



Written by [William S. Hahn](#) on January 24, 2023

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Taking Action

McCarthy Is In, Now What?

The fight to become the speaker of the House of Representatives wasn't much of a fight. Many House Republicans had coalesced behind Representative Kevin McCarthy's leadership long ago. His best Freedom Index (FI) score was for the 111th Congress (2009-2010) — when it wasn't too hard for Republicans to get good scores. All they had to do was oppose the Democrats during President Obama's first term. McCarthy earned an 86 percent.



[AP Images](#)

His scores then dropped before increasing once again under another Democratic president. During President Trump's term, McCarthy earned 53 percent, and now has a 61 percent FI lifetime score. Let's also keep in mind that he served under the leadership of House Speaker John Boehner (FI 53 percent lifetime), Minority Whip Eric Cantor (FI 55 percent lifetime), and then House Speaker Paul Ryan (FI 58 percent lifetime), while he moved into the whip leadership and then served as Republican leader.

In looking at why his scores mirror the Republican establishment, we must ask the question, "What gets things done?" What moved the early Colonists to declare independence, fight a war, and win? The answer is the same: organization. The establishment is organized to perpetuate itself and its Big Government agenda. While some members of the Freedom Caucus used the speaker vote for leverage to get rules changed and garner certain committee assignments, the fact remains that they did not have an organized effort to put up a candidate. Those who were nominated were not serious candidates (most voted for others).

As of this writing, even with McCarthy installed as speaker, the House seems to have gotten off to a promising start, including the approval of a new House subcommittee to investigate the "weaponization" of the federal government. (See "[The New House of Representatives](#).") But will McCarthy continue to keep his promises? Under his leadership, will the encouraging start continue, or veer off course? Time will tell.

Of course, it should be kept in mind that, in doing what he is now doing, McCarthy is responding to a small but growing group of recalcitrant representatives who have been elected to Congress as a result of growing understanding on the part of their constituents. Also, as we have repeatedly pointed out, it's the record, not the rhetoric, that matters. Rhetoric may sound pretty solid when it is employed to appeal to a conservative constituency, but only the record will indicate if promises are kept.

Let's also keep in mind that the speaker is in a pretty safe place. He and the House can bring forth as many solid bills as they want that reflect the wishes of the base, but what happens when they die in the Senate or on the president's desk? Cue the fundraising letters blaming it on the political opposition and



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the narrative of how more Republicans must be voted in! Yet, when the GOP was in control of the Congress and the White House, what did they accomplish? Was spending cut? Did government get smaller? Did we move closer to getting the federal government to operate within its constitutional limitations? Not so much.

Any movement in a constitutional direction will most likely not originate from the floor of Congress or any square inch of federal property in the District of Columbia. As the Founding Fathers demonstrated, the pressure must come from the people — the electorate, i.e., those who are tasked with eternal vigilance through education and organized action.

In our booklet (which can be download for free here) titled *The Founders' Brilliant Solution to Big Government: Article VI*, we write, "To give you an idea of how far Americans have slipped in their civic knowledge, notice the following observation made on a visit to America in 1831 by Alexis de Tocqueville, a famous French political theorist: 'Every citizen ... is ... taught ... the history of his country, and the leading features of its Constitution... [I]t is extremely rare to find a man imperfectly acquainted with all these things, and a person wholly ignorant of them is sort of a phenomenon.' Sadly, now the opposite is true. Anyone who is even vaguely acquainted with the Constitution and the true history of the country is a rarity — and that is the root of the problem."

Help the McCarthy-led House understand that the main function of government is to protect our God-given rights, and how they must go about doing so. Begin by joining The John Birch Society to get involved in our education efforts on the grassroots level. We detail the problems and the constitutional solutions to generate the necessary pressure to get elected officials to act. Start at [JBS.org](https://www.jbs.org).



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