



Written by [Laurence M. Vance](#) on November 1, 2012

## Republicans at Their Best and Their Worst

Thanks to the liberal Independents Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, the Democrats have controlled the U.S. Senate since the 2006 midterm election. Since the president is a Democrat, only a Republican-controlled House is keeping the Democrats from having absolute control of the government. To get an idea of what this would mean one only has to go back to the 111th Congress of 2009 to 2011 during the first two years of the presidency of Barack Obama. This Congress passed, and President Obama signed, more laws that affect Americans since the legislation passed during Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society"



It is during this period that was instituted the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, Cash for Clunkers, the reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, and, of course, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act known as ObamaCare.

But as bad as these things are, would it be a good thing if the Republicans regained control of the Senate in the upcoming election?

Twenty-one Senate seats currently held by Democrats are up for election this year, plus the seats held by Lieberman and Sanders. Only ten Senate seats currently held by Republicans are up for grabs. Fifteen Democratic senators are running for re-election and six incumbents are retiring. Among the Independents, Sanders is running for re-election while Lieberman is retiring. Seven Republican senators are seeking re-election and three incumbents are retiring.

There are currently 47 Republicans in the Senate. This means that the Republicans need to retain their ten seats and win four additional seats (or some combination of fourteen) to have a majority in the Senate. If the Republican Romney/Ryan ticket wins the presidency, the Republicans only need to win 13 Senate elections since the vice president (as president of the Senate) can vote to break a tie if the Senate is deadlocked after a 50/50 vote.

So, it is entirely possible that the Republicans could gain control of the Senate just like the Democrats did in the 2006 midterm election and the Republicans did in the elections of 1994 and 2002.

But will Republican control of the Senate necessarily mean anything different from a Senate controlled by Democrats? Would a Republican majority favor liberty, follow the Constitution, restore federalism, and not forsake the principle of limited government?

The answer is: it depends. It depends on which party controls the House and the presidency.



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Senate Republicans talk, act, and vote differently depending on whether Republicans control just the Senate, the House and the Senate, or both Houses of Congress and the presidency. This is because Republicans are at their best when they are the opposition party; they are at their worst when they are the party in power.

One way to see this phenomenon is by checking the votes of Senate Republicans in *The New American's* "Freedom Index." Published four times every two-year congressional term, each publication of "The Freedom Index: A Congressional Scorecard Based on the U.S. Constitution" shows how every member of Congress voted on ten key issues. This means that 40 significant votes of each member of Congress are analyzed each congressional term. The scores range from 0 to 100 percent. A high percentage indicates a congressman's support of limited government, fiscal responsibility, national sovereignty, and a traditional foreign policy of avoiding foreign entanglements; a low score indicates just the opposite. House Republican Ron Paul consistently scores a 100.

The last installment of the "[Freedom Index](#)" for the 112th Congress has just been released. It covers such issues as tax cuts, repealing Obamacare, auditing the Federal Reserve, EPA regulations, foreign aid, and highway and farm bills.

Ten Senate Republicans scored a perfect 100: John McCain, Marco Rubio, Rand Paul, Tom Coburn, Pat Toomey, Jim DeMint, John Cornyn, Orin Hatch, Mike Lee, and Ron Johnson. And although none of them earned a perfect score for this entire congressional term, Senator Rand Paul's cumulative score is a 95 and Senator Mike Lee's is a 90. The average Senate Republican score for the 112th Congress is a 70.3. In contrast, the average Senate score is a 40, which means that the average Democratic score is even lower than that. The average Senate Republican score for 111th Congress (2009-2011) was an even better 82.2.

But this doesn't mean that I am ready to vote Republican.

First, a little political history. Republicans regained control of both the House and the Senate in the third year of Clinton's first term (for the first time since the 83rd Congress of 1953-1955). Their excuse for not doing anything to repeal FDR's "New Deal" and LBJ's "Great Society," or even scaling back the government a little, was that they needed a larger, veto-proof majority in the Congress. Then, after Clinton only vetoed 17 bills during his eight years in office, another excuse was put forth: a Republican in the White House is needed to complete the Republican revolution. In the election of 2000, the Republicans got their Republican president in George W. Bush, an absolute majority in the House, and a 50-50 split in the Senate with a Republican vice president to break tie votes. But when Republican senator Jim Jeffords switched from Republican to Independent in May of 2001, the Republican majority fizzled until the midterm election of 2002 resulted in a new Congress (the 108th, 2003-2005) for the last two years of Bush's first term that was once again solidly Republican. When Bush was reelected in 2004, the Republicans further increased their majority in Congress until they lost control of the Senate during the 2006 midterm election.

What is interesting to note are the "Freedom Index" scores for Senate Republicans when Bush the Republican was the president instead of Obama the Democrat. The average score for Senate Republicans for the 107th Congress (2001-2003) was 56.04, for the 108th Congress (2003-2005), 56.18, for the 109th Congress (2007-2009), 45.49, and for the 110th Congress (2007-2009), 47.12.

The last time I went to school, scores this low were considered failing grades. Republicans are miserable failures regarding the principles of liberty, the Constitution, federalism, and limited



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government *when they control the Congress and the presidency*. Yet, they expect us to believe that America will be put back on the right path if only we elect a Republican president and a Republican majority in the House and Senate even though it is a historical fact that Republicans *never* undo the damage done by Democrats and in fact usually compound it with more of their own.

Republicans want absolute power again after giving us during the Bush years two foreign wars, a doubled national debt, the first trillion dollar deficit, bloated federal budgets, the Patriot Act, the TSA, and the Department of Homeland security. Not to mention the Republican version of Obamacare — the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act. This expansion of the welfare state, which was the biggest increase since LBJ began the Medicare program, was introduced by the Republican House Speaker, supported by the House and Senate Republican leaders, passed in the House and Senate with overwhelming Republican support, and signed into law by a Republican president.

With Republicans like these, who needs Democrats?



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