

INDIVISIBLE, from page 10

their seven-year promise to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Upon hearing the news of the AHCA being pulled from the floor, Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer Tweeted out to his followers: "We did it! Resistance works, derailing the destruction of the ACA, at least for now. Keep it up!"

"And we're just getting started," said Platt, of Oregon Indivisible. "The takedown of Trumpcare validates the power of the people."

Should I Bring a Sign?

According to the Indivisible Guide, the answer depends on your member of Congress, referred to as an MoC in the document: "If you're holding an oppositional sign, staffers will almost certainly not give you the chance to get the mic or ask a question." But: "If you have enough people to both ask questions and hold signs, go for it!"

All of these instructions are geared to help constituents to get a better idea of how their representatives think: "Reelection, reelection, reelection," the guide states. "MoCs are enormously sensitive to their image in the district or state, and they will work very hard to avoid signs of public dissent or disapproval."

The guide walks constituents through numerous best practice approaches to dealing with their MoCs; especially effective local strategies include attending town halls, other local public events ("cutting ribbons and kissing babies back home"), district office visits, and coordinated calls. Congressional staffers who answer the phones keep tally sheets so they can report back to their bosses with respect to issues and where constituents stand. Between March 22-24, the days the health care bill was being deliberated in Congress, Representatives took to Twitter to express their call tallies:

■ From Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.): "Phones won't stop ringing with constituents asking us for one thing: to stop this horrible bill. #TrumpCare"



A sign from an Indivisible demonstration in Portland.

■ From Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky): "275 oppose vs 4 support #ObamaCareLite. Phone calls to my office from constituents over last two weeks. Why are we voting on this?"

■ From Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Ore.): "NW Oregonians overwhelmingly want me to oppose #Trumpcare."

Calls/emails since January:
Support: 51
Oppose: #ACAREpeal: 3,859

Progressives know they won't be able to set the agenda for at least the next few years, according to the guide, which is why the strategy is purely defensive. While the phone calls coming in to Congress are substantial, perhaps the most press-worthy resistance interactions are taking place at town hall meetings. Oregon senators Wyden and Merkley enjoy progressive reputations and have convened numerous town halls all over Oregon, where they are met with mostly approval but also strong pushes to veer even further left. Other MoCs have not

gotten off so easily, with Republicans such as Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) and Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) facing down raucous crowds that demanded accountability on things such as health care, Russian political interference, and Trump's taxes. These town halls have some MoCs seemingly running scared.

"Some groups struggle with MoCs who won't show up," said Martinez de Vedia. "It's here that we see tremendous creativity - they've booked gyms and auditoriums and put a cardboard cutout of their MoC up at a podium to ask questions and get on the news. One group got a chicken, and they were talking to it, and the joke was that the chicken had more courage than their Congressman" (U.S. Rep. Dave Trott, R-Mich.).

Coming Together

The most recent Indivisible meetup, on March 22, had once of its largest crowds to date, at 70 people, with a focus on health care. Together, group members shared their painful stories with Wyden staffer Ree

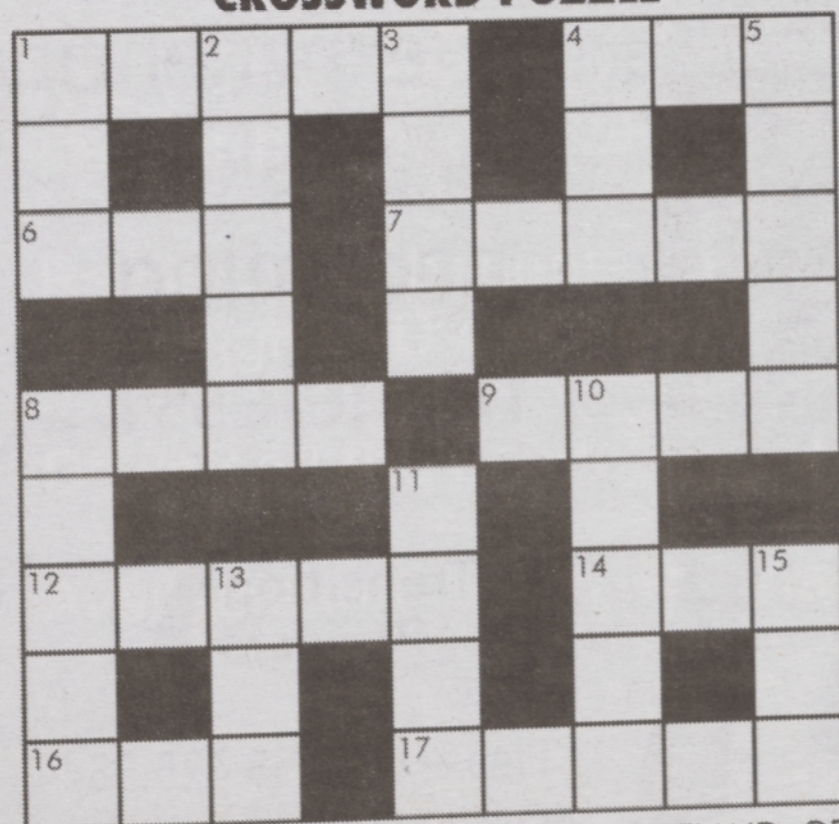
Armitage, who was so moved by their accounts that he asked for more. Now that the battle for health care seems to have subsided, Andrea Platt expects the enthusiasm to keep growing. "Even though we're all exhausted after 61 days, it's a marathon not a sprint. Involvement will ebb and flow, but we see our role as making sure that we're arming people with information to fight the Trump agenda."

The Women's March that took place on Jan. 21 brought out more than 4 million people to more than 900 events on seven continents - numbers the Tea Party never even came close to. By several barometers, the resistance to Trump, Indivisible, has had more early energy and success than the protests to Obama in 2009. Platt and others that Street Roots spoke to resisted comparisons to the Tea Party. "We're so much different because we are more diverse. Our people span a broader spectrum who show up and are engaged and informed, not hostile. We want an honest dialogue," said Platt. One more difference: Tea Party town halls didn't start gaining steam until around August 2009; anti-Trump town halls began before he was even inaugurated, and have continued to gain steam throughout the country.

In the short time that Indivisible Oregon has banded together, volunteers put together more than 50 daily posts with actionable information, organized more than 10 meet-ups, and lent support to help teams prepare for meetings with their MoCs. The group is also in constant contact with other Indivisible groups from each of Oregon's five congressional districts. "We're trying diligently to make sure we share information, and learn from each other," said Platt.

"We're in uncharted waters here," said Martinez de Vedia. "Fortunately we've put out a blueprint that specifically addresses this environment, and shows how civically engaged people are becoming. We are pulling the emergency brakes on Trump's agenda."

DOUGHNUT CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1. Fermentation agent
4. Have a bite
6. Tree fluid
7. Cake ingredient
8. Three-ply cookie
9. Hook's henchman
12. Ground grain
14. The gift of ___
16. Tease or ridicule
17. Francis or Kevin?

DOWN

1. Affirmative!
2. Type of fritter
3. Analyze or try
4. Cake ingredient
5. Tres
8. Deal
10. Potter's practice
11. Nosh!
13. Late rapper; abbr.
15. ___ appétit

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