



## Steve Southerland

Tennessee  
Senator, SD-009 (R)

[freedomindex.us/10963/](https://freedomindex.us/10963/)

**77**  
Lifetime  
Freedom  
Score

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## TN Legislative Scorecard 2025

Based on the Principles of the U.S. Constitution

The Legislative Scorecard is a nationwide, nonpartisan educational program of The John Birch Society intended to inform voters about legislators' voting records. It does not promote any candidate or political party. Bills are chosen for their constitutional implications and taxpayer costs.

★ Constitutional    ✗ Unconstitutional    ? Did not Vote

Vote

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. <b>SB263 Global Entities Ban (Passed 25 to 6 on 4/14/2025).</b> Bans Tennessee state and local government entities from enforcing or recognizing any mandates or requirements from the World Health Organization, United Nations, or World Economic Forum.   | YES<br>★ |
| 2. <b>SB449 Right to In Vitro Fertilization and Contraception (Passed 27 to 3 on 4/14/2025).</b> Officially recognizes and protects the right of individuals to access and receive fertility treatments—such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), egg/sperm preservation, genetic testing, and artificial insemination—as well as contraceptives.                       | YES<br>✗ |
| 3. <b>SB836 Illegal Migrants from Education (Passed 19 to 13 on 4/10/2025).</b> Authorizes Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and public charter schools to refuse to enroll students who are unlawfully present in the United States.   | YES<br>★ |
| 4. <b>SB827 Protecting Online Schools (Passed 26 to 5 on 3/20/2025).</b> Exempts fully online, self-paced private schools from certain regulations. The State Board of Education can no longer mandate these schools adhere to rules on class size, school calendar, vaccination requirements, or student assessments to qualify as Category?III nonpublic schools. | YES<br>★ |
| 5. <b>SB480 Property Rights Protection (Passed 30 to 0 on 3/6/2025).</b> Replaces Tennessee's vague "blighted area" definition with a case-by-case standard based on specific code violations, ensures property owners get notice and time to fix issues, limits eminent-domain use, and promotes due process and voluntary sales for redevelopment.                | YES<br>★ |
| 6. <b>SB6003 Disaster Recovery Fund (Passed 32 to 1 on 1/29/2025).</b> Establishes two new funding sources to support disaster recovery.<br><i>Estimated cost per household: -\$79.00/year.</i>   | YES<br>✗ |

**Scorecard Votes: 67%**



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# \$291,061

U.S. National Debt Per Household as of June 4, 2026

# Why do these votes matter?

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## 1. Global Entities Ban

SB263 bans Tennessee state and local government entities from enforcing any mandates or requirements from the WHO, UN, or WEF. It ensures that international organizations cannot impose policies—such as mask mandates, vaccination rules, medical testing, or data collection—within the state.

The Tennessee State House of Representatives passed SB263 on April 14, 2025 by a vote of 25 to 6. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because the U.S. Constitution, under Article VI, is the supreme law of the land, and international bodies such as the WHO, UN, or WEF have no lawful authority over the American people. These globalist entities promote policies—such as Agenda 2030—that undermine U.S. and state sovereignty.

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## 2. Right to In Vitro Fertilization and Contraception

SB449 recognizes and protects the "right" of individuals to access and receive fertility treatments—such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), egg/sperm preservation, genetic testing, and artificial insemination—as well as contraceptives.

The Tennessee State Senate passed SB449 on April 14, 2025 by a vote of 27 to 3. We have assigned pluses to the nays because the bill broadly protects practices like IVF and embryo manipulation, which often destroy human embryos and violate the right to life. Hormonal birth control, especially "morning-after" pills, can act as abortifacients by preventing implantation and causing early abortions. Government's highest duty is to protect life.

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## 3. Illegal Migrants from Education

SB836 authorizes Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and public charter schools to refuse to enroll students who are unlawfully present in the United States.

The Tennessee State Senate passed SB836 on April 10, 2025 by a vote of 19 to 13. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because taxpayer-funded education is not the role of government and should not be extended to those who have entered the country illegally, especially when public schools are already burdened with declining academic outcomes and rising costs. This bill supports state sovereignty and upholds the rule of law—and critics of the bill claim it jeopardizes federal funding, which would be a win.

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## 4. Protecting Online Schools

SB827 exempts fully online, self-paced private schools from certain regulations. The State Board of Education can no longer mandate these schools adhere to rules on class size, school calendar, vaccination requirements, or student assessments to qualify as Category III nonpublic schools—simplifying regulatory hurdles for online private-education providers.

The Tennessee State Senate passed SB827 on March 20, 2025 by a vote of 26 to 5. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because this bill takes an important step toward reducing government overreach in education by exempting fully online, self-paced private schools from unnecessary regulations. Education is not a proper function of government, and SB827 supports the fundamental right of parents to direct their children's education—an unalienable right protected by the U.S. Constitution.

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## 5. Property Rights Protection

SB480 removes Tennessee's broad definition of "blighted area" and instead defines "blighted property" case-by-case, based on specific, uncorrected safety or code violations. The bill gives property owners advance notice and time to fix issues before their land can be taken by housing authorities. These changes narrow the scope of when and how government bodies can seize property, strengthen due-process rights, and support negotiated sales.

The Tennessee State Senate passed SB480 on March 6, 2025 by a vote of 30 to 0. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because this bill strengthens private-property rights and restores some proper constitutional limits on government power. By eliminating the vague and overly broad definition of "blighted area," SB480 helps prevent abuse of eminent domain—where governments seize land under the guise of redevelopment.

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## 6. Disaster Recovery Fund

SB6003 created two disaster recovery funds: one for \$110 million in local loan interest from federal disasters, and another \$100 million fund for emergency relief, including aid for agriculture, unemployment, and business recovery.

The Tennessee State Senate passed SB6003 on January 29, 2025 by a vote of 32 to 1. We have assigned pluses to the nays because, as President Grover Cleveland stated in his 1887 veto message for the Texas Seed Bill, "I can find no warrant for such an appropriation in the Constitution, and I do not believe that the power and duty of the General Government ought to be extended to the relief of individual suffering.... Though the people support the Government the, Government should not support the people." Both that bill and SB6003 are intended to secure government assistance for local disasters. However, it is not the government's role to solve every problem.