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From: Morning Score
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Subject: POLITICO's Morning Score: Brooks fights to stay relevant in Alabama — Dem poll finds Collins down in hypothetical GOP gubernatorial primary — NRSC attacks Baldwin

By Maggie Sevens | 08/08/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With Kevin Robillard, Daniel Strauss, Zach Montellaro and 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>)

ONE WEEK 'TIL ALABAMA - "Brooks fights to stay relevant in Alabama primary," by Campaign Pro's Daniel Strauss: "Rep. Mo Brooks has been fighting for weeks to shake attack ads by allies of Sen. Luther Strange. But now, with a week until Alabama's special Senate primary, comes the worst sign of all for Brooks: Those attacks are slowing down. Strange and Senate Leadership Fund, the super PAC run by allies of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, have turned the bulk of their negative advertising against former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore ahead of the Aug. 15 primary, in a sign that Brooks' outspent, insurgent campaign may have fizzled against better-known opponents. 'I've seen a number of polls and every poll I've seen has Luther leading Roy Moore by between 3 and 5 points. Mo at one time was up to about 20 [percent],' said Perry Hooper, a Strange supporter and the former co-chairman of the Trump campaign in Alabama. "The last I've seen has him at 15, 16 [percent]. I guess anything can happen but the trend looks like people like what Luther has been doing.'" [Full story.](#)

- FINANCIAL TIMES - "Luther Strange's fundraising momentum grows in July, outraises Mo Brooks by 6-to-1; Roy Moore third," by AL.com's Howard Koplowitz: "Strange is also sitting on the most cash on hand of the major candidates in the race with about \$934,000 in his campaign account, according to the most recent filings submitted to the Federal Election Commission. ... In July, Strange raised about \$387,000 - or more than \$150,000 than the roughly \$226,000 raised by Rep. Mo Brooks, who was second in fundraising for the month among the major contenders in the election. For the entire election cycle, Strange has outraised Brooks by a more than 6-to-1 margin. ... Former Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore was in third with \$152,000 raised in July and about \$456,000 for the cycle. Brooks was the biggest spender last month among the top three contenders in Tuesday's special election, with his campaign spending about \$827,000 in July." [Full story.](#)

- CHUCK NORRIS ENDORSEMENT - Actor endorses former Moore for Senate. In a press release, the "Walker, Texas Ranger" star says "Alabama needs Judge Moore there doing what he's always done: fighting to protect our constitutional rights to life, religious liberty, and the freedom to protect ourselves and our families. And he will always put principle over politics."

EARLY POLLING DATA - FIRST IN SCORE - PPP survey shows Collins in trouble in Maine GOP primary: If Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins makes a bid for governor in 2018, she might have trouble making it through a Republican primary. A survey from the Democratic firm Public Policy Polling, obtained by Campaign Pro, shows Collins' approval rating among likely GOP primary voters at just 33 percent, with 62 percent disapproval. Seventy-seven percent of the Republican primary electorate approves of President Donald Trump's performance, while 79 percent approve of Gov. Paul LePage's performance. The highest-profile Republican in the race now, former LePage health commissioner Mary Mayhew, would lead Collins in a hypothetical matchup, 44 percent to 33 percent. Given the choice between Collins and "someone else," just 28 percent of voters chose Collins. It's unclear who commissioned the survey, which polled 672 likely GOP primary voters on Aug. 1 and 2. **Full poll results [here](#).**

- "Poll Shows Nevada's Dean Heller Vulnerable In GOP Primary," by the Daily Caller News Foundation's Ted Goodman: "The poll, conducted by Strategic National, a Republican-leaning consulting firm, revealed that Heller would face stiff competition from Nevada Republican Rep. Mark Amodei and businessman Danny Tarkanian should either man choose to take on Heller. In a three-way primary between Heller, Amodei and Tarkanian, Amodei received 27 percent to Heller's 26 percent, well within the margin of error of 4.4 percent. Tarkanian, the son of the legendary University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian, received 21 percent. Head to head versus Tarkanian, Heller received 38 percent to Tarkanian's 34 percent, within the margin of error. [Twenty-seven] percent said they were undecided between the two. ... The poll, which surveyed 500 registered Nevada Republicans on Aug. 1 and 2, revealed that Heller holds a 31 percent approval rating, with a 43 percent disapproval rating." **Full story.**

- The polling picture is pretty clear: The Republican base is mad, and willing to turn on previously popular incumbents. A Public Policy Polling survey last week had Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake's approval at just 22 percent among Republicans, with 57 percent disapproval. Republicans will scoff at the PPP results, but on-the-ground reporting (and polling from Alabama's Senate contest) backs up the idea that Republicans who are breaking from Trump or his agenda risk alienating the party's base. A [Bangor Daily News](#) story from this weekend featured a former party chairman saying Collins, long the most popular politician in the state, wouldn't be able to clear the GOP primary field. Another activist, Christian Civic League of Maine board member Bob Emrich, was blunt: "I do not believe she can win the Republican primary."

- But wait, there's more! AAN's new polling on tax reform: The House leadership-aligned American Action Network is out with a poll today that tests voters' moods and messages about tax reform. The poll found more than half of Americans believe the personal income tax should be overhauled. AAN found that 70 percent of Democrats would like to see their lawmakers working in a bipartisan manner. The poll was conducted between August 1st and August 3rd by GS Strategy Group. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percent. Full results [here](#).

Days until the 2017 election: 91.

Days until the 2018 election: 455.

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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BADGER STATE ACTION - NRSC attacks Baldwin over Tomah VA scandal in radio ads:

The National Republican Senatorial Committee is running a radio ad this week in the Wausau and La Crosse markets attacking Democratic Sen. Tammy Baldwin, alleging Baldwin swept a scandal, in which doctors overprescribed opioids to veterans, "under the rug." "The Inspector General report uncovered the scandal - Tammy Baldwin buried the report," the ad's narrator says. "Whistleblowers tried to tell Tammy the truth. But Tammy Baldwin's office told them not to talk to the press. Tammy Baldwin looked out for her own political health - instead of the health of our veterans." [Full ad here.](#)

- Wisconsin GOP attacks Wachs: Democratic state Rep. Dana Wachs launched a bid for governor on Monday, and the Republican Party of Wisconsin immediately launched a digital ad campaign attacking him as a "liberal trial attorney" who "has a history of filing frivolous lawsuits to try to pad his own pockets."

THE LEFT'S NEW 'LITMUS TEST' - Bernie Sanders throws his weight behind Medicare-for-all: POLITICO's Gabriel Debenedetti reports: "The Vermont senator himself has not explicitly said he'll support primary challenges to those who won't support his push for a so-called Medicare-for-all health care plan. But there are plenty of signs that Sanders and his allies view the issue as a defining moment for Democratic lawmakers. 'Our view is that within the Democratic Party, this is fast-emerging as a litmus test,' said Ben Tulchin, the pollster for Sanders' White House run.

"The fears are acute enough that when the Nevada chapter of Our Revolution - the political group spawned from the Sanders presidential campaign - endorsed long-shot candidate Jesse Sbaiah in the state's Democratic Senate primary over party favorite Rep. Jacky Rosen, retired former Sen. Harry Reid felt the need to call Sanders directly. Don't endorse Sbaiah, and don't let the national Our Revolution group accept its Nevada chapter's recommendation to back him either, the former minority leader implored his friend. Sanders agreed, said a Democrat familiar with the interaction." [Full story.](#)

Q&A - Missouri Republican Austin Petersen goes on the record about his Senate run, via Campaign Pro's Kevin Robillard: "Austin Petersen started his run for the Libertarian Party's presidential nomination last year while he was living behind a convenience store in Kansas City. ... Now, he's running in the GOP primary for Missouri Senate, hoping his small-government views and small-dollar donations can fuel a Rand Paul-style primary upset.

Why are you running for Senate? I think Claire McCaskill's got to go. I'm mostly focused on her. I'm frustrated with a lot of the progress on health care, and I'm a little nervous about the

prospects for tax reform now. Government spending is really the big target for me. I think we spend too much, and we tax too much. I'm an across-the-line fiscal conservative.

Are you nervous about tax reform? I'm an optimist in my personal life, but I'm a pessimist about government. Now that this health care has failed so spectacularly, I wonder if they're going to be able to get anything done substantively on taxes. ...

How will you separate yourself from Attorney General Josh Hawley and other Republicans in the primary? What's your path to victory? I'll be talking, not just about the basic red meat you get from conservatives, but about criminal justice reform, about eliminating mandatory minimums. I'll probably be the only candidate in the race ending the federal war on drugs. ... I have to raise money. I think I need to raise about \$1.5 million by next August; \$3 million would be great. With \$1.5 million, I'll get one good shot." [Full story](#).

CODA - QUOTE OF THE DAY: "I don't give a s--t, you understand? I just don't give a s--t." - Democratic West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin , explaining his reaction to GOP opponent Patrick Morrisey's attacks on tax reform to [the Charleston Gazette-Mail](#).

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