

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Score
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Subject: POLITICO's Morning Score: Trump's loyalty put to test in GOP primaries — Committee fundraising totals — Trump approval in mid-30s in key Midwest states

By Elena Schneider | 08/21/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With Scott Bland, Kevin Robillard 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>)

WITH HIM OR AGAINST HIM - "Republicans' primary litmus test: Trump loyalty," by Campaign Pro's Kevin Robillard: "Taxes, spending and even health care have taken a back seat to the most potent new litmus test in Republican primaries: allegiance to President Donald Trump. Even as the president spars with members of his own party and his approval rating has plummeted to historic lows, Republican Senate campaigns across the country are preparing to use instances of disloyalty to Trump to bludgeon primary opponents who've gotten on the wrong side of the president. Loyalty to Trump has quickly become the most potent issue within the Republican base, according to a dozen candidates and strategists immersed in 2018 races. It has already put Sens. [Jeff Flake](#) and [Dean Heller](#) under pressure in their states, sparked bickering between GOP candidates in two of Republicans' top 2018 targets, Indiana and West Virginia, and sunk one candidate running for Alabama's open Senate seat." [Full story.](#)

CASH RACE - FIRST IN SCORE - DSCC raises \$3.5 million in July: The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee raised \$3.5 million in July and has \$18.5 million on hand. "Our generous supporters are doing everything they can to make sure we stop their harmful agenda - and that includes making sure Democrats have the resources to fight back next fall," DSCC executive director Mindy Myers said.

- DCCC tops NRCC fundraising totals in July: The DCCC brought in \$6.2 million to the NRCC's \$3.8 million during July, per FEC filings. But the NRCC has more cash on hand with just under \$35 million, while the DCCC has nearly \$23 million.

- "RNC raises millions more than DNC in July," via The Hill's Ben Kamisar: "The Republican National Committee expanded its massive fundraising lead over the Democratic National Committee in July as the Democrats posted their worst July haul in a decade. The DNC raised just \$3.8 million in July, compared to the \$10.2 million raised by the RNC in the same month. While the GOP has no debt, the DNC added slightly to its debt in July, which now sits at \$3.4 million." [Full story.](#)

- "Vice President Mike Pence is heading to California to raise money with Kevin McCarthy," via The Los Angeles Times. [Full story.](#)

EARLY POLLING DATA - GOP poll shows Missouri Republicans want competition for Hawley: A poll of Missouri GOP primary voters found 55 percent want Attorney General Josh Hawley to run against Democratic Sen. [Claire McCaskill](#), and 45 percent don't. Even if he does, 72 percent would like him to face competition in the primary and about 50 percent believe he would be vulnerable to political attacks focused on him using his position as attorney general as a stepping stone. JTD Strategies conducted the poll of 1,022 likely GOP primary voters, which has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. [Full results here.](#)

BATTLEGROUND: MIDWEST - Trump approval in mid-30s in NBC/Marist polls of Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin: President Donald Trump's approval is well underwater in three key battleground states with Senate and governor's races in 2018. Trump's approval stands at 36/55 among registered voters in Michigan, 35/54 in Pennsylvania and 34/56 in Wisconsin. Trump also has a net negative approval among non-college whites in the polls of Michigan and Wisconsin, though he is slightly above-water (44/42) among that group in Pennsylvania.

- Democrats have early double-digit leads on the generic congressional ballot in all three states. They lead Republicans 48-35 in Michigan, 47-37 in Pennsylvania and 46-38 in Wisconsin. **The splits among college/non-college whites** are enormous in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. In Pennsylvania, where Democrats are attacking GOP-held seats in the Philadelphia suburbs, white college grads say they want a Democratic Congress 55 percent to 35 percent. But Republicans also hope to target Democratic Rep. [Matt Cartwright](#) in the working-class 17th District, and non-college Pennsylvania whites want GOP control, 45 percent to 37 percent. [See the poll results here.](#)

Days until the 2017 election: 78.

Days until the 2018 election: 442.

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.

You can also follow us on Twitter: [@politicoscott](#), [@ec_schneider](#), [@politicokevin](#), [@danielstrauss4](#) and [@maggieseverns](#).

FIRST IN SCORE - American Action Network airs ads on tax reform: American Action Network is airing ads on CNN and releasing a mobile billboard ahead of Speaker [Paul Ryan](#)'s live town hall Monday night to promote the "need for meaningful tax reform that will lower rates for working families and small businesses," per a statement from the group. **Watch the national cable ad [here.](#)**

NEW THIS MORNING - WEB WARS - Clean Air Moms Action hits five states with digital buy: The environmental group is up with a \$250,000 digital ad buy targeting five states to urge Congress not to support the Regulatory Accountability Act (RAA) and the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act (REINS) Act, "two bills that threaten life-saving consumer protections that keep our air and water clean, our food and workplaces safe and our

families healthy," per a statement from the group. The ad will air in Missouri, Indiana, Montana, Florida and Virginia. **Watch the ad [here](#).**

ALABAMA RUNOFF POLL - Moore leads Strange: A new JMC Analytics poll released Sunday found former Alabama Judge Roy Moore leading Sen. [Luther Strange](#) in the Republican primary runoff for Senate. Fifty-one percent of respondents said they would vote for Moore if the election were held today, while 32 percent said they would vote for Strange. Another 17 percent said they were undecided. See the full results [here](#).

CHARLOTTESVILLE FALLOUT - "Charlottesville and Trump's Response Reshape Virginia Gubernatorial Race," by The New York Times' Jonathan Martin: " ... The gubernatorial race in this swing state was already set to be the next big test of the nation's politics, its results inevitably to be read as a harbinger for the 2018 midterm elections and President Trump's fate. But the events last weekend in one of its historical centers - in the city that Thomas Jefferson called home and on the university campus that he designed and founded - ensure that the nation's highest-profile campaign this fall will also be fought in part along the highly combustible lines of racial politics." [Full story.](#)

SCOTUS WATCH - Texas appeals redistricting ruling, legislature will not redraw maps: Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on Friday started the appeal process of the U.S. district court ruling that overturned two of the state's congressional districts. In [the filing](#), the state asked for a temporary reprieve from redrawing its maps and said that Gov. Greg Abbott will not call a special legislative session to redistrict. The district court denied the motion to stay and asked the parties to the suit to start the process of submitting new maps for consideration. Next up we'll see if the Supreme Court decides to hear the appeal - and whether it stops the redrawing process in the meantime.

- MEANWHILE - Former assistant U.S. attorney Jay Hulings is the second major Dem to jump into GOP Rep. [Will Hurd's TX-23](#), via the San Antonio Express-News: Hulings is the son of two CIA agents, "whose prosecutorial résumé includes the recent Crystal City corruption case that resulted in the convictions of former City Manager James Jonas and former Mayor Ricardo Lopez. ... Hulings is also a friend and former law-school classmate of Julián and Joaquín Castro, and his political team will basically be the Castro campaign team." He joins a Democratic primary with Gina Ortiz Jones, a former intelligence officer who launched her campaign earlier this month. [Full story.](#)

2018 WATCH - "Republican strategist has new Idaho political funding group" by the Associated Press' Kimberlee Kruesi: "A top Republican strategist and fundraiser has quietly launched a new political action committee in Idaho, but he is not revealing which candidate or measure will receive his support in the 2018 election, according to documents filed with secretary of state's office. [GOP operative Carl Forti](#) filed the paperwork to create Building Idaho's Future, Inc. on Aug. 8. The group has not yet had to submit a campaign disclosure report, meaning there is no information that has been made public about the group's donors or contributions. ... In Idaho, political committees must file documents with the state so they can start collecting contributions and spend money but are not required in those documents to identify specifically who or what they support." [Full story.](#)

- **"Kansas lawmaker Jim Ward announces gubernatorial run," by the Associated Press:** "A top Democratic legislator, House Minority Leader Jim Ward, announced Saturday that he is joining a crowded field of candidates seeking to replace Republican Gov. Sam Brownback. Ward, an attorney from Wichita, has been an outspoken opponent of Brownback's agenda, particularly tax cuts pushed by the governor." [Full story.](#)

- **"McCaskill reaching out to rural Missouri ahead of election," by The Associated Press's Summer Ballentine:** "Democratic Sen. [Claire McCaskill](#) is spending the August recess trekking through Republican strongholds in rural Missouri as she gears up for what's expected to be a fierce battle for a third term. Missouri has shifted even further to the right since the former state auditor joined the Senate in 2007. Republicans haven't lost a statewide race since 2012 when McCaskill won her second term, and they haven't lost a presidential race for more than two decades." [Full story.](#)

TREND WATCH - "More GOP lawmakers bucking their party on climate change," by POLITICO California's David Siders: "While President Donald Trump continues to dismantle Obama-era climate policies, an unlikely surge of Republican lawmakers has begun taking steps to distance themselves from the GOP's hard line on climate change. The House Climate Solutions Caucus, a bipartisan backwater when it formed early last year, has more than tripled in size since January, driven in part by Trump's decision in June to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accord. And last month, 46 Republicans joined Democrats to defeat an amendment to the annual defense authorization bill that would have deleted a requirement that the Defense Department prepare for the effects of climate change. The willingness of some Republicans to buck their party on climate change could help burnish their moderate credentials ahead of the 2018 elections." [Full story.](#)

STATE BY STATE - Club for Growth launches new Senate super PACs: "Two GOP donors have poured money into the Club for Growth's new state-specific federal super PAC in Ohio, part of a new campaign finance strategy the Republican group plans to replicate around the country in 2018. CFG Action Ohio filed its second campaign finance report Friday, showing a \$250,000 donation from Republican megadonor Richard Uihlein. The group has almost \$490,000 on hand after raising another quarter-million dollars from Missouri Republican donor David Humphreys in June." [Full story.](#)

- **"After decisive role in 2016 election, pressure's on Nevada Latino voters to stay engaged in 2018," by The Nevada Independent's Michelle Rindels and Luz Gray:** "It translates to 'If we don't vote, we're going to lose. If we keep losing, those that will be left on the corners are those that we love most in the world.' And it's a sentiment that's especially meaningful for Nevada's Hispanic voters, who are credited with putting now-Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto and Hillary Clinton over the top in 2016 but are projected to stay home at a higher rate during a sleepier midterm." [Full story.](#)

ADMINISTRATION SPEED READ - "White House Bracing for an Angry Reception in Phoenix," by The New York Times' Noah Weiland and Maggie Haberman: "Officials in the White House and in Arizona are bracing for a furious reception to President Trump's campaign

rally in Phoenix this week, amid the fallout from his comments faulting "both sides" for racially charged violence in Charlottesville, Va. Of particular concern for some officials is the prospect that Mr. Trump may be planning to announce a pardon for Joe Arpaio, the former sheriff of Maricopa County, Ariz., who became an avatar for hard-line policies with his roundups of undocumented immigrants. Some of Mr. Trump's advisers worry that a pardon could deepen the racial wounds exposed in the last week and compound the president's political problems." [Full story.](#)

CODA - QUOTE OF THE DAY: "I don't have any plans to do anything like that. I'm rooting for him to get it together." - Ohio Gov. John Kasich on a possible 2020 GOP primary challenge to Trump, [POLITICO](#) reported.

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