



Written by [Christian Gomez](#) on December 5, 2016

Published in the December 5, 2016 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 32, No. 23

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## On Trump's Coattails

In the weeks and days leading up to the election, including the morning thereof, the mainstream media, pundits, and so-called political experts alike were already crowning Hillary Clinton the nation's first female president. And with this expected historic achievement, Democrats would be swept into office, capturing control of Congress, thus ensuring the Democratic president-elect an unquestionable mandate to govern, similar to 2008. Serendipitously, however, the mainstream media, like the vast majority of its scientific polling, were proven wrong, as they underestimated the countless millions of voters in rural middle America longing for change from the progressive globalist status quo.



Donald Trump's name on top of the ballot did not prove to be the hazardous liability for the Republican Party that many in the liberal media claimed it would be. In fact, many Republicans were likely reelected to Congress on the coattails of Donald Trump because, historically, congressional Republicans don't fair well during presidential election years.

Incumbent GOP Senators Marco Rubio of Florida and Rob Portman of Ohio were reelected to the Senate, easily defeating their Democratic opponents in what were expected to be close elections and possible turnovers for the Democrats. In Wisconsin, where all of the state's internal polling predicted Democrat Russ Feingold winning, incumbent Republican Senator Ron Johnson surprisingly won with 1,470,262 votes, more than 50 percent of the vote.

## Bye Now for the RINOs

Ironically, Republicans who distanced themselves most from Trump performed worst of all, including a few notable high-profile GOP incumbents. In New Hampshire, Democrat Governor Maggie Hassan narrowly defeated so-called moderate Republican U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte, who had previously withdrawn her support for Donald Trump. Senator Ayotte not only distanced herself from Trump, but from some of his proposed popular policies, such as controlling immigration. Ayotte, who maintains a lackluster 61-percent score on The New American's "Freedom Index," which measures the fidelity of congressmen to the Constitution based upon their votes in either the House or Senate, was notable in her support of President Obama's unconstitutional executive order granting "deferred action" (aka amnesty) to an estimated four to five million illegal aliens in the United States. Over a third of her votes in the Senate have been against the Constitution and/or in favor of various policy positions advocated by both President Obama and the Democratic Party.

In Illinois, another "moderate" Republican Senator, Mark Kirk, who previously called Trump "too



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bigoted and racist” to be president and went so far as to call for an “emergency replacement” of Trump as the GOP nominee, was overwhelmingly defeated in his reelection bid by Democratic Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth. Senator-elect Duckworth received more than 54 percent of the vote, compared to Kirk’s 40 percent. Senator Kirk’s liberal-leaning 35-percent score on the Freedom Index is the lowest of any Republican currently in the Senate.

In the House of Representatives, where Republicans managed to retain the majority, only a handful of seats, mostly those held by yet more “moderate” Republicans who also distanced themselves from Trump, were lost to the Democrats. Illinois Republican Congressman Bob Dold, who repeatedly denounced Trump during the campaign and refused to vote for him, lost his reelection to Democrat Brad Schneider. Dold maintains a dismal Freedom Index score of 42 percent.

In Florida, 12-term GOP Congressman John Mica, who maintains a lackluster Freedom Index score of 57 percent, lost his reelection bid to Democrat challenger Stephanie Murphy, the first Vietnamese-American woman elected to Congress. Also in Florida, incumbent freshman Republican Congressman David Jolly, who holds an unimpressive Freedom Index score of 55 percent, was defeated by former Republican governor-turned-Democrat Charlie Crist.

Although Trump won the presidential election, he will be going to Washington with fewer of the moderate Republicans whose votes have typically deviated from the Constitution and allowed for much of President Obama and the Democratic Party’s liberal, unconstitutional, big-government agenda to proceed unchecked. Despite a few Democratic gains in Congress, the overall results of this election offer hope, as we shall discuss further below, to constitutionalists and liberty-minded enthusiasts who seek to undo the damage of the last eight-plus years, return to smaller government, and promote stricter adherence to the Constitution.

## **Constitutionalists Reelected**

Following the announcement of Trump’s victory, newly reelected libertarian-leaning Republican Congressman Justin Amash optimistically tweeted: “Congratulations to President-elect @realDonaldTrump. Let’s work together to defend liberty, the Rule of Law, and the Constitution.” Amash’s tweet encapsulates the aspirations of millions who defied the establishment on election day, sending Trump to the White House with a Republican-majority to Congress to get the job done. The stakes for liberty are high for the incoming 115th Congress, as it is expected to roll back ObamaCare and much of the rest of the regulatory state, as well as chart a new course on the world stage in which a less-interventionist America-first foreign policy trumps both neoconservative and progressive shades of internationalism.

However, none of this will happen without a constitutionalist-leaning Congress. Fortunately, all incumbents with a Freedom Index score of 80 percent and greater were reelected. Among those constitutionalists to return to Congress next year are:

- Justin Amash, who was reelected to a fourth consecutive term to represent Michigan’s Third Congressional District. An ideological heir to former Texas Congressman Ron Paul, who typically garnered a 100-percent score on the Freedom Index, Amash maintains an impressive 93-percent score and is the chairman of the House Liberty Caucus. Amash was reelected with 59 percent of the vote over Democrat Douglas Smith, who only received 38 percent;



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- Thomas Massie, whose impeccable constitutionalist voting record has garnered him a 98-percent score on the Freedom Index (currently the highest of any member in Congress). He was overwhelmingly reelected in Kentucky's Fourth Congressional District with a landslide 71-29 percent over Democratic nominee Calvin Sidle. Although Massie initially supported Rand Paul in his presidential bid before he dropped out, he told the *Washington Examiner* in an interview that he would be casting his vote for Trump. When asked to explain his endorsement of Trump, Massie replied, "Well, he's better than 90 percent of the congressmen I serve with." Massie further elaborated, "He's not owned. Nobody owns him. That rules out a lot of them," and "he's got real business experience";
- Rand Paul, ophthalmologist and freshman senator from Kentucky, who was easily reelected 57-43 percent over Democratic candidate and Lexington Mayor Jim Gray. With a 93-percent rating on the Freedom Index, Paul has the highest score in the Senate. In his victory speech, Paul vowed to his supporters, "Regardless of who wins the presidency, I will not be a rubberstamp for a liberal Supreme Court nominee." The following morning, after Trump was announced the winner, Paul optimistically predicted on MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, "I think we're going to spend the first month passing repeal of Obama regulations and they will be signed by Trump. So, I think there will be a half a dozen regulations repealed in the first week of Congress and this is something I'm excited to do";
- Mike Lee, of Utah, whose Freedom Index score of 92 percent is the second highest in the Senate and who defeated Democratic nominee Misty K. Snow, the first transgendered person nominated by the Democratic Party for the Senate. Lee overwhelmingly won, with 68 percent of the vote compared to Snow's 27 percent;
- Raúl Labrador, a Puerto Rican and ranked one of "Newsmax's 50 Most Influential Latino Republicans" in 2016, who easily won reelection to Idaho's First Congressional District 68-32 percent over Democratic nominee James Piotrowski. Labrador's 90-percent Freedom Index score is one of the highest in the House of Representatives. A staunch constitutionalist and member of the House Liberty Caucus, Labrador told supporters on the night of the election as election results were still coming in, "The establishment has been repudiated";
- Incumbent freshman congressman and former economics professor Dr. Dave Brat, who won reelection 58-42 percent in Virginia's Seventh Congressional District, defeating Democratic nominee Eileen Bedell. In 2014, Brat defeated then-incumbent House Republican Majority Leader Eric Cantor in the GOP primary before going on to win in the general election. With a notably high Freedom Index score of 90 percent, Brat has distinguished himself from his GOP establishment predecessor on budget, fiscal restraint, immigration, and trade; and
- Alex Mooney, another stalwart defender of the Constitution and freshman congressman, who also won reelection 58-42 percent in West Virginia's Second Congressional District, defeating Democratic nominee Mark Hunt. From fighting against ObamaCare, ObamaTrade, and hazardous environmental regulations that have cost millions of coal-mining jobs in West Virginia, to passionately fighting for the rights of the unborn and defending religious liberty, Mooney's first term in the House has been one of impeccable constitutional conservative credentials.

## High Expectations

President Trump's success in terms of reducing government and repealing regulations and ObamaCare

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will be largely due to the efforts of constitutionalists such as Mooney, Brat, Labrador, Lee, Paul, Massie, and Amash.

Prior to election day, the House of Representatives of the current 114th Congress, which will remain in service until January 3, 2017, at which time the new 115th Congress will be sworn in, had a total of 246 Republican seats compared to the Democrats' 186 and three additional vacancies. Unless the incoming Trump administration taps any Republican members of Congress for positions in the administration, or some other unforeseen incident occurs, the incoming 115th Congress is expected to have 239 Republicans and 192 Democrats with zero vacancies.

In the Senate, where Republicans held a majority with 54 seats compared to the Democrats' 44, with two independents who caucus with the Democrats, Democrats only gained two seats (in Illinois and New Hampshire) and will remain in the minority in the next Congress. Because of election laws in the state of Louisiana, the Senate race between Republican John Neely Kennedy and Democrat Foster Campbell will be determined by a runoff election scheduled for December 10, 2016. Even if Campbell is successful, Republicans will still retain their majority, though barely.

Although all leadership positions for the new Congress have yet to be determined, one change in leadership that is already known is that of Senate minority leader. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) announced his retirement and did not run for reelection. Democrats retained Nevada's Senate seat: It was won by incoming junior Senator-elect Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.), the first Latina elected to the Senate. Democrat Senator Chuck Schumer of New York will take over for Reid as minority leader. One bit of encouraging news from the new incoming minority leader was Schumer's recent remark to the AFL-CIO Executive Council, following the results of the election, in which he said that President Obama's signature TPP agreement is virtually dead because Congress will not ratify it.

This area, where most Democrats agree with President-elect Trump, is one of the few where Democrats are likely to align with the new president politically. For the most part, Schumer will be leading an embattled opposition Democratic Party that is currently divided over Hillary Clinton's loss. Only their fierce opposition to Trump and a desire to expand their liberal, unconstitutional, big-government agenda is likely to unite them, but with little chance of advancing any of their major legislative proposals in the next two to four years.

Despite moderate gains by the Democrats in both the House and Senate, Republican majorities in Congress, along with the incoming, new Trump administration, offers a major opportunity for Republicans to enact new or repeal previous legislation in Congress without the obstruction of a liberal progressive Democratic president threatening to invoke a veto. Republicans will have little excuse to not make good on their campaign promises: addressing the fiscal crisis, balancing the budget, cutting both taxes and spending, and repealing ObamaCare, or at the very least, the most onerous aspects of it, such as the individual health-insurance mandate and the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB), otherwise known as the "death panel."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) indicated that Congress would likely not waste any time in passing a repeal of ObamaCare. "It's pretty high on our agenda as you know. I would be shocked if we didn't move forward and keep our commitment to the American people," McConnell said. According to unnamed sources reported by CNN, "House and Senate GOP leaders are considering a novel and complicated approach to the budget reconciliation process that would allow Congress to act



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very soon after they are sworn-in in early January to repeal large sections of the Affordable Care Act.”

A full and singular repeal of the Affordable Care Act (i.e., ObamaCare) would normally take many months, and without a 60-seat supermajority in the Senate, a repeal vote would be susceptible to a filibuster from Democrats. Such a budget reconciliation process would enable Republicans to begin repealing large portions of ObamaCare related to taxation and spending with a simple majority vote, which the Republicans will easily be able to accomplish along party lines, supposing the Senate parliamentarian does not roadblock such efforts.

There is also strong support in the House from Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) to repeal and replace President Obama’s signature health insurance law. “Obamacare is failing. It must be replaced. We’re going to do that. We’re excited about it.... We can fix what is broken in health care without breaking what is working in health care,” Ryan said following the election. The biggest issue with repealing ObamaCare in Congress is what will replace it. Will Republicans repeal it in its entirety, will they go further and repeal previous regulatory measures preventing health insurance companies from selling insurance across state lines, or will they repeal only bits of ObamaCare and retain other large portions? Despite whispers in all directions, it remains to be seen what the next Congress, along with President Trump, will do.

In terms of trade, President Trump will have the same trade promotion authority Congress granted to Obama in 2015, allowing him renegotiate existing trade deals or negotiate new ones. Trump’s staunch opposition to the TPP and support for Brexit in the U.K. suggests Congress will likely not approve TPP and/or the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, the negotiations of which the Obama administration and European leaders have yet to conclude.

Congress may work out or approve reforms to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which Trump has also been highly critical of on the campaign trail, calling it “one of the worst deals ever made of any kind signed by anybody.” In the final months and weeks of the campaign, Trump had called for renegotiating NAFTA. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced he would be willing to renegotiate with Trump. “If the Americans want to talk about NAFTA, I’m more than happy to talk about it,” Trudeau said.

Despite the challenges that lie ahead for the new 115th Congress, the election of Trump, backed by a Republican congressional majority that includes a good number of constitutionalists, offers what is likely to be the best opportunity in a long time for constitutionalists and liberty advocates alike to positively address issues such as illegal immigration, trade agreements, and spending. If such positive changes take place, whether or not they remain permanent will largely depend on the long-term education of the electorate about the issues and the Constitution. Although it was a largely frustrated electorate that repudiated and defeated the establishment this past election, it is only an informed electorate that can ensure America returns to less government, more responsibility, and — with God’s help — a better world.



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