



The Freedom Index

A Congressional Scorecard Based on the U.S. Constitution

Current Members

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Search By Name:



Name: Jefferson Van Drew

Congress: New Jersey, District: 2, Democrat

Cumulative Freedom Index Score: 12%

Status: Active Member of the House

Score Breakdown:

11% (116th Congress: 2019-2020)

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Key Votes:

HR 4378: Short-term Appropriations

Vote Date: September 19, 2019

Vote: AYE



Bad Vote.

This bill (H.R. 4378) would provide funding for federal government operations and services through November 21, 2019, at fiscal 2019 levels. Passage of this bill, known as a continuing appropriations resolution, was necessary because the House Democrats had passed only 10 of the 12 major 2020 fiscal year appropriations bills so far, and the Senate had not even passed one of the 12, even though the 2020 fiscal year began on October 1, 2019.

The House passed H.R. 4378 on September 19, 2019 by a vote of 301 to 123 (Roll Call 538). We have assigned pluses to the nays because with this continuing appropriations bill, Congress is failing to address its fiscally and constitutionally irresponsible budgeting and appropriating process that is currently yielding annual federal deficits of about \$1 trillion that contribute directly to the dramatic growth of our \$23 trillion national debt.

H R 3877: Budget Deal

Vote Date: **July 25, 2019**

Vote: **AYE**



Bad Vote.

This two-year budget bill (H.R. 3877) would establish sufficiently high spending limits to allow the Washington spendathon to continue (and then some) through fiscal years 2020 and 2021. It would also suspend the national debt ceiling until July 31, 2021, in order to accommodate accumulating federal debt between now and then without having to vote to raise the debt limit. Congressional Quarterly (CQ) noted that the bill would “add \$324 billion to spending limits over the next two years, not counting an extra \$157 billion mainly for overseas military operations.” And although \$77 billion of that would be offset, CQ further noted that the supposed cuts “don’t take effect until fiscal 2027.” Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) was so outraged by the budget deal that he attempted (but failed) to change the bill’s title to read, “A bill to kick the can down the road, and for other purposes.”

The House passed the budget deal on July 25, 2019 by a vote of 284 to 149 (Roll Call 511). We have assigned pluses to the nays not only because spending needs to be brought under control and deficits eliminated to avoid fiscal disaster — not “down the road,” but now — but also because much of the spending is unconstitutional.

H R 2157: Disaster Supplemental Appropriations

Vote Date: **June 3, 2019**

Vote: **AYE**



Bad Vote.

This bill (H.R. 2157) would provide \$19.1 billion in supplemental disaster funds for response efforts to damage caused by hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, and other natural disasters that occurred in 2017, 2018, and 2019. It includes nutrition assistance for individuals impacted by natural disasters in Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. And it provides funds for economic assistance, employment training, healthcare, agricultural losses, and infrastructure repairs in disaster-stricken areas.

The House passed H.R. 2157 on June 3, 2019 by a vote of 354 to 58 (Roll Call 232). We have assigned pluses to the nays because the federal government does not have authority under the Constitution to rebuild areas stricken by natural disasters. Such activity should be undertaken by private companies and charities first, and, as a last resort, handled by local or state governments. This would arguably result in disasters being handled much more efficiently and effectively, as the federal government is often criticized for its slow, inefficient, and ineffective response to such events (think FEMA).

H R 5: Equality Act

Vote Date: **May 17, 2019**

Vote: **AYE**



Bad Vote.

This bill (H.R. 5) would expand the definition of protected classes in federal law to include “sexual orientation and gender identity.” Regarding the latter, the Equality Act explicitly states that “an individual shall not be denied access to a shared facility, including a restroom, a locker room, and a dressing room, that is in accordance with the individual’s gender identity.” That is, males who identify as females would be able to use the public restrooms, locker rooms, and dressing rooms of the opposite sex — and visa versa. Moreover, the bill not only fails to include religious exemptions (e.g., allowing a church adoption agency to refuse placing children with homosexual couples), but explicitly states that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 cannot be used as a defense against the bill’s applications.

The House passed the Equality Act on May 17, 2019 by a vote of 236 to 173 (Roll Call 217). We have assigned pluses to the nays because of the harm it would cause to heterosexual children and adults, as well as threatening religious freedom and the right of association.

H R 9: Paris Agreement

Vote Date: **May 2, 2019**

Vote: **AYE**



Bad Vote.

This bill (H.R. 9) would prohibit the use of federal funds for U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on climate change and would require the president to develop a plan for the United States to meet contributions promised under the Obama administration.

The House passed H.R. 9 on May 2, 2019 by a vote of 231 to 190 (Roll Call 184). We have assigned pluses to the nays because the Paris Agreement never should have been signed by the United States in the first place. The Paris Agreement essentially

functions as a treaty, and the United States entered into it without ratification by the U.S. Senate, which is required under the Constitution. Furthermore, from a practical standpoint, fulfilling the terms of the agreement would stifle the U.S. economy and energy sector while making almost no impact whatsoever on alleged man-made global warming.

S J RES 7: Yemen

Vote Date: **April 4, 2019**

Vote: **AYE**



Good Vote.

This bill (Senate Joint Resolution 7) would direct "the President to remove United States Armed Forces from hostilities in or affecting the Republic of Yemen ... unless and until a declaration of war or specific authorization for such use of United States Armed Forces has been enacted." The measure exempts U.S. forces "engaged in operations directed at al Qaeda or associated forces."

The House passed S.J. Res. 7 on April 4, 2019 by a vote of 247 to 175 (Roll Call 153). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because Congress is vested with the power to declare war, and Congress has not authorized any intervention or war in Yemen. Nor should Congress do so, since the civil war in Yemen does not threaten the United States.

H R 8: Firearms Background Checks

Vote Date: **February 27, 2019**

Vote: **AYE**



Bad Vote.

The Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 (H.R. 8) would mandate universal background checks, essentially ban all private firearm sales, and create a federal registry of all gun owners in the United States. Michael Hammond, the legislative counsel for Gun Owners of America, noted, "Bottom line, H.R. 8 was not about public safety. Over and over again we see that mass shooters, who don't steal their weapons, pass background checks before purchasing their firearms. So extending the background checks to private sales will do nothing to keep guns 'out of the wrong hands.'"

The House passed H.R. 8 on February 27, 2019 by a vote of 240 to 190 (Roll Call 99). We have assigned pluses to the nays because this bill would severely infringe upon the Second Amendment-protected right to keep and bear arms, since the bill's onerous regulations would make it very difficult for law-abiding citizens to privately sell their firearms or to purchase firearms from a private seller.

S 47: Public Lands

Vote Date: **February 26, 2019**

Vote: **AYE**



Bad Vote.

This bill (S. 47) would permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which was first authorized in 1964 to assist states in the planning, acquisition, and development of "recreation" lands. The LWCF was initially funded by proceeds from the sales of surplus federal property, motorboat fuel taxes, and fees for recreational use of federal lands, but by 1969 a major funding source was added: fees charged to oil and gas companies for extracting resources from public lands. In this way this could be portrayed as making more "recreational" public land available without any cost to taxpayers (neglecting to admit that ending the LWCF funding would benefit taxpayers by freeing up the fossil-fuel royalties for other purposes). The LWCF has been spending about \$1 billion per year in recent years. This bill would also authorize other federal activities pertaining to natural resources, such as designating "National Heritage Areas" and "Conservation Districts."

The House passed S. 47 on February 26, 2019 by a vote of 363 to 62 (Roll Call 95). We have assigned pluses to the nays because the Constitution does not authorize Congress to purchase private property except "all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings."

H J RES 31: Consolidated Appropriations

Vote Date: **February 14, 2019**

Vote: **AYE**



Bad Vote.

This bill (House Joint Resolution 31) would provide \$333 billion in discretionary spending for the seven remaining fiscal 2019 appropriations bills: Agriculture (\$23 billion); Commerce-Justice-Science (\$64.1 billion); Financial Services (\$23.4 billion);

Homeland Security (\$61.6 billion); Interior-Environment (\$35.6 billion); State-Foreign Operations (\$54.2 billion); and Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (\$71.1 billion).

The House passed the final version of the bill (the conference report) on February 14, 2019 by a vote of 300 to 128 (Roll Call 87). We have assigned pluses to the nays because most of the bill's spending programs are unconstitutional, our nation's national debt is about \$23 trillion, and our nation's 2019 federal budget deficit was nearly \$1 trillion.

