



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 29, 2018

Senator Jeff Flake's Replacement Likely to Disappoint Constitutionalists

[The winner](#) of Tuesday's Republican Senate Primary in Arizona, U.S. Representative Martha McSally (shown), is likely to disappoint constitutionalists and Americanists hoping for an improvement in the next Congress over retiring Senator Jeff Flake's record.



Beating back challenges from more conservative Republican opponents Kelli Ward and Joe Arpaio, McSally had to move to the right to accomplish the task. In 2016 she did not endorse Donald Trump, nor did she disclose for whom she voted in the presidential election, leading some to conclude that she either voted for Hillary Clinton or didn't vote at all. But as Trump kept his campaign promises and began to implement his policies, McSally moved to align her votes with him. According to Five ThirtyEight, the opinion pollster which tracks Congressional votes, McSally has voted with Trump's legislative positions 97.8 percent of the time.

Her victory in the primary on Tuesday was thus understandably greeted with this tweet from the President: "Martha McSally, running in the Arizona Primary for the U.S. Senate, was endorsed by rejected Senator Jeff Flake ... and turned it down — a first! Now Martha, a great U.S. Military fighter jet pilot and highly respected member of Congress, WINS BIG. Congratulations, and on to November!"

One of the highest-ranking female pilots in the history of the Air Force, McSally was the first American woman to fly in combat following the lifting of such restrictions by the Air Force in 1991. She earned an appointment to the U.S. Air Force Academy, graduating in 1988, and then earning an MA degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Serving two terms in the House, representing Arizona's Second District, she compiled a record of voting against the U.S. Constitution almost half the time, with a Freedom Index Rating from The John Birch Society of just 53 out of 100. Other groups using different criteria were only slightly more generous in their rating of McSally's performance while in the House. The American Conservative Union (ACU) gave her a 58 percent rating in 2015, while the fiscally conservative Americans for Prosperity (AFP) gave her a rating of 87 percent in 2018.

On the other hand, the liberal ACLU gave McSally a rating of just 23 percent in 2016, while Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) gave her electoral performance a rating of just five percent.



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As a moderate, McSally is a member of the middle-of-the-road Republican Main Street Partnership, a group of “centrist” and “moderately conservative” members of the House, and the Tuesday Group, an informal caucus of about 50 “moderate” Republicans in the House.

On other issues McSally’s position reflects a conservative coloration. On abortion she declares herself to be pro-life, but with exceptions. Planned Parenthood gives her a rating of 12 percent while the National Right to Life Committee gives her a rating of 87 percent.

She supports local control of education, takes a “hawkish” position on national defense (criticizing the Iran nuclear deal and voting to increase military spending), and voted to repeal ObamaCare. On immigration, she criticized President Obama for his executive orders concerning both DACA (the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program) and DAPA (the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans program). In May 2018, for instance, she expressed support for a bill that would dramatically increase federal spending on border security.

On LGBT issues, McSally’s position is simple: “I believe marriage [to be] between one man and one woman, and [the issue] should be left to the states.” This should give McSally’s Democratic opponent in November plenty of ammunition, as that opponent, U.S. Representative Kyrsten Sinema, is the first openly bisexual individual ever elected to the U.S. Congress. Sinema sports a Freedom Index Rating from the JBS of 18 percent.

McSally voted for Trump’s tax bill, declaring at the time that it would “put our economy into afterburner” and that opposition to that bill would disappear “when people see [more] money in their paychecks.”

McSally is likely to win over Sinema in November, putting Flake’s seat in the Senate into the hands of a Harvard graduate with little interest in adhering to the strictures of the U.S. Constitution, despite taking an oath upon taking that office to do just that.

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