

Why do these votes matter?

1. UN Arms Trade Treaty

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) offered an amendment to "uphold Second Amendment rights and prevent the United States from entering into the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty."

A UN treaty that infringes on the Second Amendment of the Constitution should not be ratified.

2. "Assault Weapons" Ban

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) offered an amendment that would ban the future manufacture, import, sale, transfer, or possession of certain semi-automatic firearms considered to be "assault weapons."

Banning firearms from law-abiding citizens is a clear violation of the Constitution — the Second Amendment guarantees that our "right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

3. Continuing Resolution

This bill (H.R. 2775) was the result of a negotiated deal that ended the partial government shutdown over the Republican attempt to defund ObamaCare. It continued funding government operations, including ObamaCare, through January 15, 2014. The amount of spending in the bill was based on the fiscal 2013 post-sequestration spending level. The legislation also suspended the federal debt limit through February 7, 2014.

The negotiated deal contained in this bill constituted a cave-in by congressional Republicans that ended the Republican attempt to defund the unconstitutional ObamaCare law.

4. Ukraine Aid

Provides \$150 million for direct aid to Ukraine. It would also provide for loan guarantees (meaning that U.S. taxpayers would be stuck holding the bag if the loans are not paid). And it would impose sanctions on Russian and ex-Ukrainian officials deemed responsible for the crisis in the Ukraine.

Foreign aid is unconstitutional. The rationale for providing U.S. aid to Ukraine is that the country needs our assistance to resist Russian hegemony and build "democracy." Yet the oligarchs wielding power in Ukraine are hardly "democrats," and (because money is fungible) U.S. assistance could effectively be funneled to Russia in the form of Ukrainian energy and debt payments.

5. Gas Tax

Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) introduced an amendment to, rather than having the federal government fund and oversee the spending on such projects.

The federal government has no constitutional authority to interject itself into local and state highway infrastructure projects in the first place. Constitutionally, the states should fund their own transportation projects, without the money for such projects being routed through Washington.

6. Executive Action on Immigration

During consideration of the omnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 83), Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) raised a constitutional point of order that the bill violates the Constitution's separation of powers, its enumerated powers, and its requirement that the president faithfully execute the laws because the bill would fund activities related to President Obama's executive action on amnesty.

President Obama's executive amnesty was unconstitutional for the reasons listed above.