



The New American

The Freedom Index ... And Now Our New Congressional Scorecard

by Gary Benoit, *Editor-in-Chief*, The New American

Because of the importance of Congress, The John Birch Society has for many decades published a congressional scorecard via its affiliate magazines that rates how every member of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate voted on key issues. This scorecard, which predates *The New American*, was originally called *The Conservative Index*, but was renamed *The Freedom Index: A Congressional Scorecard Based on the U.S. Constitution* (*Freedom Index* for short) to make the scorecard's perspective crystal clear, particularly during the era of "neoconservatism," when the word "conservative" means different things to different people.

Our newest *Freedom Index*, the second for the current Congress, appears in the January 31, 2022 issue of *TNA*. As always, we ask you to use the index to find out how faithful your own U.S. representative and senators have been to the Constitution, the document they pledged to uphold; to let your own congressmen know what you think of how they voted on particular legislation, as well as overall; and to inform others about how their congressmen are voting and encourage them to contact their congressmen, as well.

Over the years our *Freedom Index* has been an eye-opener for many. Congressional candidates don't run for office promising to shred the Constitution; if they did, they would not get elected. There is often a big gap between what a politician says and what he does, and the "Freedom Index" exposes this gap by shining the spotlight on the latter. Also, because each vote description explains the proper (constitutional) position, each description is actually a mini-constitutional lesson!

The *Freedom Index* packs quite a punch. However, it includes the voting records of all 535 U.S. representatives and senators in a single edition, as opposed to showing the record of just a single member of Congress.

Veteran members who joined as recently as the early 2000s will likely recall the TRIM (Tax Reform IMmediately) *Bulletins* that showed the voting record of just one U.S. representative on the fourth page of a single sheet of paper folded in half. This was effective because the actual congressman whose votes were shown depended on the congressional district where the *Bulletin* was being distributed. And because of the inexpensiveness of printing and folding a single sheet, distribution of these *Bulletins* sometimes numbered in the tens of thousands in a single district.

Now, the basic concept of the TRIM *Bulletin* has been brought back in the form of our new *Congressional Scorecard*.

Congressional Scorecard

In fact, the basic concept has been enhanced in two important ways. First, unlike the old TRIM *Bulletins*, which only showed how U.S. representatives (one per *Bulletin*) voted on big-money bills, our new *Congressional Scorecards* show how representatives and senators (again, one per *Scorecard*) voted not only on big-money bills but also on other bills of importance to the freedom movement.

Second, the process of printing the new *Congressional Scorecard* has been greatly simplified, thanks to today's technology. The old TRIM *Bulletins* were originally printed by local TRIM committees via commercial printers on legal-size paper (8.5 x 14 inches). Our new *Scorecards* can be downloaded from TheNewAmerican.com by anyone and printed on a home printer on letter-size paper (8.5 x 11 inches).

These new *Congressional Scorecards* are in addition to, not a replacement of, the *Freedom Index*. Just as a carpenter needs different tools in his toolbox to best accomplish particular tasks, so does the active Bircher. And now the Birch toolbox includes both the *Freedom Index* showing the voting records of all 535 congressmen in the same edition, and the smaller *Congressional Scorecard*, showing the voting record of a single congressman.

The John Birch Society

Author: [Peter Rykowski](#)

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To learn more about how to use both tools effectively, go to <https://thenewamerican.com/freedom-index/user-guide/>. In addition to the written guidelines on this page, there is also a three-minute video tour. Please watch the video. And before exiting the website, please complete your “tour” by downloading and printing out a PDF of a *Congressional Scorecard* showing the voting record of any congressman you select, so you can find out firsthand just how easy the process actually is.