



Written by [Gary Benoit](#) on October 17, 2012

How Do Your Congressmen Vote? Check Out the Freedom Index.

With all the hoopla and media attention now being devoted presidential politics, it would be easy to overlook the importance of Congress. Yet under our system of government, the Congress possesses more powers than the President.

“All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States,” the [U.S. Constitution](#) states in Article I, Section 1. This means that the president does not possess any legislative powers whatever.



The legislation includes appropriations bills to fund various federal operations. This control of the purse strings by Congress means that Congress can effectively kill federal agencies or programs by refusing to provide the money.

The president may ask Congress to pass certain legislation, but if Congress declines to do so the legislation will never reach his desk. He may veto bills passed by Congress, but Congress may override his vetoes. When bills become law, the president’s constitutional role is limited to executing them. The president is the chief executive, not an elected dictator.

Of course, presidents have ridden roughshod over the Constitution by (to cite just one example) deciding when to go to war, despite the fact that the power to declare war belongs to Congress (Article I, Section 8). However, Congress possesses constitutional means to check the executive branch. Those powers include Congress’ aforementioned control of the purse strings — and even impeachment if necessary. If the Presidency seems to overshadow Congress, it is only because Congress has allowed this to happen.

Yet how much do Americans know about their congressmen? Even if they are familiar with the campaign rhetoric, do they know how their congressmen actually vote on key issues impacting the direction of our country?

To help create the needed understanding, four times every two-year congressional term *The New American* publishes “The Freedom Index: A Congressional Scorecard Based on the U.S. Constitution.” Each index shows how every member of the House and Senate voted on 10 key issues. A high percentage score in our index indicates that a congressman regularly voted in support of constitutional principles of limited government, fiscal responsibility, national sovereignty, and a traditional foreign policy of avoiding foreign entanglements; a low score indicates the reverse.

Our final installment of the “Freedom Index” for the current (112th) Congress shows how members of Congress voted on extending tax cuts (House and Senate), repealing ObamaCare (House), auditing the Federal Reserve (House), EPA regulations (Senate), Aid to North Korea (Senate), etc. Published in the October 22, 2012 print edition of *TNA*, this index is also available online ([click here for the PDF](#)).



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The other three indexes for the 112th Congress are also available online — click [here](#) (first index), [here](#) (second), and [here](#) (third).

Please check out how your own U.S. representative and senators voted on key issues as well as overall.



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