

FREEDOMINDEX.US

CONGRESSIONAL SCORECARD

BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION



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/>

\$297,522

U.S. National Debt Per Household as of September 3, 2026



Benjamin Cardin

U.S. Senator, Maryland (D)

Website: cardin.senate.gov

freedomindex.us/973/



Congressional Scorecard 118-4: 0%

✓ Constitutional ✗ Unconstitutional — Did not Vote **Vote**

1. Federal Reserve Activities: Prohibits the Federal Reserve from purchasing or selling the debt of any state or municipality.



Constitutional: **Yes** · Cast: **No** · H.R. 7463 · 02/29/2024

2. Spending Reductions: Reduces spending by 5 percent, excluding military and border funding.



Estimated Benefit per household: **+\$142.00/year.**

Constitutional: **Yes** · Cast: **No** · H.R. 2882 · 03/23/2024

3. Migrant Parole Program: Prohibits funding in the bill from being used to fly illegal migrants into the United States.



Constitutional: **Yes** · Cast: **No** · H.R. 2882 · 03/23/2024

4. EPA Tailpipe Emissions Rule: Prohibits the use of fiscal 2024 funding to implement or enforce EPA rules on tailpipe emissions for vehicles.



Constitutional: **Yes** · Cast: **No** · S. 4072 · 04/18/2024

5. Canceling Ukrainian Debt: Disapproves of President Biden's plan to cancel \$4.65 billion in Ukrainian debt.



Estimated Benefit per household: **+\$35.00/year.**

Constitutional: **Yes** · Cast: **No** · S. J. Res. 117 · 11/20/2024

6. Continuing Appropriations: Extends federal funding through March 14, 2025.



Estimated Cost per household: **-\$3,191.00/year.**

Constitutional: **No** · Cast: None · H.R. 10545 · 12/21/2024

Why do these votes matter?

1. Federal Reserve Activities

During consideration of a continuing appropriations resolution (H.R. 7463), Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) offered an amendment to prohibit the Federal Reserve from creating an emergency lending program or facility that purchases or sells the debt of any state or municipality.

This amendment would have been a step toward ultimately abolishing the unconstitutional Federal Reserve System. The Federal Reserve is the largest domestic holder of U.S. public debt, which has surpassed \$36 trillion. It had already caused much damage to our nation's economy, through its inflationary policies and issuance of fiat currency, prior to its announcement during Covid-19 that it would also be willing to buy or sell the debt of state and local governments. According to Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, only Congress has the power to "coin Money" and "regulate the Value thereof." Moreover, Article I, Section 10 specifies that "No State" shall "make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts."

2. Spending Reductions

During consideration of a consolidated appropriations bill (H.R. 2882), Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) made a motion to refer the bill back to committee with instructions to amend it to reduce its overall funding by five percent, excluding funding for the Department of Defense and border security.

Reining in government spending ought to be an urgent priority given that the national debt recently surpassed \$36 trillion. Members of Congress must also take more drastic and immediate action to eliminate all spending that is not specifically authorized by Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. Their ongoing failure to do so is contributing to the erosion and decline of the American Republic.

3. Migrant Parole Program

During consideration of a consolidated appropriations bill (H.R. 2882), Senator Bill Hagerty (R-Tenn.) made a motion to offer an amendment to prohibit funds in the bill from being used to fly in illegal migrants under the Department of Homeland Security's "Processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans" (CHNV) parole program and resettle them in towns and cities across the United States.

The Constitution does not authorize the federal government to facilitate the transportation of illegal migrants into the United States.

4. EPA Tailpipe Emissions Rule

S. 4072 would have prohibited the use of fiscal 2024 funding to implement, enforce, or administer certain EPA rules on tailpipe emissions for vehicles. This includes the proposed May 2023 rule and the final March 2024 rule setting multipollutant emissions standards for light-duty and medium-duty vehicles for model years 2027 and beyond.

The federal government has no constitutional authority to impose environmental regulations.

5. Canceling Ukrainian Debt

On November 18, 2024, President Biden submitted to Congress his plan to cancel \$4.65 billion in Ukrainian debt owed to the United States. To block this debt forgiveness, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) offered a resolution (Senate Joint Resolution 117) to disapprove the president's proposal.

The \$4.65 billion, which is just a small fraction of U.S. aid to Ukraine, not only should *not* be canceled, but never should have been loaned to Ukraine in the first place. Moreover, the United States should not interject itself into the Russia-Ukraine war by providing aid to one of the combatants, and should instead follow a noninterventionist foreign policy that puts America first.

6. Continuing Appropriations

H.R. 10545, also dubbed the "American Relief Act," would extend funding for federal-government operations at current levels through March 14, 2025, thereby averting a partial government shutdown that would otherwise have begun on December 21, 2024. The bill would also provide \$110 billion for disaster aid, including \$30.8 billion for farm losses, among other provisions. It does not include, however, a two-year suspension of the debt limit that was in an earlier version under a different bill number (H.R. 10515). Ironically, President-elect Donald Trump wanted the debt-limit suspension in the bill, but Democrats did not — the latter preferring to raise or suspend the debt limit under Trump's (not Biden's) watch.

The misnamed American Relief Act will continue the Washington spendathon, thereby continuing to run up government debt without providing any relief. Instead of kicking the can further down the road, Congress must cut spending now, not later.