

**To:** Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]  
**From:** Morning Score  
**Sent:** Fri 9/8/2017 2:04:40 PM  
**Subject:** POLITICO's Morning Score: DENT TO RETIRE — Democrats mad at Sanders (again) — Vukmir to challenge Baldwin in Wisconsin

By Kevin Robillard | 09/08/2017 10:00 AM EDT

*With Zach Montellaro, Maggie Severns and Daniel Strauss*

*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>)*

**DENTED - "GOP moderate Rep. Dent won't seek re-election in 2018," by Kyle Cheney and Alex Isenstadt:** "Pennsylvania Rep. Charlie Dent, a Republican who occupies a swing district, will not seek reelection in 2018, he confirmed in a statement on Thursday night. Dent issued a statement emphasizing his lengthy career in public office and noting that he 'never planned on serving' more than five or six terms - but he's now in his seventh. ... Dent's retirement comes the day after another swing district Republican, Washington Rep. Dave Reichert, announced he was calling it quits. Florida Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, another moderate, is also retiring. Democrats are certain to target all three seats in next year's midterms. Dent's announced departure comes one day after state Rep. Justin Simmons said he would challenge him in a primary. Dent spent much of 2017 opposing President Donald Trump's agenda, to the chagrin of hardline conservatives, who vowed to oppose him." **Full story.**

**- From Dent's statement:** "As a member of the governing wing of the Republican Party, I've worked to instill stability, certainty and predictability in Washington. I've fought to fulfill the basic functions of Government, like keeping the lights on and preventing default. Regrettably, that has not been easy given the disruptive outside influences that profit from increased polarization and ideological rigidity that leads to dysfunction, disorder and chaos."

**- Reminder:** Three (contested) seats may make a trend, but it doesn't make a majority.

**BADGER STATE BATTLE - "Leah Vukmir enters Republican U.S. Senate race in bid to unseat Democrat Tammy Baldwin," by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's Bill Glauber:** "Vowing to bring the 'Wisconsin Way' to the U.S. Senate, state Sen. Leah Vukmir of Brookfield entered the race for the Republican nomination to take on Democratic incumbent Tammy Baldwin next year. In a campaign video and announcement that was released Thursday morning, Vukmir cast herself as a 'consistent conservative' who during tough political battles stood side by side with Republican Gov. Scott Walker. ... By emphasizing her deep roots among Wisconsin Republicans, Vukmir, 59, is seeking to offer a vivid contrast with the only other candidate in race, Delafield businessman and U.S. Marine veteran Kevin Nicholson. ... A Vukmir-Nicholson political battle has already brought in two of the biggest contributors to the GOP. Beloit billionaire Diane Hendricks, owner of ABC Supply, will serve as Vukmir's finance co-chair. Richard Uihlein, who lives in Lake Forest, Ill., and is co-owner of Pleasant Prairie-based Uline

Corp., has already poured in \$3.5 million into a super PAC that backs Nicholson." [Full story](#).

**- Big money comes to Senate primaries:** The fight between Nicholson (and Uihlein) and Vukmir (and Hendricks) and potentially self-funding businessman Eric Hovde will be just one of several GOP Senate primaries that could see huge spending in 2018. The Club for Growth already has \$10 million set aside for Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley, some of which is likely to be spent fending off primary challengers. Both Rep. [Evan Jenkins](#) and Attorney General Patrick Morissey have super PACs in West Virginia. The Club for Growth is with Nicholson and state Auditor Matt Rosendale in Montana.

**2016 REDUX - "Bernie backers' attacks on Democrats infuriate the party," by Gabriel Debenedetti:** "Prominent Democrats are increasingly riled by attacks from [Bernie Sanders](#)' supporters, whose demands for ideological purity are hurting the party ahead of the 2018 midterms and 2020 presidential election, they say. But it's not just the outside agitators that Democratic lawmakers, operatives, and activists are annoyed with: They're tired of what they see as the senator's hesitance to confront his own backers, either in public or through back channels. Tensions boiled over recently when a handful of Sanders loyalists bashed freshman Sen. [Kamala Harris](#) - a rising star in the party and potential 2020 hopeful - as an establishment tool. Democrats were also rankled that other prominent Sanders allies said support for single-payer health care should be a litmus test for candidates.

In response, Democratic senators and outside groups have begun telling Sanders and friendly intermediaries that if he wants to be a leading figure for Democrats ahead of 2020's presidential election, he needs to get his supporters in line - or at least publicly disavow their more incendiary statements. ... The complaints have largely gone unheeded by Sanders' camp. Many of the senator's closest allies insist such frustration simply reflects the same misunderstanding of Sanders' "political revolution" Democrats have had since he first started running for president. 'Bernie Sanders really does lead a movement, he doesn't run an organization. And movements are different from organizations,' said Mark Longabaugh, a veteran Democratic strategist who was a senior advisor to Sanders' campaign. 'A movement operates organically and moves on its own. It can have leaders, but no one directs a movement.'" [Full story](#).

**NEW POLLING - ECU finds House Democrats with higher approval than Republican counterparts:** House Democrats in key battleground districts tend to have a higher approval rating than Republicans, left-leaning End Citizens United found in a new poll of 50 of the most competitive House districts. ECU found Democrats in competitive districts had an overall job approval of 53 percent, while Republicans' approval was 37 percent. And 30 percent of voters disapproved of Democratic incumbents, while 40 percent disapproved of Republicans.

ECU also polled Trump's popularity and found that 37 percent of likely voters approve of the president's job performance, while 61 percent disapprove. Among Independents, 34 percent approved of Trump's job performance and 61 percent disapproved. The poll was conducted by Normington, Petts & Associates of 1,000 likely voters in 50 top battleground districts (31 currently held by Republicans and 19 held by Democrats) between Aug. 24 and Sept. 5. The margin of error is 3.1 percentage points.

**Days until the 2017 election: 60.**

**Days until the 2018 election: 424.**

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

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**MENENDEZ WATCH - "Federal Judge excoriates Sen. Menendez prosecution team," by the Washington Post's Devlin Barrett:** "The judge overseeing the bribery trial of Sen. Robert Menendez ripped into prosecutors Thursday for trying to focus on what he called 'tabloid' details - an unusual description for dry testimony about a series of emails about a hotel reservation. U.S. District Judge William Walls stopped testimony for 20 minutes in which he tongue-lashed prosecutors for their painstaking recounting of emails used to book a luxury hotel in Paris for the New Jersey Democrat in 2010. The three-day hotel stay is a central part of the Justice Department's case. ... He halted questioning of FBI supervisory analyst Jane Ruch about emails discussing Menendez's lunch plans during the trip. After having the jury leave the courtroom, the judge lit into Justice Department lawyers. 'I don't think it's a sin for him to want a limestone bath, per se,' Walls said. 'It's tabloid in nature. . . . Whether these defendants engaged in bribery does not depend on whether the senator chose a more expensive room. We're not talking about Days Inn." [Full story.](#)

**- Here's what Democratic senators up in 2018 have to say.** Missouri Sen. [Claire McCaskill](#), to [HuffPost](#): "I'm a former prosecutor, so I was trained appropriately to never discuss a trial until it is completed. That process needs to be completed before we all start weighing in politically." ... West Virginia Sen. [Joe Manchin](#), to [CNN](#): "We are a country of laws. And I think people should just let this process go through before they come to judgment in any way shape or form." ... Montana Sen. [Jon Tester](#) told CNN he's been focused on wildfires in his home state: "I haven't really been paying attention to the trial."

**EARLY POLLING NUMBERS - "Poll shows Schuette, Whitmer deadlocked in potential matchup for Michigan governor," by the Detroit Free Press' Paul Egan:** "If Michigan's election for governor was held today, the party's presumed front-runners - Democrat Gretchen Whitmer and Republican Bill Schuette - would be deadlocked in a head-to-head matchup, according to a new poll. But Schuette would defeat another potential Democratic candidate - Southfield trial attorney Geoffrey Fieger - by 10 percentage points, says the poll from EPIC-MRA of Lansing." [Full story.](#)

**- FIRST IN SCORE - New Tennesseans for Conservative Action poll:** New polling by Tennesseans for Conservative Action obtained first by Score finds President Donald Trump with an 82 percent job performance approval among Republicans in the state. The poll also found voters divided among which Republican gubernatorial candidate to support. About 14 percent said they support Rep. [Diane Black](#), while 11 percent said they back former Tennessee

Economic and Community Development Commissioner Randy Boyd. Another 7.4 percent picked Tennessee House Speaker Beth Harwell. But the majority of those surveyed (57 percent) said they were undecided. Read the full results [here](#).

**- Ryan challenger releases polling showing him down nine:** Randy Bryce, the ironworker making a much-hyped challenge to House Speaker [Paul Ryan](#), released a poll showing him trailing Ryan by nine points, 46 percent to 37 percent. The poll, from Global Strategy Group, has Trump's approval rating at just 42 percent in the district, and Ryan's approval rating at 50 percent. After reading short, positive biographies of both men, Bryce takes a 44 percent to 41 percent lead. **Full results** [here](#).

**SHADOW PRIMARY - Zinke's wife backs Downing:** "Troy Downing, GOP candidate for the U.S. Senate [in Montana], said Wednesday that Lola Zinke, wife of Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, will serve as his campaign chairwoman," the Great Falls Tribune reported. **Full story**.

**2018 WATCH - "Donna Lynne makes it official, enters Colorado governor's race," by the Denver Post's John Frank:** "Gov. John Hickenlooper picked Lynne, a former health insurance company executive, for the state's No. 2 ranking job in March 2016. Lynne initially said she wouldn't run to succeed him in two years, but now she enters the race with Hickenlooper's support and the power of the office to help boost her bid. ... A first-time candidate with no political base of support, Lynne faces a difficult challenge in her bid to top four prominent challengers - businessman Noel Ginsburg, former state Sen. Mike Johnston, former state Treasurer Cary Kennedy and U.S. Rep. Jared Polis - who have been securing support and raising money for months now." **Full story**.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY:** "The press has been incredible." - Donald Trump to Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi in a [morning phone call](#), discussing coverage of their deal to extend the debt limit for three months.

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