

**To:** Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]  
**From:** Morning Score  
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**Subject:** POLITICO's Morning Score: Moore, Strange head to Alabama runoff — Jones wins Democratic primary — Curtis wins GOP primary to replace Chaffetz — Court strikes down Texas districts

By Kevin Robillard | 08/16/2017 10:00 AM EDT

*With Elena Schneider 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>)*

**STRANGER THINGS - "Moore, Strange advance to GOP runoff in Alabama special election," by Campaign Pro's Daniel Strauss:** "Former Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore and Sen. Luther Strange advanced to a Republican primary runoff in Alabama's special Senate race, which will put President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's political clout on the line in September. Moore had 40 percent of the vote and Strange - who was backed by Trump and McConnell - had 32 percent after The Associated Press called the race. Rep. Mo Brooks trailed at 20 percent. Alabama election laws call for the top two primary finishers to compete in a runoff if no candidate gets a majority. Despite the weighty endorsements, Strange has been locked in fierce competition with the other Republican hopefuls this summer. He leaned hard into Trump's endorsement to try to make a show of strength in the first round and close in on Moore. '[President Trump] knows that I am the person in this race that's going to make this country great again,' Strange told cheering supporters Tuesday night. But Strange, who was appointed to the seat earlier this year when Attorney General Jeff Sessions left the Senate to join Trump's Cabinet, still ran behind Moore - and well behind the majority marker - in the first round. 'This is a great victory,' Moore told attendees at his election night party. 'The attempt by the silk stocking Washington elitists to control the vote of the people of Alabama has failed.'"

- "Whoever wins the Republican primary will be heavily favored in conservative Alabama, but Democrats have been hoping to make a stronger-than-expected showing in the special election. Former U.S. Attorney Doug Jones won the Democratic nomination outright Tuesday night, avoiding a runoff, after garnering big-name endorsements from former Vice President Joe Biden and Reps. John Lewis, Cedric Richmond and Terri Sewell. Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee chairman Chris Van Hollen recently donated to Jones, who as a federal prosecutor won convictions against perpetrators of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, decades after the civil rights movement-era attack." **Full story.**

- **From the stat book:** To be fair to Strange, he has had little time to consolidate support since his appointment to the Senate. But his showing (approximately one-third of the vote) is the lowest primary vote share won by any U.S. senator since at least 2000. The next-lowest share in that time? Then-Sen. Richard Lugar took 39.5 percent of the vote in his 2012 primary against Richard Mourdock.

**IN THE HOUSE - "Curtis wins UT-03 GOP primary," by Campaign Pro's Elena Schneider:** "Provo Mayor John Curtis won Utah's GOP special election primary Tuesday, clearing the path for an establishment favorite to replace retiring Republican Rep. Jason Chaffetz in a rare race where President Donald Trump didn't factor. Curtis had 41 percent of the vote when The Associated Press called the race. Former state Rep. Chris Herrod, backed by the Club for Growth, got 38 percent, while first-time candidate and businessman Tanner Ainge received 28 percent with more than three-quarters of precincts reporting. Curtis, who led in public polling throughout the primary, weathered a barrage of negative TV ads in the closing weeks of the campaign. But Curtis picked up an early nod from Gov. Gary Herbert, who recorded a radio ad for the two-term mayor. Outside groups dropped nearly \$1 million on the race, some of which was spent on casting Curtis as not conservative enough and for 'back[ing] taxes and fees 46 times,' along with a '\$12 million sales tax,' according to a TV ad backed by the Club for Growth. Curtis's opponents also hammered him for being a registered Democrat nearly 20 years ago." [Full story.](#)

**REDISTRICTING WATCH - "Two Texas districts struck down by federal court," by Campaign Pro's Scott Bland:** "A U.S. district court ruled today that two Texas congressional districts - the 27th District, represented by Republican [Blake Farenthold](#), and the 35th District, represented by Democrat [Lloyd Doggett](#) - would have to be redrawn due to unconstitutional racial gerrymandering. The court ruled that Texas' congressional map still had the 'taint' of 'racially discriminatory intent' from redistricting in 2011, which carried over into an interim plan suggested by a court in 2013. But the district court also ruled that there was no evidence of intentional discrimination in Texas' 23rd District, held by GOP Rep. [Will Hurd](#) and for years the state's only true battleground district. The court also declined to order the drawing of new minority-opportunity districts in the Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston metro areas. However, a redraw of the map to address the two districts struck down by the court could still affect the 23rd District (and others). Doggett's heavily Democratic district snakes from Austin to San Antonio, and shifts in population could affect the parts of the 23rd District that reach into San Antonio's suburbs." [Full story.](#) [Decision.](#)

- **Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, in a statement:** "We appreciate that the panel ruled in favor of Texas on many issues in the case. But the portion of the ruling that went against Texas is puzzling considering the Legislature adopted the congressional map the same court itself adopted in 2012, and the Obama-era Department of Justice did not bring any claims against the map. We look forward to asking the Supreme Court to decide whether Texas had discriminatory intent when relying on the district court."

**Days until the 2017 election: 83.**

**Days until the 2018 election: 447.**

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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### **PRIMARY POLITICS - Vukmir earns backing of Hendricks in Wisconsin Senate**

**primary:** Wisconsin State Sen. Leah Vukmir, who hasn't officially entered the GOP primary to challenge Democratic Sen. Tammy Baldwin, will have the backing of Beloit billionaire Diane Hendricks if she decides to run, the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel [reported](#) on Tuesday. Hendricks, who has donated generously to Wisconsin Republicans, could serve as a counterweight to some of GOP primary entrant Kevin Nicholson's big-dollar supporters, including megadonor Richard Uihlein and the Club for Growth.

- **Missouri Treasurer Eric Schmitt passes on Senate bid, clearing way for Attorney General Josh Hawley.** Schmitt, as a fellow statewide elected official, would have been a major challenge for Hawley in the primary against Democratic Sen. Claire McCaskill. But he's clearing out for Hawley, he said in a statement. "I believe it is time for all of us to unite behind one candidate to be the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate, which is why I am supporting Attorney General Josh Hawley," Schmitt said. Republicans fear a replay of the 2012 GOP primary, where Rep. Todd Akin was able to win in a crowded field.

- **SPEAKING OF HAWLEY - "Attorney general voted in Boone County in Aug. 8 special election," by the Springfield News-Tribune's Bob Watson:** "Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley voted in last week's special election, the Boone County Clerk's office told the News Tribune this weekend. Hawley's action appears to violate a state law, which says: "The attorney general shall reside at the seat of government and keep his office in the supreme court building." The Missouri Constitution defines the seat of government as Jefferson City. ... In February, Hawley said he and his legal team were convinced he was not breaking any laws by remaining in his Boone County home, which 'is 17 minutes away' from his office." [Full story.](#)

- **"Bernie Sanders supporter jumps in to unseat Democrat in one of nation's hottest House races," by the Sacramento Bee's Angela Hart:** "Brad Westmoreland, a Democrat and political newcomer, said he wants to shake up 'politics as usual.' He criticized [Ami] Bera for his stance on health care and for accepting campaign contributions from insurance companies. ... Andrew Grant, a Republican and Marine Corps veteran, is also running to unseat Bera." [Full story.](#)

**CHARLOTTESVILLE FALLOUT, MARYLAND GOVERNOR EDITION - "Hogan calls for Taney statue at Maryland State House to be removed," by the Baltimore Sun's Pamela Wood:** "The statue of Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney, a Calvert County native and author of the infamous Dred Scott decision, has stood on the front lawn of the State House in Annapolis since 1872, withstanding multiple efforts to remove it. Hogan's announcement probably ensures that the bronze likeness of Taney will be removed from its prominent perch in the state capital. Hogan acknowledged the statue may send an inappropriate message in a country that continues to struggle over civil rights and equality. ... Hogan previously supported keeping Taney in his spot at the State House, and in 2015 called removing monuments to the Confederacy 'political correctness run amok.'" [Full story.](#)

- **"Ben Jealous arrested in demonstration near White House; Baker speaks out on Trump,"**

**by the Baltimore Sun's Carrie Wells:** "Maryland Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ben Jealous was arrested Tuesday in Washington during an immigrants' rights demonstration, his campaign said. ... Later, Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker, another Democratic candidate for governor, called on President Donald J. Trump to resign from office. Baker released a statement Tuesday evening saying Trump 'is unfit to serve the people of our country and should resign, effective immediately.'" [Full story.](#)

**PAGING PELOSI - Yesterday, we told you about Paul Davis' campaign launch in KS-02. But there's more: "Kansas Democrat Paul Davis announces congressional bid, says he won't vote for Pelosi,"** by the Kansas City Star's Hunter Woodall: "The man who many thought would make another run for Kansas governor is officially running for Congress instead. Democrat Paul Davis announced his entrance into the race for the 2nd District congressional seat Tuesday morning. If elected, he said, he does not plan to vote for Rep. [Nancy Pelosi](#), the current House Democratic leader and former speaker of the U.S. House when Democrats last held the majority. 'This is a broken Congress right now, and I think the leaders of both political parties bear responsibility for that,' Davis said. 'And I think that we need new leadership in both political parties.'" [Full story.](#)

**HOLLYWOOD TOUCH - Democrat Boyd Melson, a retired boxer and West Point graduate, announced he was running for Congress in New York's 11th district with a splashy new ad. The district is currently represented by Republican [Dan Donovan](#), who won his election in 2016 by over 25 points. The ad comes from Hilltop Public Solutions, the same firm that produced the viral ad for Randy Bryce, the Democratic iron worker challenging Speaker Paul Ryan. [The ad](#) .**

**CORDRAY WATCH - "GOP Governors Step Up Effort to Discredit Cordray" by Morning Consult's Ryan Rainey:** "Republican governors on Tuesday stepped up their efforts to discredit Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray as he approaches the end of his term and possibly considers a bid to run for governor of Ohio. On Tuesday, the Republican Governors Association filed a Freedom of Information request with the CFPB requesting documents on whether Cordray, a Democrat, used federal resources to coordinate with Democratic officials in his home state. The organization requested Cordray's phone logs and schedule since June 1, along with emails sent from bureau email addresses that reference the gubernatorial race. ... A CFPB spokesman did not immediately return a request for comment. In a statement provided to Morning Consult on Tuesday, Ohio Democratic Party Communications Director Kirstin Alvanitakis dismissed the RGA efforts. 'The Republican Governors Association is clearly running scared of losing the Buckeye State because they keep launching baseless attacks at Ohio Democrats,' Alvanitakis said." [Full story.](#)

**ADMINISTRATION SPEED READ - "Trump Defends Initial Remarks on Charlottesville; Again Blames 'Both Sides,'" by the New York Times' Michael D. Shear and Maggie Haberman:** "In a combative exchange with reporters at Trump Tower in Manhattan, the president repeatedly rejected bipartisan criticism for waiting two days before naming the right-wing groups and for placing blame on both the right and the left for the bloodshed on Saturday that ended with the death of a young woman after a car crashed into a crowd. ... Again and again, Mr. Trump said that not all of the protesters defending the Lee statue were neo-Nazis or white supremacists, and he said it was unfair to suggest that they were." [Full story.](#)

**CODA - QUOTE OF THE DAY:** "They didn't put themselves down as neo-Nazis, and you had some very bad people in that group. But you also had people that were very fine people on both sides. You had people in that group - excuse me, excuse me. I saw the same pictures as you did. You had people in that group that were there to protest the taking down, of to them, a very, very important statue and the renaming of a park from Robert E. Lee to another name." - President Donald Trump on Charlottesville protesters, according to a POLITICO [transcript](#) of Tuesday's press conference.

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