



Written by [Gary Benoit](#) on July 3, 2012

New “Freedom Index” Shows How Your Congressmen Voted

Every member of Congress has taken an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States. Yet much of what the federal government does — from foreign aid to ObamaCare — falls outside the specified powers of the Constitution. How can this be, particularly when the votes in support of U.S. government overreach run contrary to the wishes of most constituents?



Part of the problem, obviously, is that many congressmen do not take their oath of office seriously. Many do not use the Constitution as their guide for determining how they vote on important legislation. And even when they do, they may apply interpretations that fly in the face of both the clear language of the Constitution or the intent of the Founding Fathers — just as the Supreme Court recently did when they ruled that the individual-mandate provision of ObamaCare was constitutional.

And of course, many U.S. representatives and senators say one thing when they are campaigning for votes in their home districts, but do something else entirely when they are casting their own votes in Congress.

To eliminate the gap between rhetoric and record, and to show how members of Congress actually vote on key issues, The New American periodically publishes “The Freedom Index,” a congressional scoreboard that rates all members of the House and Senate based on their adherence to constitutional principles of limited government, fiscal responsibility, national sovereignty, and a traditional foreign policy of avoiding foreign entanglements. The index is published four times each two-year congressional term; each index rates Congressmen based on 10 key votes.

Our latest “Freedom Index,” the third for the current (112th) Congress, shows how every U.S. representative and senator voted on key issues such as raising the national debt limit, reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank (a corporate-welfare program), and developing our oil and gas resources. This index appears in the July 9, 2012 print edition of *The New American*; it is also available online as a downloadable PDF ([click here](#)).

The average House score in this index is a dismal 47 percent, and the average Senate score is an even-worse 43 percent. Obviously, these low scores show that much work needs to be done to improve the average congressman’s fidelity to the Constitution, the oath of office notwithstanding.

We encourage everyone to go to our new Freedom Index (get PDF by [clicking here](#)) and to see for



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themselves how their own U.S. representative and senators voted on each of the 10 key issues, as well as overall. We also recommend contacting legislators to commend them for their constitutional votes and to urge improvement where needed.

(Past installments of the "Freedom Index" for previous Congresses are available online at JBS.org, the website of The John Birch Society. The New American is an affiliate of the JBS.)



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