

AFD 257 Links and Notes

- New Members of Congress making waves
 - PAYGO bs: Dems want to score “fiscal responsibility” points, but literally no one outside of DC cares
 - <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/01/paygo-rule-explained-ocasio-cortez-house-democrats-pelosi.html>

The PAYGO rule is substantively indefensible. It rests on the economically illiterate premise that balanced budgets are forever and always desirable. In truth, deficit spending is the [only responsible means of combating severe recessions](#), and a perfectly sound means of financing worthwhile public investments in a context of low inflation and chronically low labor-force participation — which is to say, in our current context. As a political matter, it is true that voters generally evince a fondness for the phrases “fiscal responsibility” and “balanced budgets.” But it defies credulity to suggest that there is a significant contingent of single-issue, deficit-reduction swing voters who plan to carefully study the Democratic Party’s changes to House procedure before going to the ballot box in 2020. Therefore, even swing-district Democrats have no excuse for backing PAYGO, and their attachment to the rule is maddening.
 - <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/1/3/18165261/paygo-house-democrats-progressives-medicare>

“The message [Democratic leaders] are sending is that we as a party, Democrats, stand for fiscal discipline,” Stephanie Kelton, a progressive economist with Stony Brook University, said. “What I hear is that Democrats are willing to prioritize budget outcomes over human ones.”
 - <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2019/01/house-democrats-rules-package-paygo.html>

For Khanna, though, reinstating any pay-go rule, even a porous one, is just “bad politics,” as he told me in an interview Wednesday. On the granular level, the waiver process creates its own unnecessary problems. “Why have a waiver and give Republicans a talking point every time you’re asking for a waiver?” he said.
 - <https://twitter.com/RoKhanna/status/1080472399123042304>
 - Some key committee appointments (Financial Services, House Oversight)
 - <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/01/progressives-oversight-committee.html>

So why the high-profile assignments for these freshmen? Despite the real ideological differences that separate Ocasio-Cortez, Tlaib, and Pressley from Pelosi, the three left-wing Democrats all supported Pelosi for speaker (as did Khanna). Internal opposition to another Pelosi term largely came from the party’s conservatives and moderates, not from its growing left-wing faction. It’s plausible that the assignments are a reward

for loyalty. They also make a lot of strategic sense. The party has suffered from a weak back bench for a long time, and roles on committees like Oversight can develop new legislators into future party leaders and candidates for higher office.

- <https://www.thenation.com/article/pramila-jayapal-cpc-joan-walsh/>

Of course, as Jayapal ventures beyond the CPC's membership to build support for Medicare for All, she runs the risk of watering down the bill and losing support from the left. That dynamic is at play more broadly, too: Some progressives have expressed concern that the label "progressive" has become so popular that it might be co-opted. There is currently, for example, a 12-member overlap between the centrist New Democrat Coalition and the CPC. After her primary win last summer, Ocasio-Cortez floated the idea of creating a "sub-caucus" of truly progressive members who vote as a bloc. Jayapal didn't comment on that idea directly, but she is having conversations about whether it makes sense to create an agenda that members must explicitly support in order to join the CPC.

- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2019/01/18/ayanna-pressley-heads-house-financial-services-committee/nV7ihooF4a4sa02chto8DO/story.html>

It will also allow me to build upon work that I've already been doing on the municipal level on that space. Consumer protection, tackling student debt, affordable housing crisis — and the thing I'm most excited about is to keep Ben Carson in my sightline. He has all but abandoned public housing. I have one of the largest housing developments in the country. As far as student debt, MA-7 has the largest concentration of college students in the country. Student debt is crippling and handicapping dreams and the full contributions that so many people hope to make. It is a national crisis. I'm especially concerned about some of these recent agreements at play, where students are signing away huge swaths of their income for more than half of their life not even aware of what they're signing on to and what the risk will be. So I'm very interested in protecting those consumers and those students.

I also want to address the wealth and wage inequities and disparities in MA-7. Mitigating the impacts of redlining, which has contributed for generations to the wealth gap — a very sharp contrast along racial lines. I also want to tackle the issue of under-banking. So I'm excited. The reach of this committee allows me to legislate and to govern in a way that is very appealing, and in a way that I've always tried to model — and that is to address the intersectionality of so many issues.

- Shining a light on some bad business-as-usual practices like the corporate lobbyist orientation event
 - <https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1070735202031423488>
 - <https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1070764827533078529>

- But there's also the terrible Manchin committee thing (assuming that happened) & the Senate Dems Energy Committee staffer who was a fracking lobbyist
 - <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/12/11/manchin-senate-energy-natural-resources-committee-1058526>
 - <https://splinternews.com/joe-manchin-is-worthless-pt-infinity-1832020814>
 - <https://consortiumnews.com/2019/01/25/senate-energy-democrats-hire-former-industry-lobbyist-to-lead-staff/>
- As **first reported** by the publication *Greenwire*, **Sarah Venuto Perez** formerly served as lead federal lobbyist for America's Natural Gas Alliance (ANGA), as well as the natural gas electricity companies Centerpoint Energy and Entergy. ANGA, until **merging** into the American Petroleum Institute in 2015, was the lead federal lobbying organization promoting hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") for natural gas in shale basins across the U.S.
- The U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is under the Democratic minority leadership of U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV), a coal and natural gas state legislator who has long served as a vocal supporter of the fossil fuel industry. Most recently, Venuto Perez had worked as chief legal counsel and senior policy adviser for Manchin.
- <https://consortiumnews.com/2019/01/25/senate-energy-democrats-hire-former-industry-lobbyist-to-lead-staff/>