CallMyReps Script for the week of Aug 21, 2017.      Number of Weeks Till MidTerm Elections:  63

**Nomination of Birther and Climate Denier Sam Clovis**

**Why:**
Donald Trump has nominated Sam Clovis, his longtime campaign aide, to serve as the USDA Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, a position typically held by people with advanced degrees in science and medicine. As Under Secretary, Clovis would manage the USDA's $3 billion research and education portfolio and serve as the USDA's top scientist, coordinating the setup and implementation of the USDA's policies.

The 2008 Farm Bill specified that nominees to the Under Secretary post should be "distinguished scientists with specialized training or significant experience in agricultural research, education, and economics." However, Clovis lacks an advanced science degree and has shown blatant disregard for scientific evidence by refusing to acknowledge that humans are causing the majority of climate change. He has called climate science "junk science" and proudly declared himself a climate change "skeptic." Because one third of our greenhouse gas emissions come from agricultural production, it is critical that the USDA's top scientist acknowledges that climate change is real, human-caused, and a dire threat to our global security (not to mention our global food supply).

In addition, as a talk radio host and blogger from 2011 to 2014, Clovis stoked racist birther conspiracy theories about then-President Obama, made derogatory racist comments about then-Attorney General Eric Holder, and stated homosexuality is a choice and can lead to pedophilia. In light of the white supremacy rallies in Virginia, the appointment of a racist, bigoted birther to a top job in the executive branch is unacceptable. The Senate must take a firm stance against racism, and Trump's ongoing endorsement of it, by rejecting Clovis's nomination.

**Script:**
Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown.

I'm calling to express my opposition to Sam Clovis's nomination to be USDA Under Secretary. It is unacceptable for the USDA's top scientist to be a climate change denier with no formal scientific training, and for the Trump administration to continue endorsing racism and bigotry by appointing a birther. I strongly urge _mySenator_ to reject Clovis's nomination. 

[IF LEAVING A VOICEMAIL: please leave your full street address to ensure your call is tallied]
Call:      US Senators | House Rep | PA Senator | PA House Rep | PA Secretary of State
Issue:    Oppose: The Rollback of Birth Control under ACA
Why: Since 2011 the ACA has required that female contraception must be covered by insurers without a co-pay. This “contraceptive mandate” has extended affordable birth control to millions of Americans: today 55 million Americans benefit from coverage of preventive services, including birth control, saving Americans billions of dollars per year.

The existing mandate gives exemptions to certain organizations that object to birth control for religious reasons, including houses of worship, certain religiously affiliated hospitals and universities, and ‘closely held’ private companies (recall the ‘Hobby Lobby’ Supreme Court case of 2014). Despite these accommodations, the Trump Administration is pushing further exemptions to the contraceptive mandate, with the finalization of a new rule expected in the coming days. The new rule makes the exemption available to “all” employers, including large, publicly-traded, for-profit companies, on the basis of religious beliefs or “moral convictions.” It makes the mandate optional for religiously affiliated organizations, and it creates an exemption for health insurance companies that have religious or moral objections to providing birth control.

This broad expansion of the exemption is in line with the Trump Administration’s record of seeking to roll back women’s healthcare and rights by undermining access to critical, affordable birth control. When this rule is published by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the exemptions will immediately go into effect.

Script: Hi, my name is [NAME] and I’m a constituent from myTown.

I’m calling to express my objection to any change in the contraceptive mandate in the Affordable Care Act. Adding more exemptions to the contraception mandate will erode access to preventative healthcare for millions of Americans. I ask the plan to publish this new rule be abandoned, or at the very least, allow for a period of public comment.

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<td>Issue:</td>
<td>Support: The College for All Act</td>
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<td>Why:</td>
<td>Thanks to skyrocketing college tuition costs, student debt in the US amounts to $1.3 trillion. Eighty-three percent of all students attending US public universities graduate with debt, and some of them will remain in debt for their entire lives. A coalition of Representatives and Senators have introduced a bill to end the crushing burden of high college tuition. The College for All Act would provide free public university tuition for families earning up to $125,000 per year, covering about 80% of all US college students. The bill would also reduce student loan interest rates for new borrowers, allow existing borrowers to refinance at lower rates, and eliminate tuitions and fees at two-year community colleges. Student loan debt prevents people from buying homes, starting families, saving for retirement, and working in lower-paying but crucial fields like social work and early childhood education. It is time to end the student debt crisis and make an affordable college education a reality for all.</td>
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<td>Script:</td>
<td>Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown. I'm calling to ask [REP/SEN NAME] to support [HR 1880/S 806], the College for All Act. This important bill would alleviate the economic and social burden of student debt and give everyone access to an affordable college education.</td>
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<td>Issue:</td>
<td>Oppose: Brian Benczkowski Nomination</td>
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<td>Why:</td>
<td>Brian Benczkowski has been nominated to lead the Department of Justice Criminal Division, which is responsible for enforcement of all federal criminal law. His nomination is highly concerning given his history with Alfa Bank, the Russian bank under investigation by the FBI for potential connections to the Trump organization. In March of this year, Benczkowski agreed to represent Alfa Bank during the investigation into ties between Alfa Bank servers and the Trump organization. A month later, the Trump administration asked him about his interest in leading the DOJ Criminal Division. Rather than immediately recuse himself from representing Alfa Bank, he continued working with them until June 6, the day he was officially nominated. Benczkowski’s decision to take on, and keep representing, a controversial client with a potential conflict of interest against the American people, casts serious doubt on his judgment. In addition, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee responsible for his approval, asked him if he would recuse himself from current / future cases involving Alfa Bank, as well as the related investigations underway by Special Counsel Mueller. He refused. The Senate will ultimately decide on Benczkowski’s appointment, and Senators needs to hear from their constituents about their opposition to this highly problematic candidate.</td>
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<td>Script:</td>
<td>Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown. I'm calling to express my concern about DOJ Criminal Division nominee Brian Benczkowski, who has a troubling association with Russian bank Alfa Bank. I ask that my Senators vote against his nomination. We need someone with a demonstrated history of good judgment and lack of conflicts of interests for this crucial position.</td>
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<td>Issue:</td>
<td>Oppose: Overturning Consumer Banking Protection</td>
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<td>Why:</td>
<td>On July 10th, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) announced a new rule banning the use of mandatory arbitration clauses to block participation in class action lawsuits. According to the CFPB, this is a straightforward consumer protection providing a much-needed check on predatory and illegal banking activities that will “stop companies from sidestepping the courts and ensure that people who are harmed together can take action together.”</td>
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Banking contracts (such as those for checking accounts, credit cards or payday loans) routinely include “mandatory arbitration” clauses, requiring that all disputes be handled through private arbitration rather than the public court system. Banks use these clauses to avoid accountability by blocking consumers from bringing or joining class-action lawsuits and forcing those who have been victims of predatory and illegal practices to take legal action alone (something few Americans can afford) or give up.

As a recent high-profile example, Wells Fargo used arbitration clauses to obstruct legal action following the revelation that employees created millions of fraudulent accounts for unwitting consumers. The Military Coalition, which represents over 5 million active and former service members, formally petitioned Congress to ban these clauses because the effects of predatory lending practices targeting the armed services are harming America’s military readiness and military personnel have a particularly limited ability to fight legal cases individually.

Republican leaders (including those taking millions of dollars in donations from big banks) quickly denounced the new CFPB arbitration rule and introduced legislation (H.J. Res 111) to overturn it under the Congressional Review Act. This is a distressing case of legislators prioritizing Wall Street profits above the financial needs and consumer protection of all Americans.

The House has passed H.J. Res 111. It is now in the Senate for consideration.

**Call:** US Senators | House Rep | PA Senator | PA House Rep

**Issue:** Support: Bipartisan Fix to ACA

**Why:** In the middle of the night on July 27th, Senators Collins, Murkowski and McCain voted against the Senate GOP "Skinny Repeal," rendering the Congressional Republicans' ongoing efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act dead. Note: the Senate will delay it’s recess for two weeks in which it may take up the issue again.

The failure of this bill, and the previous bills in both the House and Senate, represent an opportunity for Republicans to abandon their partisan obsession with dismantling the ACA and instead partner with Democrats to shore up the law. One major Republican critique of the ACA has been that the individual insurance markets are unstable and have increasingly high premiums. However, these markets are in fact mostly stable, and tax subsidies have shielded most consumers from premium increases. In fact, Republicans themselves have contributed heavily to these markets’ instability by refusing to commit to paying cost-sharing reductions that let them insure sicker people at lower costs. Meanwhile, the ACA's popular insurance regulations, such as prohibitions on annual and lifetime spending caps, mandated coverage of essential health benefits, and a ban on pricing discrimination based on gender or health status, have given millions of Americans unprecedented healthcare access.

McConnell's floundering ACA repeal efforts have shown that his party cannot coalesce to develop a coherent ACA replacement, regardless of how much time they have to do so. Instead, Republicans should work with Democrats to implement a package of ACA fixes, from insurance market stabilization to negotiation of lower pharmaceutical costs, that would preserve (and even increase) access to affordable health insurance while still containing healthcare spending.

Following the defeat of the ACA repeal on the Senate floor, Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) welcomed Senators on the other side of the aisle into a bipartisan discussion, in regular legislative order, to improve the nation's healthcare system. Now, it's on Republicans to do the right thing and shift their focus from closed door, partisan repeal plans to helping Americans.
[REPUBLICAN]: I'm calling to encourage Senator Toomey to abandon their ACA repeal efforts and instead advocate for a bipartisan approach to healthcare reform in committee hearings and regular legislative order. The Senate has wasted too much time on unpopular and failing repeal plans when the majority of Americans want the ACA repaired.

[DEMOCRAT]: I'm calling to encourage Senator Casey to pursue a bipartisan effort to repair the ACA. I thank the Senator for his persistence in fighting the Republican repeal plans, and the best way forward for the American people now is to find a way to fix the ACA's problems. Thank you for your hard work answering the phones.

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**Call:** US Senators  | House Rep  | PA Senator  | PA House Rep  | PA Secretary of State  
**Issue:** Oppose: The Criminalization of Boycotts  
**Why:** In March of 2016, the United Nations Human Rights Council issued a resolution urging member nations to pressure companies to divest from Israel and maintain a database of companies that operate in territories beyond Israel's 1949 Armistice lines.

In response to this, members of Congress introduced a bill, the Israel Anti-Boycott Act (S.720/H.R. 1697), to amend existing international business laws to make it a felony for Americans to support the UN resolution or to cooperate with any other international efforts to boycott Israel. While the Israel-Palestine conflict is an ongoing, complicated matter, this bill goes a step too far and criminalizes the ability of an American to protest.

The bill, which has bipartisan sponsors ranging from Ted Cruz (R-TX) to Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), would impose a minimum civil penalty of $250,000, and a maximum criminal penalty of $1 million and 20 years in prison, on boycott supporters. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has denounced the bill, noting that it would “impose civil and criminal punishment on individuals solely because of their political beliefs.” Troublingly, a number of the bill's sponsors appear to be unaware of the bill's full implications. For example, co-sponsor Sen. Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) incorrectly told The Intercept that there would be no civil penalties for violating the Act.

Regardless of your stance on Israel, the Israel Anti-Boycott Act is a clear infringement on First Amendment rights to protest. Urge your congresspeople not to support this dangerous erosion of the First Amendment.

**Script:**

Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown.

I'm calling to oppose [S.270 / H.R. 1697] the Israel Anti-Boycott Act. This bill is a clear violation of our First Amendment rights to protest and express one's personal political beliefs. I urge [REP/SEN NAME] to not support this blatantly unconstitutional bill.

**Call:** US Senators  | House Rep  | PA Senator  | PA House Rep  | PA Secretary of State  
**Issue:** Oppose: Financial Choice Act Agency Defunding  
**Why:** After passing the widely criticized Financial Choice Act, a bill that would roll back the post-recession Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, the House is now moving to enact similar provisions through the federal budget process. The Republican-led Financial Services Subcommittee's 2018 spending bill would give Congress unprecedented control over the budget of federal financial regulators, including the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and several other agencies that oversee credit, mortgages, currency, etc. Currently, these agencies are funded by the Federal Reserve or other sources outside of the congressional appropriations process.

This shifting of budgetary control gives Congress greater control over these agencies, allowing them to weaken these agencies' regulatory and enforcement powers. Language in the spending bill blocks the implementation of the Volcker Rule (which bans banks from making risky investments), prevents
the CFPB from regulating payday lenders, and stops the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) from developing campaign finance rules for big corporations. While the Senate may decline to vote on the House's Financial Choice Act, the 2018 spending bills are must-pass bills. By sneaking 88 pages of the Financial Choice Act into the Financial Services spending bill, the House is using a backdoor method to weaken and eliminate consumer protections. It is unacceptable for the House to undermine rules designed to protect customers from the risky investment and lending practices that led to the catastrophic 2008 recession. The congressional threat to banking regulation is especially dire given that Trump executive branch appointees like Secretary of the Treasury Steve Mnuchin are decidedly disinterested in reining in corporate greed to protect individual consumers.

The House Appropriations Committee passed the 2018 Financial Services spending bill on July 13th. It now awaits a vote on the House floor.

**Script:**
Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown.

I'm calling to express my opposition to the Financial Services appropriations bill's funding changes and new enforcement limitations on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and other banking regulators. The Dodd-Frank was put into place to prevent another recession, and I urge myRepresentative to oppose any spending bill that undermines implementation of this necessary law. Thank you for your hard work answering the phones.

**Call:** [US Senators] [House Rep] [PA Senator] [PA House Rep]

**Issue:** Protect: Women's Health Care from 'Better Care Reconciliation Act'

**Why:**
Given that the Senate's ACA-repeal bill, the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA), was drafted entirely by Republican men, it is hardly surprising that the bill harms women's health in myriad ways. First, the bill would stop federal funding for Planned Parenthood for a year, even though the Hyde Amendment already prohibits allocation of federal dollars to abortion care. Defunding Planned Parenthood would cause thousands of people, particularly in areas with healthcare provider shortages, to lose access to crucial preventive services like cancer prevention and prenatal care.

The bill also contains multiple other provisions that undermine access to maternity care. The BCRA will allow states to opt out of the requirement that exchange plans must cover ten essential health benefits, including maternity care and contraceptive access. Employers will also no longer be required to cover maternity care, as the bill eliminates the requirement that large employers offer insurance that meets specific standards. Attacks on Medicaid funding would further reduce coverage for maternity care, as nearly half of births in the US are currently paid for by Medicaid, and more than 25 million women are insured through Medicaid. The bill even allows states to impose work requirements on Medicaid recipients that would allow them to force mothers to find work within 60 days of giving birth.

Finally, the bill prevents people from using tax credits to buy exchange plans that cover abortion services. Reproductive rights advocates argue that this provision will dissuade insurance companies from providing abortion coverage, even in employer-sponsored plans. This provision is also thought to violate the Byrd Rule, which prohibits the Senate from using the reconciliation process (i.e. a filibuster-proof voting process where legislation can pass with a simple majority) to pass any policy changes that do not directly affect the budget.

Women are half of this country's population and deserve a healthcare bill that does not punish them for their gender.

**Script:**
Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown.

I'm calling to urge MySenators to oppose any provision in the Better Care Reconciliation Act which would harm women by defunding Planned Parenthood, rolling back Medicaid coverage, and allowing insurers to stop covering maternity care services and contraceptive access. Women should not face financial penalties and barriers to healthcare access simply because of their gender.

[OPTIONAL: Share a story about how the BCRA would harm you or women in your life.]

Thank you for your hard work answering the phones.
### Protect: Personal Data from Trump’s Voter Suppression Commission

**Why:**
Earlier this year, Trump established an Election Integrity Commission, chaired by VP Mike Pence, supposedly to "promote fair and honest federal elections" and address alleged voter fraud. However, the appointment of Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach to the commission hints at the true purpose of this group. Kobach is a lawyer with ties to white nationalism who has helped write and pass voter ID laws in multiple states, many of which have been overturned in court due to their racially disparate impact and clear discriminatory intent. In early June, Kobach was fined $1,000 for "presenting misleading arguments in a voting-related lawsuit." It is clear that the goal of this commission is voter suppression, not election integrity.

Now, Kobach is taking action toward widespread national voter suppression. On June 29th, Kobach sent a letter to the secretaries of state (the state-level officials in charge of elections) of all 50 states demanding they turn over their complete voter rolls, including every voter's name, address, birthday, the last 4 digits of Social Security number, felony convictions, and their voting history from the last decade. The letter did not make clear what they intended to do with this delicate information, and because of Kobach's anti-voting rights history, it is exceptionally problematic. Kobach's letter also states that all information submitted to the commission would be made public, making it possible for personal data to be used for harassment or other wrongful purposes.

The following 27 States have publicly stated they will not comply with Kobach's request:

PA Secretary of State is Pedro A. Cortés, tel: (717) 787-6458.

**Script:**

Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown.

I'm calling to thank the Secretary of State for protecting citizens from Trump's Election Integrity Commission demand to turn over state voter rolls and personal information. This is clearly a push towards nationwide voter suppression and protecting our voter rights must be a priority for every state.

Thank you for your hard work answering the phones.

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overriding their local detention policies and barring them from receiving Homeland Security and Justice Dept. grants if they don't comply. Together, these bills would increase our already sky-high prison population as well as the fear level within our immigrant communities.

Script: Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown.

I'm calling to express my opposition to Kate's Law and the No Sanctuary for Criminals Act. These bills will jeopardize local law enforcement's ability to protect our cities and instill even more fear among our immigrant communities. I urge MySenator to oppose these anti-immigrant bills and work towards better, comprehensive immigration reform.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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Ebola, and provide routine preventive services like cancer screening and immunizations. The Senate Trumpcare bill eliminates this funding source, known as the Prevention and Public Health Fund, starting in October of this year. The Fund currently provides about 12% of the CDC's overall budget and 40% of the CDC's immunization program budget. Suddenly terminating this crucial funding, as former CDC director Tom Frieden has noted, will put Americans "at greater risk of vaccine-preventable disease, food-borne infections, and deadly infections contracted in hospitals."

Urge your senator to vote against Trumpcare and preserve critical funding for important public health initiatives.

Script:
Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown.

I'm calling to urge _MySenator_ to vote against Senate's senselessly cruel Affordable Care Act repeal bill. I'm particularly concerned that the bill would eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which provides essential funding for states to respond to epidemics and provide preventive services like immunizations. I hope the Senator does everything they can to preserve this critical funding source for public health programs.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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Call:  
US Senators  
House Rep  
PA Senator  
PA House Rep

Issue: Support: A Filibuster-by-Amendment to Block Trumpcare

Why: While the Russia-Trump scandal has distracted the nation, Mitch McConnell and an all-male panel of 13 Republican Senators have been working in secret on a healthcare bill. Nobody knows what this bill looks like or how it differs from the House's American Health Care Act, which would cause an estimated 23 million people to lose their health insurance by 2026. The GOP wants to keep it that way.

McConnell and Republican Senators intend to submit their secret healthcare bill to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) without any committee hearings, discussions, bipartisan debate, or public comments. They will keep the bill's contents secret until the CBO finishes scoring the legislation. This means they would only release the bill publicly mere days or even hours before the final vote, which they plan to hold on or before June 30th (by contrast, Senate Democrats held over 30 Senate Finance Committee meetings to draft the Affordable Care Act and included their Republican colleagues in these meetings). This GOP strategy contravenes the spirit of our democratic process, and we must not stand for it.

We can do something about this: Demand Democratic Senators block a final AHCA vote by introducing thousands of amendments during the reconciliation process, an approach known as filibustering by amendment. Further, we can urge Republican Senators to push their colleagues to draft their healthcare replacement openly and publicly. The American public deserves to know what is in their healthcare legislation, and the egregious behavior by the GOP must be stopped.

Script: 
Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from myTown.

IF DEMOCRAT Rep: I'm calling today because I'm upset about the GOP's strategy to write and pass the American Health Care Act in secret, with no Senate hearings or public debate. I'm demanding that [SEN NAME] work with other Democrats to plan a filibuster by amendment during the reconciliation vote-a-rama on the AHCA and block the passage of this cruel bill. Your constituents are counting on you to fight for their healthcare.

IF REPUBLICAN Rep: I'm calling today because I'm upset at the GOP's strategy to write and pass the American Health Care Act in secret, with no Senate hearings or public debate. I'm demanding that [SEN NAME] urge their colleagues to hold hearings on this bill and stop bypassing our democratic process.

[OPTIONAL: Share a personal story of why the ACA is so important to you, your family, and / or your community]

Thank you for your hard work answering the phones.

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