

Two Greens Senators resign from Senate. Obamacare repeal attempt likely to fail

Written by Adrian Beaumont, Honorary Associate, School of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Melbourne

On 14 July, WA Greens Senator Scott Ludlam revealed that he had New Zealand citizenship. Today, Queensland Greens [Senator Larissa Waters](#) revealed she had Canadian citizenship. Both Senators have been forced to resign from the Senate as they had unwittingly violated [Section 44\(i\) of the Constitution](#)

Section 44(i) bars anyone with allegiance or citizenship of another country from serving or being elected to Australia's Parliament. To overcome this barrier, a candidate that has a foreign citizenship must renounce it prior to election. The Constitution cannot be changed by legislation, only by a referendum.

Ludlam was first elected at the November 2007 election, and began his term in July 2008, so he has been ineligible for nine years. Waters was first elected in August 2010, beginning her term in July 2011.

Section 44(i) has been a known issue for decades; the last elected candidate to be disqualified was [One Nation's Heather Hill](#) following the 1998 election, owing to her British citizenship. The Greens could have avoided this mess had they asked Ludlam and Waters a few simple questions before they were preselected ahead of the 2007 and 2010 elections.

If the Greens had lost one Senator due to Section 44(i), it may have been unfortunate. To lose two Senators shows incompetence in the Greens' preselection vetting.

In WA, a [special recount will elect](#) Jordon Steele-John, the No. 3 on the WA Greens Senate ticket, to replace Ludlam. At the 2016 double-dissolution election, Ludlam was elected third of 12, and thus earned a six-year term. Rachel Siewert, the No. 2 Green, was elected 12th, winning a three-year term. Unless the Senate changes the three-year and six-year designations, Steele-John will receive a six-year term despite being lower-ranked than Siewert on the Greens ticket.

Steele-John could resign from the Senate as soon as he is elected. In this case, a casual vacancy would be created and the Greens would select one of their own. However, the Greens

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are likely to prefer that this vacancy be filled as soon as possible.

In Queensland, the special recount will elect the Greens No. 2, former Australian Democrats leader Andrew Bartlett, who will earn a three-year term. Three-year terms expire in June 2019, while six-year terms expire in June 2022.

Until a court orders special recounts, the Greens will be down two seats in the Senate. Labor and the Greens will have 33 of the now 74 Senate seats, and 38 votes will be required to pass legislation. This situation will slightly assist the Coalition. Parliament resumes in three weeks, on 8 August.

Essential at 54-46 to Labor, plus YouGov

This [week's Essential](#) is at 54-46 to Labor, from primary votes of 38% Labor, 36% Coalition, 10% Greens, 7% One Nation and 3% Nick Xenophon Team. Labor's primary vote is up two points since last fortnight, and the [highest for Labor since May](#)

Essential asked whether respondents had a favourable or unfavourable view of various world leaders. Canadian PM Justin Trudeau had a 51-11 favourable rating, followed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel (43-17), French President Emmanuel Macron (41-14) and UK PM Theresa May (33-27). Russian President Vladimir Putin had a 61-16 unfavourable rating, US President Donald Trump 70-16 and North Korean tyrant Kim Jong-un 80-6.

50% supported a national vote which is binding on Parliament to resolve the same sex marriage issue, 23% supported a parliamentary vote, and just 9% supported a non-binding national vote. 73% thought the South Australian battery a good idea, and just 5% a bad idea.

45% said they could consider voting for a new "centrist" party, and 71% want the major parties to work together more often. However, the Australian Democrats were a centrist party that vanished. In the UK, the Liberal Democrats went into coalition with the Conservatives following the 2010 election, and were reduced from [57 seats to 8 at the 2015 election](#) .

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A total of 23% of working people thought their job had been replaced, had undergone significant changes or would be replaced in the next five years due to automation. Voters thought technological advances in recent years were good for entertainment and other issues, but were divided on personal relationships and job security.

Last week's [YouGov Australian poll](#), conducted 6-11 July from a sample of a little over 1000, had the Coalition at 36% (up 3 from three weeks ago), Labor at 33% (down 1), the Greens at 12% and One Nation 7%. These primary votes would be about 52-48 to Labor using the previous election's preference flows, but YouGov has produced a 52-48 to the Coalition result by respondent preferences. While respondent preferences may favour the Coalition by about a point, a 4-point gain for the Coalition is excessive.

Obamacare repeal attempt likely to fail; Trump's latest Russian scandals won't affect him in Congress

According to reporting at US [analysis website FiveThirtyEight](#), the current attempt to repeal and replace the 2010 Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare, has failed. Republicans hold a 52-48 US Senate majority, and need at least 50 votes to pass bills on Vice President Mike Pence's tie-breaking vote.

No Democrats support Obamacare repeal, and four Republicans say they will vote against a motion to proceed. This motion is similar to a second reading in Australia's Parliament; it is not the vote on the final bill. The Republicans are now at least two votes short.

There was much jubilation among the left in March when the US House failed to vote on the Obamacare repeal, but in May the House passed its repeal. If Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell can convince his colleagues to unite behind a bill, it could pass. However, that looks unlikely now.

In [May I wrote that](#), owing to the "Trump cultists", it was unlikely that Congressional Republicans would take any substantial action against Trump despite his many scandals. In spite of the revelation last week that [Trump Jr had met with a Russian](#) government lawyer in June 2016, the Republican-controlled Congress remains unlikely to take action.

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If Democrats take control of at least one chamber of Congress at midterm elections in November 2018, they would then take substantial action against Trump. However, a 2/3 majority is needed for the Senate to impeach a President, and the Democrats will not have a 2/3 Senate majority.

[FiveThirtyEight's poll aggregate](#) has Trump at 38.8% approve, 55.4% disapprove, for a net rating of -16.6. Trump's ratings have been relatively stable since mid-May.

[Republicans approve of Trump](#)

by 81-16.

Since assuming office six months ago, Trump's net approval has dropped 14 points according to [analyst Harry Enten](#). This drop is near the bottom of all Presidents since 1953. Trump's current net approval is at the bottom for Presidents after six months.

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Read more <http://theconversation.com/two-greens-senators-resign-from-senate-obamacare-repeal-attempt-likely-to-fail-81087>