



FEATURE: Impeachment: week in review

A weekly one paragraph summary report and analysis, including MeetToImpeach news, followed by recaps (with links) of representative on-line articles and essays – typically 800 to 1,600 words.

Week ending 8/5/2018
(~ 1,875 words)

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Minneapolis 8/5/18 Edition – This was a relatively slow week for impeachment. The main event was the start of Paul Manafort’s first trial, in Virginia -- it is expected to go to the jury at the end of this week or next week. This is not directly related to Trump per se, but Manafort was his campaign chair for part of 2016, and his main accuser, Rick Gates, was actively involved in the inauguration. The trial appears to have prompted another “Tweet Storm” from President Trump, calling for an immediate end to the Mueller investigation. Trump is reported to be worried that his son, Donald Jr., may end up facing a perjury charge. Manafort, at age 69, could be looking at cooperation with Mueller as the only way to avoid spending the rest of his life in a Federal prison – but it is unknown what, if anything, he has to “cooperate with.” Trump’s polling/approval ratings remain steady, low, and a reflection of the nation’s deep partisan divide. However, some recent evidence shows that “flip” voters, who went from Romney to Clinton, or Obama to Trump, are both numerous enough to drive the result for control of the House, and are “in play” – open to persuasion to go for either Republican or Democratic control. There was a violent clash between right wing protesters and counter-demonstrators, including injuries and four arrests – officials announced by loudspeaker “all people in this area must disperse.”

MeetToImpeach Event: On Tuesday, July 31st [bobagain told the Hennepin County Board of his experience being “shut down” while displaying his Impeachment banner July 24th,](#)

claiming the First Amendment is his permit and saying he will continue and will be arrested if necessary. As a courtesy, bobagain provided Hennepin County with photos of the display unit and the banner. The subsequent MeetToImpeach.com was rained out Saturday, August 4th, but another meeting is being announced for “People’s Plaza” (AKA "Government Plaza", between Minneapolis City Hall and the Hennepin County Government Center, at 4th Street and 5th Avenue) from Noon to 1 PM on Saturday, August 11th. "The purpose of these meetings is to launch a bi-partisan discussion of what our Constitution actually says about Impeachment and removal from office, and to challenge some major teachings of 'Conventional Wisdom' that appear to be just plain wrong... or incomplete at best," bobagain said. Although Carney is also a candidate for the Republican nomination in the August 14th primary for U.S. Congress in the 5th District, which includes Minneapolis, these meetings will not be campaign events, and will be non-partisan – candidates of all parties are welcome.

Paul Manafort’s first Trial begins – the first major test of Mueller’s investigation

The Gates-gate is opening at Paul Manafort’s first trial. [The Washington Post reports:](#) "Rick Gates worked for years as Manafort’s right-hand man, managing his clients, his business, and his accounts. He also served as a senior Trump campaign aide and played a major role in planning the 2017 inauguration. This week, Gates begins a new role: star witness against his former boss and business partner." Although the case doesn't directly involve Trump, it is viewed as significant to Robert Mueller's investigation, partly because if Manafort is convicted it will be the first major and contested result adverse to the Trump camp. A conviction would widely be seen as proof that Russian interference in the election was real -- partly because Manafort was Trump's campaign chairman during a crucial time before the 2016 Republican national convention. However, Gates' admitted dishonesty with prosecutors could dispose the jury against him. The trial is expected to be finished by this week or next.

[NBC News reported](#) on another of President Trump's "Tweet Storms" -- this one August 1st, and apparently prompted by the first Manafort trial: “President Donald Trump... called on Attorney General Jeff Sessions to end special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation, one of the most direct demands he has made of the Justice Department to stop the probe since it began. ¶ Attorney General Jeff Sessions should stop this Rigged Witch Hunt right now, before it continues to stain our country any further. Bob Mueller is totally conflicted, and his 17 Angry

Democrats that are doing his dirty work are a disgrace to USA!' the president said in a morning tweet. ¶Sessions recused himself from overseeing the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election over conflict of interest concerns, because he had served as a surrogate for Trump's campaign.”

Opinion polling; key metrics and categories, and their significance

This is a good week to catch up on what’s going on in this category.

CNN Editor-at-large [Chris Cillizza writes on a "disconnect" between voter approval of President Trump's performance on the economy, as compared to their disapproval of him overall.](#) From Jimmy Carter in 1978 forward, for Presidents approaching a mid-term election there is only one comparable example of a President with a positive rating on the economy, but an overall rating that is significantly lower. In 1998, President Clinton's economic "grade" was 27% higher than his overall grade -- a recent Quinnipiac poll shows Trump's economic "grade" is 20% higher than his overall grade. As Cillizza points out, Clinton was in the middle of an impeachment fight in 1998. However, as Cillizza doesn't point out, even in the middle of that fight, Clinton's party gained five seats in the U.S. House election that year. While Clinton won re-election in 1996 by over eight million votes, his Democratic Party won 21 fewer House seats than the Republicans. In contrast, Trump won the Electoral College, but lost the popular vote by three million, his Republican party won 47 more House seats than the Democrats. It's hard not to conclude that with a roaring economy, the current hefty Republican House majority, and a district-by-district map that heavily concentrates the Democratic popular vote in core cities, the Democrats face a daunting task in trying to win a House majority this November. As Cillizza seems to suggest, the voter disconnect between Trump's rating on the economy and his overall negative rating may be the best thing Democrats have going for them. Cillizza concludes: "People seem to be reacting negatively to the full package of Trump, which crowds out their positive reaction to the job he is doing on the economy. If he could take the focus off his tweets, the Russia investigation and the like -- and steer all of his rhetorical firepower onto the state of the economy, he and the Republican Party he leads would likely be in a much better place today. ¶Of course, that sort of message discipline isn't Trump. And if we've learned anything these last three years, it's that Trump is going to Trump. Always."

At [VOX, editor Ezra Klein weighs in on Trump’s “messy” poll numbers](#), arguing he’s

“playing a strong hand, poorly.” One of the most intriguing graphics shows a range of poll results for the first 479 days in office – for Presidents from Truman to Trump -- with a focus on the 50% of polls that appear most representative. Two points emerge: first, as Klein points out, Trump’s results are the most stable of any President in the sense they are in the narrowest range. But second, Trump’s results are also the lowest of any President in the post-WWII era. Klein draws this conclusion: “Judged on the economy, which is the traditional driver of presidential approval, Donald Trump’s poll numbers should be much, much higher than they are now. Far from finding a winning strategy, he seems to have found a losing one despite holding a winning hand.” A recent [Pew Research FactTank” feature](#) by Amina Dunn notes the same consistency, but focuses on how sharp the partisan divisions are. The key chart from that article shows a sharp increase in the baseline partisan division on approval ratings began with Reagan, and (with an exception in the first half of G.H.W. Bush’s term,) has remained very wide, but never as wide as with President Trump. One key feature of Trump’s rating is that there was no real “honeymoon period” during which the opposing party’s approval was not rock-bottom. For whatever reason, Trump started out low (after the briefest post-inaugural “honeymoon”) – and he’s stayed low.

In a [NY Times op-ed Henry Olsen](#), an UnHerd.com editor, presents a counterpoint to the "Conventional Wisdom" view that turning out the base is the key to victory in the midterms. A key question is how many "flip" voters will show up -- and Olsen identifies the two main types: Obama-to-Trump voters and Romney-to-Clinton voters. We've heard more about Obama-to-Trump, but a biennial longitude survey with large samples gives us some insight into these groups. Among Romney-to-Clinton voters, Trump's approval rating is less than 20% -- 43% intend to back Democrats, while only 20% intend to back Republicans. While Obama-to-Trump voters still support Trump in high numbers, 44% say they're unsure who they'll vote for this fall, or plan to vote 3rd party. If both bases are equally energized, these "flip" voters may be decisive in determining control of the U.S. House.

Right wing groups and counter-protesters clash in Portland -- [ABC News reports](#):
Four people were arrested Saturday as a conservative Patriot Prayer rally broke out into violence with opposing anti-fascist protesters and police in Portland, Oregon. ¶The city, which had been bracing for the potential violence, mobilized a massive police presence in the area of Tom McCall Waterfront Park in the heart of downtown. ¶The Patriot Prayer protest, organized by

political activist Joey Gibson, kicked off midday Saturday, but it didn't take long before police were calling for the hundreds of assembled people to clear the streets. ¶According to police, protesters surrounded police cars, threw rocks, firework mortars and bottles and put officers in danger, necessitating trucks to announce, 'All people in this area must disperse.' They were warned arrests would follow." Although technically people with Oregon permits are allowed to "conceal carry" in a park, reportedly chosen by the organizers for that reason, it was announced in advance that people would be searched for weapons – baseball bats and clubs were reported confiscated, but there was no mention of guns being confiscated.

Book Beat -- Harvard Emeritus Professor Alan Dershowitz's new book, [The Case Against Impeaching Trump](#), cracked the [publishersweekly.com top 25](#) again in its third week out, at #20 after dropping to 27th place in week two. Total sales are still pretty anemic: 13,735 cumulative for three weeks. However, both the #1 and #2 books are also from the pro-Trump camp. [The Russia Hoax: The Illicit Scheme to Clear Hillary Clinton and Frame Donald Trump](#), by Gregg Jarrett, launched at #1 with first week sales of 72,300, followed at #2 by [Liars, Leakers, and Liberals: The Case Against the Anti-Trump Conspiracy](#) – from Jeanine Pirro, FOX news host of Justice with Judge Jeanine, which had been #1 when released the previous week.

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