slow the spread of COVID-19 so that we would not overwhelm our hospitals. It has been clear since, at least, mid-April that the capacity of Pennsylvania's hospitals have not been, and will not be, threatened. It is, therefore, no longer acceptable to deprive people of their livelihoods. Rather than punishing taxpayers by withholding federal aid that they helped to fund, our state government should be facilitating the safe re-opening of our economy."

— from a 05/12/20 article in *The UnionvilleTimes* titled "[COVID-19 Update, May 12: As Toomey demands reopening, Fauci warns of 'uncontrollable' outbreaks.](#)" The article included an update that reads "Following publication of this story, a spokesperson for Toomey objected to the characterization, arguing "Sen. Toomey has repeatedly noted – time and again – that areas that are still hotspots or have questionable hospital capacity should not be moving forward."

"We need to be really careful here. We are challenging the limit of how much we can borrow without serious adverse effects. We now have debt that's over 100% of GDP. We're running a deficit that's more than twice as a percentage of our economy."

— from a 05/11/20 article in *The American Independent* titled "[Republicans suddenly care about 'deficit' as they try to stop virus aid](#)"

Call to Action - Support this Bill!

The Phase Four Coronavirus Response legislation

As discussed at the top of this week's MoCTrack Report, the HEROES Act that the House just passed (H.R. 6800) is a starting point for the negotiations on this phase four response - it defines the goals that the Democrats want to see in the next bill. We can play a role in these negotiations by putting pressure on our Republican senator to show what parts of this bill have the most support.

Please consider calling (or emailing, faxing, tweeting or using ResistBot) Senator Toomey to tell him about your favorite parts of the HEROES Act. As a reminder, here are the provisions that Democrats are fighting for:

- Direct financial assistance to state tribal, territorial, and local governments
- Hazard pay for essential workers
- An extension of the \$600-per-week boost in Unemployment Compensation
- Funding for coronavirus testing and contact tracing
- Student debt forgiveness
- Protection from eviction and foreclosure for renters and homeowners
- Funding for farmers, farmers markets and local food outlets
- \$1,200 payment to individuals (up to \$6,000 per household)
- Funding assistance to the Postal Service
- Election security grants to states
- An increase to the maximum SNAP benefit to address rising food prices
- A revamping of the new employee retention tax credit to encourage employers to keep employees on payroll
- Subsidies for COBRA, to help people who lose their jobs pay for the increased cost of maintaining their health coverage
- New OSHA rules for creating safe work spaces and employee testing programs, as well as rules to protect workers who report coronavirus related workplace-safety issues

Consider choosing one or two of those provisions that are the most important to you, and letting Senator Toomey know about YOUR priorities. If you can, share a personal story that informs why you want to see

that provision make it into the final bill.

Option ONE: CALL

TOLL FREE - (855) 552-1831
Erie - (814) 453-3010
Johnstown - (814) 266-5970
Pittsburgh - (412) 803-3501
Wilkes Barre - (570) 820-4088

Allentown - (610) 434-1444
Harrisburg - (717) 782-3951
Philadelphia - (215) 241-1090
Washington - (202) 224-4254

Option TWO: RESISTBOT

Text RESIST to 50409 or on Twitter, direct message "Resist" to @Resistbot
Then follow their directions. It takes about one to two minutes to complete a full letter

Option THREE: FAX

Send a free FAX straight to Toomey

https://faxzero.com/fax_senate/T000461

Option FOUR: TWEET

Use the Hashtags #HEROESAct, #COVID19, and #CoronaVirus
Or search for those hashtags, and like/retweet content people have already composed to amplify their messaging.

Option FIVE: Senator Toomey's Website Contact Form

Use this site - <https://www.toomey.senate.gov/?p=contact> - to send an email to the Senator.

This report was brought to you by the Pennsylvania MoCTrack team...

CC

Elayne Baker

Gary Garb

Linda Houk

Kierstyn Piotrowski Zolfo

We are seeking additional assistance. Our Congresspeople are always busy and there is always more for us to cover — tasks big and small 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!