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From: Morning Score
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Subject: POLITICO's Morning Score: GOP Senate outside groups raise \$17 million — McConnell heads down to Dixie — 2020 Democratic primary maneuvering galore

By Kevin Robillard | 07/31/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With Scott Bland

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>)

BIG MONEY - "Senate GOP outside groups raised \$17M in first half of 2017," by Campaign Pro's Kevin Robillard: "The main outside groups backing Senate Republicans have nearly \$22 million combined in their bank accounts after raising \$17 million in the first six months of the year. The massive war chest, raised with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's help, should aid Senate Republicans as they try to win 10 Democratic-held seats in states President Donald Trump won last November, while playing defense for Nevada Sen. Dean Heller and Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake. Senate Leadership Fund, a super PAC which regularly launches blistering attacks on Democrats in television and digital ads, raised \$8.2 million and had \$9.6 million on hand as of June 30. One Nation, which promotes GOP policies and Republican senators who back them, raised \$8.7 million and had \$7 million in its bank account. ... 'The pivotal figure in all this has been McConnell,' [SLF President Steven] Law said. 'What most of the major donors have concluded is that Mitch McConnell is the one guy who steers clear of the chaos and focuses on the Republican agenda.' This year, McConnell has traveled extensively to meet with potential donors and hear their concerns, visiting Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Dallas, Houston, Miami and Palm Beach, Fla." **Full story.**

TWO WEEKS OUT - "McConnell wages war down South," by POLITICO's Alex Isenstadt: "The Republican leader is aiming to thwart Rep. Mo Brooks and former state Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore in a special election in Alabama next month. Both men are campaigning against McConnell as a despised symbol of the establishment - and both would exacerbate his already stiff challenge wrangling his GOP Conference. ... His super PAC is set to spend much as \$8 million to boost his favored candidate, recently-appointed Republican Sen. Luther Strange. McConnell has activated his sprawling donor network and pressed the White House for more resources. ... And in a highly unusual step, one of the McConnell's top political lieutenants has begun quietly advising a long-shot Republican primary candidate running for Brooks' House seat. The move is designed to get in the congressman's head and dissuade him from emptying his campaign war chest ... This past week, Brooks, a member of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, said he would not vote for McConnell as majority leader and called for him to step down after the failure of the health care bill. Moore, who rose to national fame after he refused to obey a federal order to remove a monument of the Ten Commandments from an Alabama judicial building, made his feelings clear about the leader in a lengthy fundraising appeal with the subject line, 'You & Me vs Mitch McConnell.'" **Full story.**

- FIRST IN SCORE - SLF attacks Brooks on Trump, war funding: A new ad from Senate Leadership Fund features Alabamans attacking Brooks in a series of direct-to-camera interviews. "Mo Brooks said we can't trust Donald Trump. You know what I don't trust? Career politicians like Mo Brooks," a woman says to start the ad off. The ad then pivots to Brooks' votes against continuing resolutions, with military veterans accusing Brooks of "voting to cut off funding to fight ISIS." "Mo Brooks didn't have my back, and he won't be getting my vote," one of the veterans says. **Watch the ad [here](#).**

2020 WATCH - "How 2018 became the new 2020," by POLITICO's Gabriel Debenedetti:

"Top contenders are making endorsements, picking sides in party primaries and aggressively working the fundraising circuit on behalf of 2018 candidates, all the while building their own name recognition. ... The early focus on the midterms is a marked departure from previous practice and a further acceleration of the presidential campaign cycle. Prior to the 2016 presidential primary season, for example, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders largely stayed off the campaign trail and out of elections until late 2014 - roughly six months before they officially announced their campaigns. ... Booker has been especially active - his travel itinerary reads like an atlas of at-risk Democratic incumbents. He's raised money for grateful colleagues in Florida, Ohio, Indiana, Montana and Michigan, among others, according to Democrats familiar with the itinerary. ... Warren, a fundraising juggernaut, has made several California fundraising stops, including one in San Francisco where the Massachusetts senator joined Esprit founder Susie Tompkins Buell, a high-level party donor and close Clinton friend. Another gave Warren face time with Oakland Athletics part-owner Guy Saperstein, who in 2016 offered Warren \$1 million to run for president." **[Full story](#).**

- "What is John Delaney thinking?" by Campaign Pro's Kevin Robillard: " Delaney, whose district stretches from some of Maryland's wealthiest D.C. suburbs to rural counties bordering West Virginia, thinks his combination of private and public sector experience, and his faith in both, are the answer. His campaign motto, at least for now, is 'Focus on the Future.' And Delaney is planning a campaign focused on problems caused by globalization, automation and technology, issues he says are getting ignored in a hopeless national political conversation. 'You need a villain in politics,' Delaney said in an interview. 'My villain is partisan politics. It's destroying our ability to govern.'" **[Full story](#).**

Days until the 2017 election: 99.

Days until the 2018 election: 463.

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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MORE 2020 WATCH - "Joe Biden still wants to be president. Can his family endure one

last campaign?," by the Washington Post's Roxane Roberts in Rehoboth Beach, Del.: "The new house is on the edge of Cape Henlopen State Park, just north of the boardwalk: three stories, six bedrooms, three fireplaces and an expansive view of the Atlantic Ocean. The new owners are Joe and Jill Biden, rich for the first time in their lives, thanks to a three-book publishing deal - two by him, one by her - that allowed them to purchase the \$2 million vacation home in this beachiest of beach towns. ... Since Joe left public life in January, the Bidens have never been more public. The past six months have seen the formation of the Biden Foundation, a way for Joe and Jill to support their pet causes, and the Biden Cancer Initiative to honor Beau. The University of Pennsylvania inaugurated the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement to study international issues, and the University of Delaware the Biden Institute for domestic initiatives. Last - but not least - there's a new political action committee, American Possibilities, a vehicle for raising money for Democratic candidates. ... With Washington in chaos and the Democrats without a standard-bearer, Joe Biden is arguably the most popular former vice president in history." [Full story.](#)

EARLY POLLING DATA - "Poll shows Mike DeWine still up big in name ID, favorability," by Cleveland.com's Seth A. Richardson: "The poll [of the Ohio Governor's race] shared with cleveland.com was paid for by the American Freedom Builders and administered by the Washington-based Tarrance Group. The results have DeWine leading Secretary of State Jon Husted, Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci. However, DeWine's favorability slipped 10 points from a similar poll in January. DeWine's favorable-unfavorable split was 61-20. That's a dip from the January poll that showed him with a 71 percent favorable rating." [Full story.](#)

PAC HEAT - "Pence raises \$1M for his leadership PAC," CNN's Elizabeth Landers reports: "Vice President Mike Pence raised a cool \$1 million for his leadership PAC on Tuesday evening during a summer soirée in Washington, according to a source close to Pence. The source told CNN that the event attracted more than 100 lawmakers, including members of the leadership in both the House and Senate. House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy were among those who attended after a successful vote for the Republicans earlier that day on health care. The President's daughter, Ivanka Trump, made a guest appearance to introduce the vice president at the event." [Full story.](#)

HACK JOB - "Hackers descend on Las Vegas to expose voting machine flaws," by Kevin Collier in Las Vegas: "[Carten] Schurman, a professor of computer science at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, used a laptop's Wi-Fi connection Friday to gain access to the type of voting machine that Fairfax County, Virginia, used until just two years ago. Nearby, other would-be hackers took turns trying to poke into a simulated election computer network resembling the one used by Cook County, Illinois. ... They were among the hundreds of cybersecurity experts who descended on 'Voting Village,' one of the most talked-about features of the annual DEF CON hacker conference. In a cramped conference room, they took turns over three days cracking into 10 examples of voting machines and voter registration systems - a reminder, they say, of the risks awaiting upcoming U.S. elections." [Full story.](#)

THE NEXT FIGHT - "Major GOP-aligned group pledges to spend millions on tax reform fight," by McClatchy's Katie Glueck: American Action Network "expects to spend as much as

\$20 million on a pro-tax reform effort dubbed the 'Middle Class Growth Initiative,' AAN told McClatchy. The program will promote tax cuts for 'working families and small businesses,' as well as a reformed tax code "that will be simpler, fairer and pro-growth," according to the organization. As part of the effort, AAN is pledging to spend \$5 million in August alone, and is kicking off the initiative with a \$1 million member-specific radio ad buy slated to run in 34 congressional districts, from Rep. Carlos Curbelo's Miami-area district to Rep. Mark Meadows' North Carolina seat to Rep. David Valadao's in California's Central Valley." **Full story.**

CODA - QUOTE OF THE DAY: "They're both Catholic, but that's probably about it." - A person close to new White House chief of staff John Kelly, on his similarities with communications director Anthony Scaramucci.

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