

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Score
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Subject: POLITICO's Morning Score: Representatives enter races for governor — Battle kicks off for Delaney's seat — New candidates in Minnesota and Tennessee

By Maggie Severns | 08/07/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With Zach Montellaro

The following newsletter is an abridged version of Campaign Pro's Morning Score. For an earlier morning read on exponentially more races - and for a more comprehensive aggregation of the day's most important campaign news - sign up for Campaign Pro today. (<http://www.politicopro.com/proinfo>)

GREENER PASTURES - Reps make bids for governor: POLITICO's Heather Caygle and Kevin Robillard report that half of the 18 retiring House members are leaving Capitol Hill next year to run for governor, but their chances of winning those races may be slim. "The last time this many sitting representatives ran for governor, in 2006, twice as many lost as won. Lawmakers are motivated partly by the quest for more power - being one in a village of 435, especially in the Democratic minority, only gets you so far. They are also seeking the chance to assist or resist the Trump administration, depending on their party, in implementing new policy throughout the states," report Caygle and Robillard. "For Democrats in particular, the choice between another term in the House minority or the chance to lead their home states can be an easy one. 'It's a good partnership to have folks who have federal experience, have relationships here but can be the governor of their states so they don't execute some of these federal changes in a way that harms their citizens,' said Rep. [Michelle Lujan Grisham](#) (D-N.M.), who announced in December that she would run for governor in 2018. 'And you would be in charge of redistricting.'"

"On the GOP side, members have watched Republican governors make political gains and pass major policy initiatives throughout the Obama administration, and they want in on the action. ... Rep. [Diane Black](#), a four-term Republican from a safe GOP seat in Tennessee, became the latest lawmaker to launch her gubernatorial campaign last week. The current House Budget chairwoman joins eight other lawmakers, as well as a handful of others who are considering runs." [Full story here.](#)

THE HOUSE SCRAMBLE - Expensive battle kicks off for Delaney's seat: Elena Schneider has the story: "Rep. [John Delaney](#)'s quest for the presidency set off a scramble for perhaps the only competitive House district in Maryland. And the price tag for the Democratic-leaning seat jumped significantly last week, after wine retailer David Trone, who sunk \$13 million of his own money on his 2016 primary bid for a neighboring district, entered the race," Schneider reports. "Republicans are eyeing the seat, too. The district comfortably backed former President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, but in 2014, Republican Gov. Larry Hogan won it handily. Amie Hoerber, who lost against Delaney in 2016, is considering another run, and former state Del. Matt Mossburg already announced his bid."

"Democrats, however, are bullish about their chances to hold on to the seat. 'This is a district - with the fundraising base and the media market - where a real Democratic leadership star could emerge,' said former DCCC deputy executive director Jesse Ferguson." [Full story here.](#)

Days until the 2017 election: 92.

Days until the 2018 election: 456.

Thanks for joining us! You can email tips to the Campaign Pro team at sbland@politico.com, eschneider@politico.com, krobillard@politico.com, dstrauss@politico.com and mseverns@politico.com

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HEALTH CARE BLOWBACK - House Majority PAC launches billboards: House Majority PAC is launching a series of billboards across the country hitting Republicans on health care. The first billboard will go up today in GOP Rep. [Fred Upton's](#) Michigan district. The billboard focuses on a so-called "age tax" in the GOP health plan that allows insurers to charge higher premiums for people over 50, and directs viewers to a [website](#) with information.

CHASING AMY - State Rep. Jim Newberger announces Minn. Senate run: Minnesota Republican Jim Newberger announced on social media over the weekend he plans to challenge Democratic Sen. [Amy Klobuchar](#) in 2018. "For over a decade, millions of Minnesotans have had no voice in the U.S. Senate. Sen. Amy Klobuchar has rejected them," Newberger wrote. He pledged to repeal Obamacare and fight for a simpler tax code, among other things, in the post.

- And a new gov candidate in Tennessee: Craig Fitzhugh, the Democratic leader in the Tennessee House of Representatives, plans to run for governor in 2018. Fitzhugh's entry means there will be a contested race for governor next year. [Full story.](#)

DAILY ROLL TIDE - Poll finds tight race in Alabama: A poll released by a GOP blog on Friday found a tight race between the GOP candidates for the Alabama Senate seat currently held by Sen. [Luther Strange](#), the Montgomery Advertiser [reports](#). Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore led Strange 31 percent to 29 percent in the poll, and Rep. Mo Brooks garnered 19 percent of the vote. The poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

- Two dispatches from D.C. journalists: Brooks was working the campaign trail over the weekend and defending himself against the slew of Senate Leadership Fund ads targeting him. Here's his defense, as told to voters in Gadsden, Ala., via [CNN's Juana Summers](#): "'Previously he was just attacking me, trying to push me down to get into a runoff with Roy Moore,' Brooks told the group. 'And now that he's attacking both me and Roy Moore, that suggests that our polling data is more like his, it shows that there is a chance that he won't make the runoff and that scares the willies out of (Senate Majority Leader) [Mitch McConnell](#) and all the special interest groups who are investing in Luther Strange in this race.'"

More from Bridget Bowman [at Roll Call](#): "The key challenge facing Brooks is how to spread his campaign message - which he boiled down to 'ethics, proven conservative, and I'm the candidate that supports Donald Trump's agenda' - while also counteracting the negative ads. In the home stretch of the primary, Brooks has launched a 'Drain the Swamp' bus tour around the Yellowhammer State, borrowing a phrase from Trump's own campaign. On Thursday, he stopped in four towns in northern Alabama."

- Brooks picks up FreedomWorks endorsement: FreedomWorks PAC president Adam Brandon said over the weekend that "it is becoming clearer every day that we need members of Congress who will not only vote the right way but actually fight for free-market, limited government principles," and the conservative group is thus supporting Brooks in the race, [The Hill reported](#).

WEEKEND BUZZ - Republicans run shadow presidential campaigns: Republican party stars including Vice President Mike Pence are scheduling events as if they're preparing for 2020 primary season, write Jonathan Martin and Alexander Burns write at [The New York Times](#). The White House is, predictably, not pleased: "Asked about those Republicans who seem to be eyeing 2020, a White House spokeswoman, Lindsay Walters, fired a warning shot: 'The president is as strong as he's ever been in Iowa, and every potentially ambitious Republican knows that.' But in interviews with more than 75 Republicans at every level of the party, elected officials, donors and strategists expressed widespread uncertainty about whether Mr. Trump would be on the ballot in 2020 and little doubt that others in the party are engaged in barely veiled contingency planning." [Full story](#).

- Pence swiftly issued a statement denouncing the story: "Today's article in the New York Times is disgraceful and offensive to me, my family, and our entire team," Pence said. "The allegations in this article are categorically false and represent just the latest attempt by the media to divide this Administration." POLITICO's David Cohen has more [here](#).

FLIP FLOP FLAP - Manchin avoids Justice fallout: West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice's decision to flip from Democrat to Republican may complicate Democratic Sen. [Joe Manchin](#)'s path to reelection in the Senate, but Manchin appears to be soldiering on as usual, POLITICO's Gabriel Debenedetti and Robillard report. Republicans immediately began attacking Manchin, but "Manchin's name barely surfaced on West Virginia's political talk radio programming on Friday. And neither Manchin, the Democratic infrastructure backing him, nor any of his Republican challengers immediately changed their strategies in the aftermath of Justice's surprise move," write Robillard and Debenedetti. [Full story](#).

SHAKEUP - Three RNC staffers head for the exits: Three aides at the Republican National Committee are departing in the coming weeks, POLITICO's Alex Isenstadt reports. Deputy chief data officer Liam O'Rourke, director of political data support Ashley Burns and director of business intelligence Patrick Stewart are all planning to exit at an awkward time for the committee as it gears up for the 2018 elections. [Full story](#).

CODA - QUOTE OF THE DAY: "I'm doing what I think my voters expect of me." - GOP Sen. [Jeff Flake](#), while [explaining to NBC's "Meet the Press"](#) on Sunday that he has no plans to quit the

Republican party.

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