



Joe Donnelly

U.S. Senator, Indiana (D)

Website: donnelly.senate.gov

freedomindex.us/1115/

Scan to view
vote history



Congressional Scorecard 115-4: 20%

Based on the Principles of the U.S. Constitution

✓ Constitutional	✗ Unconstitutional	— Did not Vote	Vote
1. NATO: To reaffirm the U.S. commitment to NATO.			—
Constitutional: No · Cast: None · H.R. 5515 · 07/10/2018			
2. Planned Parenthood: To prohibit federal funding of Planned Parenthood.			✗
Constitutional: Yes · Cast: No · S.Amdt. 3967 to S.Amdt. 3695 to H.R. 6157 · 08/23/2018			
3. Appropriations for Defense, Labor-HHS-Education, and Continuing Appropriations: Would provide \$855.1 billion in discretionary funding for fiscal 2019.			✗
Estimated Cost per household: -\$10,403.00/year.			
Constitutional: No · Cast: Yes · H.R. 6157 · 09/18/2018			
4. FAA Reauthorization and Supplemental Disaster Appropriations: Reauthorizes appropriations for the FAA and TSA, as well as \$1.7 billion for Hurricane Florence disaster relief.			✗
Estimated Cost per household: -\$13,168.00/year.			
Constitutional: No · Cast: Yes · H.R. 302 · 10/03/2018			
5. Short-Term Health Insurance Plans: Would nullify the rule from the Departments of Treasury, Labor, and HHS that would expand the duration of short-term health insurance plans.			✗
Constitutional: No · Cast: Yes · S.J.Res. 63 · 10/10/2018			
6. Yemen: To advance Senate Joint Res. 54, which would remove U.S. Armed Forces from "hostilities" in Yemen that have "not been authorized by Congress."			✓
Constitutional: Yes · Cast: Yes · S.J.Res. 54 · 11/28/2018			



View the Freedom Toolbox

Scan to learn more about the Freedom Index, view legislative alerts, and deepen your understanding of the U.S. Constitution and America's founding principles. Visit <https://freedomindex.us/tools/>

\$297,626

U.S. National Debt Per Household as of September 2,
2026

Why do these votes matter?

1. NATO

During consideration of the Defense authorization bill (H.R. 5515), Senator Jack Reed (D-R.I.) moved that Senate members in the House-Senate conference committee insist that the final version of the bill reaffirm the commitment of the United States to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military alliance. Under the North Atlantic Treaty establishing NATO, member nations “agree that an armed attack against one or more of them ... shall be considered an attack against them all.”

The United States should stay clear of entangling alliances such as NATO, which undermine the provision in the U.S. Constitution that assigns to Congress the power to declare war.

2. Planned Parenthood

During consideration of the appropriations bill for Health and Human Services and other federal departments including Defense (H.R. 6157), Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.), introduced an amendment to prohibit federal funding of Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood is the nation’s largest abortion provider, and government should not subsidize the killing of innocent human life. Moreover, under the Constitution, the federal government should not be subsidizing any private entity in the marketplace.

3. Appropriations for Defense, Labor-HHS-Education, and Continuing Appropriations

This bill (H.R. 6157) would provide \$855.1 billion in discretionary funding for fiscal 2019, including \$674.4 billion for the Defense Department (including \$67.9 billion in overseas contingency operations, i.e., Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.), \$90.3 billion for the Health and Human Services Department, \$71.4 billion for the Education Department, \$12.1 billion for the Labor Department, and continuing appropriations for all of the remaining federal government departments not explicitly funded by this bill until December 7, 2018.

Social welfare spending falls outside the enumerated powers of the federal government, and lumping multiple appropriations bills into one mega-bill reduces lawmakers’ accountability to their constituents. Moreover, even though defense spending is constitutional, the “defense” budget is bloated with funding for overseas military operations that have not contributed to the defense of our own country.

4. FAA Reauthorization and Supplemental Disaster Appropriations

This bill (H.R. 302) would reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration through fiscal year 2023, with annual authorizations for federal aviation programs increasing from \$10.2 billion in fiscal 2018 to \$11.6 billion in fiscal 2023. It also eases restrictions on FAA regulation of drones, authorizes the federal Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and includes \$1.7 billion for Hurricane Florence disaster relief.

The bill is comprised of unconstitutional federal overreach in both aviation and disaster relief. One example is the TSA. Rather than relying on an inefficient federal bureaucracy, security should be provided by the airlines. Another example is the regulation of private-sector drones, which instead should be managed by local ordinances or (at most) state laws. Regarding disaster relief, this should be handled by private charitable efforts, not the federal government.

5. Short-Term Health Insurance Plans

This measure (Senate Joint Resolution 63) would nullify and disapprove of the rule from the Departments of Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services, issued under the Trump administration, that would expand the duration of short-term health insurance plans.

Easing federal regulations is always a good thing, especially in this case since the federal government has no constitutional authority to regulate health insurance in the first place. If people want to purchase “short-term” insurance that has less coverage, but is much more affordable, they should be allowed to do so. The federal government should stay out of healthcare, period.

6. Yemen

This resolution (Senate Joint Res. 54) would “direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen that have not been authorized by Congress.”

Only Congress is vested with the power to declare war. A foreign military intervention is an act of 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.