



# General Assembly Freedom Index 2014 Session

October 2014



## SCORECARD

This index ranks General Assembly members from highest score to lowest score in terms of the RI Center for Freedom & Prosperity’s judgment of bills’ effects on aspects of freedom. Chamber, district, and party are given, and final scores are based on representatives’ and senators’ floor votes on select legislation. See [www.rifreedom.org](http://www.rifreedom.org) for additional information, including a more-detailed methodology.

1	Morgan	H26 R	-14.1	40	O’Neill	H59 D	-51.3	79	O’Grady	H46 D	-57.3
2	Giarrusso	H30 R	-14.1	41	Walaska	S 30 D	-51.5	80	Keable	H47 D	-57.6
3	Newberry	H48 R	-17.7	42	Ajello	H3 D	-51.5	81	Miller	S 28 D	-57.7
4	Ciccone*	S 7 D	-17.9	43	Tanzi	H34 D	-51.5	82	Malik	H67 D	-58.1
5	San Bento*	H58 D	-18.7	44	Cool Rumsey	S 34 D	-51.9	83	Finn	H72 D	-58.1
6	Chippendale	H40 R	-18.9	45	Pichardo	S 2 D	-51.9	84	Naughton	H21 D	-58.1
7	Costa	H31 R	-19.2	46	Lombardi	H8 D	-52.3	85	Ackerman	H45 D	-58.1
8	MacBeth	H52 D	-22.2	47	Lima	H14 D	-52.5	86	Winfield	H53 D	-58.1
9	Marcello	H41 D	-24.0	48	Satchell	S 9 D	-52.6	87	Marshall	H68 D	-58.1
10	Cote	S 24 D	-28.8	49	Archambault	S 22 D	-52.6	88	Abney	H73 D	-58.1
11	McLaughlin	H57 D	-29.0	50	DaPonte	S 14 D	-52.6	89	Cimini	H7 D	-58.1
12	Fox*	H4 D	-29.3	51	Conley	S 18 D	-53.2	90	Almeida	H12 D	-58.1
13	Kettle	S 21 R	-29.9	52	Doyle	S 8 D	-53.2	91	Slater	H10 D	-58.6
14	Trillo	H24 R	-30.3	53	Sosnowski	S 37 D	-53.2	92	Williams	H9 D	-58.6
15	O’Neill	S 17 I	-31.6	54	Fellela	H43 D	-53.3	93	Azzinaro	H37 D	-58.8
16	Raptakis	S 33 D	-32.7	55	Jacquard	H17 D	-53.5	94	O’Brien	H54 D	-58.8
17	Hodgson	S 35 R	-33.5	56	Phillips	H51 D	-53.5	95	Melo	H64 D	-58.8
18	Bates	S 32 R	-36.8	57	Tomasso	H29 D	-53.5	96	Metts	S 6 D	-59.0
19	Hearn	H66 D	-38.4	58	Goodwin	S 1 D	-53.9	97	Ruggiero	H74 D	-59.6
20	DiPalma	S 12 D	-40.0	59	Lombardi	S 26 D	-53.9	98	McNamara	H19 D	-59.6
21	Sheehan	S 36 D	-41.0	60	Lynch	S 31 D	-53.9	99	Amore	H65 D	-59.6
22	Dickinson	H35 D	-41.9	61	Paiva-Weed	S 13 D	-53.9	100	DeSimone	H5 D	-59.6
23	Palumbo	H16 D	-43.7	62	Craven	H32 D	-55.1	101	Gallison	H69 D	-59.6
24	Goldin	S 3 D	-43.8	63	Walsh	H36 D	-55.1	102	Johnston	H61 D	-59.6
25	Pearson	S 19 D	-43.8	64	Casey	H50 D	-55.3	103	Kazarian	H63 D	-59.6
26	Ottiano	S 11 R	-44.7	65	Jabour	S 5 D	-55.6	104	Serpa	H27 D	-59.6
27	Nunes	H25 D	-44.7	66	Guthrie	H28 D	-55.6	105	Shekarchi	H23 D	-59.6
28	Algieri	S 38 R	-45.1	67	Valencia	H39 D	-55.6	106	Mattiello	H15 D	-59.6
29	Edwards	H70 D	-45.2	68	Carnevale	H13 D	-55.8	107	Handy	H18 D	-60.4
30	Costantino	H44 D	-47.0	69	Martin	H75 D	-56.1	108	Palangio	H3 D	-60.9
31	Picard	S 20 D	-47.0	70	Canario	H71 D	-56.3	109	Messier	H62 D	-61.1
32	Lombardo	S 25 D	-47.6	71	Corvese	H55 D	-56.3	110	Blazejewski	H2 D	-62.4
33	Fogarty	S 23 D	-47.6	72	Ruggerio	S 4 D	-56.4	111	Diaz	H11 D	-62.4
34	Gallo	S 27 D	-48.1	73	Lally	H33 D	-56.6	112	Hull	H6 D	-62.9
35	McCaffrey	S 29 D	-48.1	74	Coderre	H60 D	-56.6	113	Bennett	H20 D	-63.6
36	Felag	S 10 D	-49.2	75	Ucci	H42 D	-56.6				
37	Nesselbush	S 15 D	-49.8	76	Silva	H56 D	-57.3				
38	Crowley	S 16 D	-50.0	77	Morin	H49 D	-57.3				
39	Ferri	H22 D	-51.0	78	Kennedy	H38 D	-57.3				

\* These three legislators scored relatively well because they missed more than 65% of votes.



## AVERAGE SCORES

General Assembly: -49.4				
House: -51.0		Senate: -46.7		
Democrats: -53.8	Republicans: -19.1	Democrats: -48.5	Republicans: -38.0	Independents: -31.6

## CATEGORIES

### Tax & Budget

House				Senate							
Top 10		Bottom 10		Top 10		Bottom 10					
1	Newberry	-13.3	75	Naughton	-95.8	1	Raptakis	-32.8	38	Metts	-72.4
2	Chippendale	-13.3	74	Bennett	-93.3	2	Ciccone*	-36.2	37	Miller	-72.4
3	MacBeth	-17.5	73	Hull	-93.3	3	Cote	-37.9	36	Jabour	-72.4
4	Costa	-20.0	72	Diaz	-93.3	4	Kettle	-37.9	35	Paiva-Weed	-72.4
5	Morgan	-26.7	71	Blazejewski	-93.3	5	O'Neill	-37.9	34	Lynch	-72.4
6	Giarrusso	-26.7	70	Messier	-93.3	6	Hodgson	-37.9	33	Lombardi	-72.4
7	McLaughlin	-26.7	69	Handy	-93.3	7	DiPalma	-54.3	32	Goodwin	-72.4
8	San Bento*	-38.3	68	Mattiello	-93.3	8	Sheehan	-56.0	31	Sosnowski	-72.4
9	Marcello	-46.7	67	Shekarchi	-93.3	9	Felag	-56.0	30	Doyle	-72.4
10	Dickinson	-46.7	66	Serpa	-93.3	10	Bates	-58.6	29	Conley	-72.4

### Regulatory Environment

House				Senate							
Top 10		Bottom 10		Top 10		Bottom 10					
1	San Bento*	-19.9	75	Bennett	-82.4	1	Ciccone*	-18.9	38	Jabour	-67.4
2	MacBeth	-19.9	74	Almeida	-78.7	2	Kettle	-34.7	37	DaPonte	-64.8
3	Chippendale	-22.1	73	Hull	-78.0	3	O'Neill	-34.7	36	Metts	-63.3
4	Morgan	-26.5	72	Diaz	-76.5	4	Cote	-37.8	35	Ruggerio	-63.3
5	Fox*	-26.5	71	Blazejewski	-76.5	5	Raptakis	-38.8	34	Paiva-Weed	-63.3
6	Newberry	-29.4	70	Williams	-76.5	6	Bates	-38.8	33	Lynch	-63.3
7	Costa	-29.4	69	Cimini	-76.5	7	Sheehan	-44.9	32	Lombardi	-63.3
8	Marcello	-33.1	68	Walsh	-74.3	8	Hodgson	-46.4	31	Goodwin	-63.3
9	Giarrusso	-35.3	67	Nunes	-74.3	9	Lombardo	-48.0	30	Sosnowski	-63.3
10	Trillo	-35.3	66	Handy	-72.8	10	Ottiano	-49.5	29	Doyle	-63.3



## Constitutional Government

House				Senate				
Top 10		Bottom 10		Top 10		Bottom 10		
1	Giarrusso	31.3	75 Lally	-12.5	1 Kettle	4.0	38 Metts	-36.0
2	Nunes	27.1	74 Jacquard	-12.5	2 Hodgson	2.0	37 Miller	-36.0
3	Morgan	25.0	73 MacBeth	-12.5	3 Ciccone*	0.0	36 Ruggerio	-33.0
4	Trillo	22.9	72 Messier	-9.4	4 DiPalma	0.0	35 Felag	-15.0
5	Costa	16.7	71 Ruggiero	-9.4	5 Crowley	-3.0	34 Lombardo	-15.0
6	Ajello	16.7	70 Azzinaro	-9.4	6 Cote	-4.0	33 Jabour	-12.0
7	Newberry	14.6	69 Malik	-9.4	7 Raptakis	-4.0	32 Paiva-Weed	-12.0
8	Tanzi	13.5	68 Lombardi	-9.4	8 Sheehan	-4.0	31 Lynch	-12.0
9	Edwards	9.4	67 Costantino	-9.4	9 Picard	-4.0	30 Lombardi	-12.0
10	Williams	9.4	66 Palangio	-6.3	10 Goldin	-9.0	29 Goodwin	-12.0

## Public Sector Labor

House				Senate				
Top 10		Bottom 10		Top 10		Bottom 10		
1	Marcello	20.0	75 Marshall	-75.0	1 Ciccone*	-17.9	38 Sheehan	-82.1
2	Hearn	20.0	74 Ackerman	-75.0	2 Walaska	-50.0	37 Raptakis	-82.1
3	Nunes	20.0	73 Carnevale	-75.0	3 DaPonte	-60.7	36 Metts	-71.4
4	Fox*	0.0	72 Tanzi	-75.0	4 Miller	-60.7	35 Ruggerio	-71.4
5	San Bento*	-15.0	71 Bennett	-60.0	5 Cote	-71.4	34 Jabour	-71.4
6	Giarrusso	-30.0	70 Hull	-60.0	6 Kettle	-71.4	33 Paiva-Weed	-71.4
7	Edwards	-30.0	69 Diaz	-60.0	7 O'Neill	-71.4	32 Lynch	-71.4
8	Ferri	-30.0	68 Blazejewski	-60.0	8 Hodgson	-71.4	31 Lombardi	-71.4
9	O'Neill	-30.0	67 Messier	-60.0	9 Bates	-71.4	30 Goodwin	-71.4
10	Kennedy	-30.0	66 Palangio	-60.0	10 DiPalma	-71.4	29 Sosnowski	-71.4

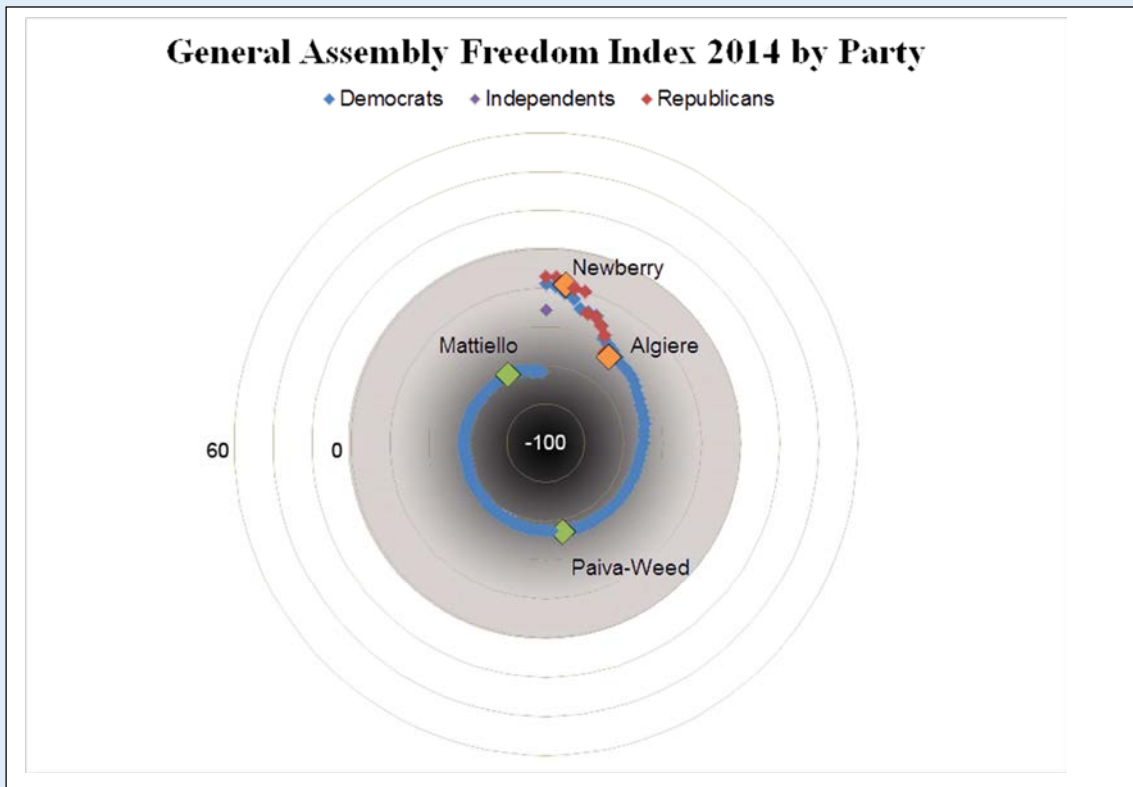
## Education Reform

House				Senate				
Top 10		Bottom 10		Top 10		Bottom 10		
1	Hearn	60.0	75 Hull	-75.0	1 Cote	45.8	38 Metts	-33.3
2	Morgan	20.0	74 Kennedy	-75.0	2 Bates	33.3	37 Miller	-33.3
3	Giarrusso	20.0	73 Bennett	-60.0	3 Pearson	33.3	36 Jabour	-33.3
4	San Bento*	-15.0	72 Diaz	-60.0	4 Ciccone	4.2	35 Paiva-Weed	-33.3
5	Marcello	-20.0	71 Blazejewski	-60.0	5 O'Neill	0.0	34 Lynch	-33.3
6	Tomasso	-20.0	70 Messier	-60.0	6 Hodgson	0.0	33 Lombardi	-33.3
7	Palumbo	-30.0	69 Palangio	-60.0	7 DiPalma	0.0	32 Goodwin	-33.3
8	Jacquard	-30.0	68 Handy	-60.0	8 Fogarty	-20.8	31 Sosnowski	-33.3
9	Fox*	-45.0	67 Mattiello	-60.0	9 DaPonte	-20.8	30 Doyle	-33.3
10	Nunes	-45.0	66 Shekarchi	-60.0	10 Ruggerio	-20.8	29 Conley	-33.3



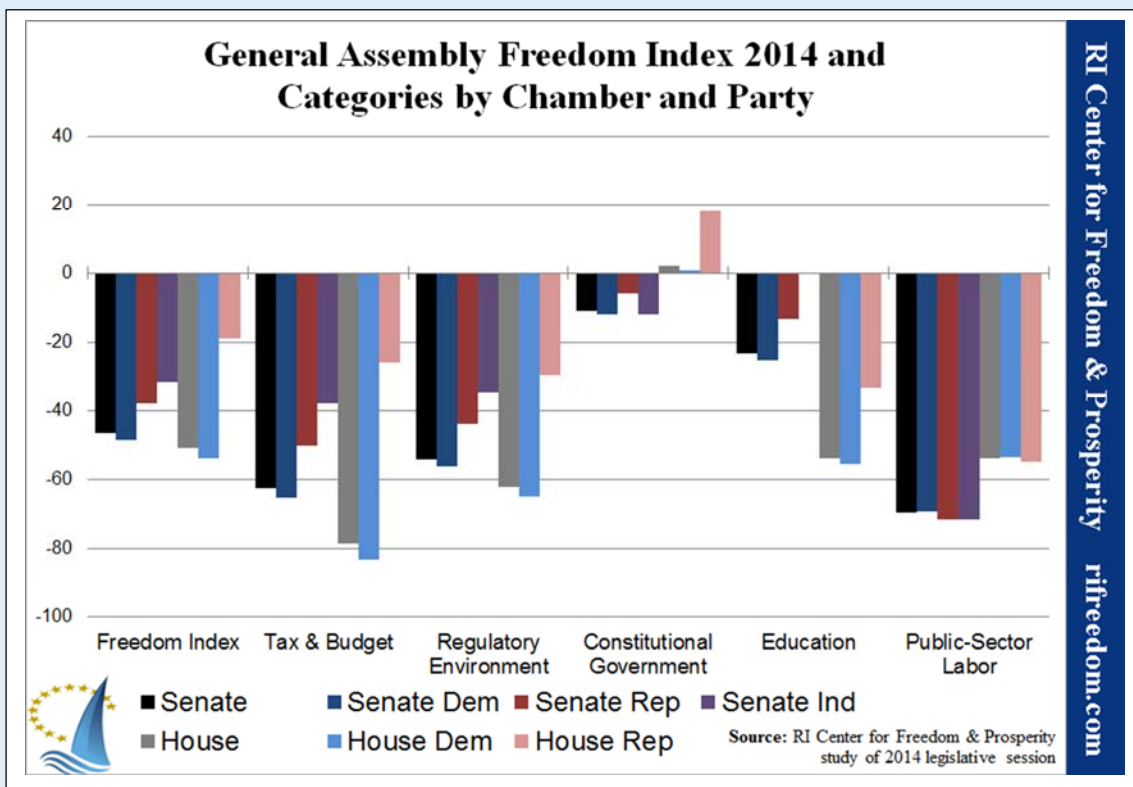
## Legislators' Scores on the General Assembly Freedom Index, 2014

*Compared with the 2013 legislative session, the Democrats improved somewhat, backing off from the abyss, mostly outside of the -60% threshold while Republicans slipped. No legislators advanced freedom overall, in 2014.*



## Comparison of Chambers and Parties

*Almost no groupings of legislators by chamber or party produce net positive votes in any category.*





## EXPLANATION

The third-annual General Assembly Freedom Index by the RI Center for Freedom & Prosperity scores Ocean State lawmakers on their level of support for principles of freedom as proven by their votes on the floors of the House and Senate.

The index examines legislators' votes in terms of their likely effect on the free market, the size and scope of government, the balance of residents' interests against those of public employees and beneficiaries, and the constitutional structure of a divided government with limited power over the people whom it represents. The Center reviewed every bill that received a vote by the full membership of either chamber (by roll-call or by lack of objection for unanimous consent) and selected 99 that fit its understanding of these criteria. (Companion bills only count once.)

The resulting scores give a detailed sense of each legislator's priorities beyond a few high-profile issues. We further divided bills into five categories:

- **Tax & budget:** bills that affect the tax structure in Rhode Island and/or that relate to government expenditures, just driving or relieving the pressure on taxation
- **Regulatory environment:** bills that make it more or less difficult to live and do business in the state by imposing regulations
- **Constitutional government:** bills that affect the structure of the government, as well as the scope of government in its authority over residents' lives
- **Public sector labor:** bills related to the relationship between the government's employees and itself and the electorate

- **Education reform:** bills that advance or impede the reform of the state's public education system, in terms of both cost and quality

Most legislation has implications for more than one of these categories. For the purposes of this index, we applied our subjective sense of the area of core effect and sorted the bills accordingly. If, for example, a bill having to do with education seemed to us intended to secure the role of public employees, we classified that bill as Public Sector Labor, not Education Reform.

## Methodology

**1) Determine weighting:** Each selected bill received a weight ranging from +3 to -3, as determined by the RI Center for Freedom & Prosperity. Negative weights indicate legislation that creates or expands an agency, government program/function, or tax; creates new regulatory burdens; is hostile to constitutional principles; or otherwise conflicts with the principles that guide the Center. Positive factors were assigned to bills in line with those principles. Companion bills in the House and Senate were weighted identically. To determine the weightings, the Center requested reviews of all chosen legislation from a half dozen engaged Rhode Islanders with similar principles and combined the range of results for a final weighting.

**2) Determine vote:** Each legislator received a +1 or -1 vote factor, depending on whether he or she voted FOR or AGAINST a particular bill, respectively. If a legislator did not vote on a bill, he or she received a +0.25 if the bill passed or a -0.25 if the bill failed. Legislators who abstained from voting received a +0.75 or a -0.75 vote factor depending on if the bill passed or failed.



**3) Calculate weighted vote:** Multiplying the weighting factor and the vote factor produced a weighted vote score for each legislator for each bill.

**4) Calculate the legislator score:** The cumulative score for all bills for each legislator determined that legislator's overall score.

**5) Calculate Freedom Index:** Dividing each legislator's total score by the maximum possible for the appropriate chamber provided his or her Freedom Index, or a percentage of the best possible score he or she could have achieved. In 2014, the "perfect" scores are 99 for the House and 117 for the Senate.

To rank the legislators, the Center sorted them by their Freedom Index scores and then, in the cases of

ties, by their scores in each category, in the following order: Regulatory Environment, Tax & Budget, Constitutional Government, Public Sector Labor, and Education Reform. When legislators' results were still identical, the Center adjusted them in order of their apparent stature and power within their chambers.

It should be noted that the complexity not only of the law but of political theory in general can make assessments of the sort described above subjective and very difficult. People reviewing the index should consider the results to be the best judgment of the Center, given our collected experience and expertise.