



**General Assembly
Freedom Index
2012**

RHODE ISLAND CENTER FOR
FREEDOM & PROSPERITY
SCORECARD

September 2012

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 for additional information, including a more-detailed methodology.

1	Costa	H31 R	59.2	39	Messier	H62 D	-27.4	77	Walaska	S 30 D	-40.1
2	Gordon	H71 R	58.7	40	Morrison	H68 D	-27.6	78	Crowley	S 16 D	-40.1
3	Newberry	H48 R	42.0	41	Azzinaro	H37 D	-27.6	79	Sosnowski	S 37 D	-40.1
4	Chippendale	H40 R	41.8	42	Marcello	H41 D	-27.8	80	Petrarca	H44 D	-40.6
5	Watson	H30 R	33.5	43	DiPalma	S 12 D	-28.2	81	Jabour	S 5 D	-40.7
6	Trillo	H24 R	28.8	44	Lombardo	S 25 D	-29.5	82	Ferri	H22 D	-41.3
7	Kettle	S 21 R	15.5	45	Slater	H10 D	-30.2	83	Pichardo	S 2 D	-41.4
8	Morgan	H26 R	15.3	46	Sheehan	S 36 D	-30.6	84	Fogarty	S 23 D	-41.4
9	Ehrhardt	H32 R	15.1	47	Medina	H12 D	-30.7	85	McCaffrey	S 29 D	-41.4
10	Shibley	S 33 R	14.0	48	Metts	S 6 D	-30.8	86	Goodwin	S 1 D	-41.4
11	Reilly	H72 R	13.2	49	Jackson	H73 D	-31.4	87	Ruggerio	S 4 D	-41.4
12	Moura	S 19 R	8.6	50	Ruggiero	H74 D	-32.1	88	Perry	S 3 D	-41.6
13	Hodgson	S 35 R	5.2	51	Hull	H6 D	-32.3	89	Coderre	H60 D	-42.0
14	Maher	S 34 R	4.1	52	Kennedy	H38 D	-32.3	90	Williams	H9 D	-42.0
15	Palumbo	H16 D	0.5	53	O'Grady	H46 D	-32.8	91	Lynch	S 31 D	-42.0
16	MacBeth	H52 D	-1.2	54	Doyle	S 8 D	-33.2	92	Miller	S 28 D	-42.0
17	DaSilva	H63 D	-1.9	55	Diaz	H11 D	-33.5	93	Corvese	H55 D	-42.7
18	Schadone	H54 D	-5.2	56	Paiva-Weed	S 13 D	-33.6	94	DaPonte	S 14 D	-43.1
19	Lima	H14 D	-6.1	57	Carnevale	H13 D	-34.2	95	Lally	H33 D	-43.4
20	Algiere	S 38 R	-7.8	58	Ciccone	S 7 D	-34.3	96	Fellela	H43 D	-43.4
21	Nunes	H25 D	-7.8	59	DeSimone	H5 D	-34.4	97	Naughton	H21 D	-43.4
22	Dickinson	H35 D	-10.9	60	Walsh	H36 D	-34.4	98	Tarro	H8 D	-43.4
23	Menard	H45 D	-11.8	61	McCauley	H1 D	-34.7	99	Handy	H18 D	-43.9
24	Pinga	S 9 D	-12.1	62	Phillips	H51 D	-34.9	100	Melo	H64 D	-43.9
25	Guthrie	H28 D	-13.4	63	San Bento	H58 D	-34.9	101	O'Neill	H59 D	-44.6
26	Bates	S 32 R	-14.7	64	Keable	H47 D	-35.1	102	Ucci	H42 D	-44.6
27	Baldelli-Hunt	H49 D	-15.8	65	DeVall Jr.	S 18 D	-36.2	103	Mattiello	H15 D	-44.6
28	Ottiano	S 11 R	-17.0	66	Tomasso	H29 D	-36.3	104	Lanzi	S 26 D	-44.8
29	Cote	S 24 D	-17.7	67	Gallison	H69 D	-36.3	105	Tassoni	S 22 D	-44.8
30	O'Neil	S 17 I	-18.3	68	Hearn	H66 D	-36.6	106	Silva	H56 D	-45.3
31	Brien	H50 D	-18.4	69	Tanzi	H34 D	-37.0	107	Cimini	H7 D	-45.3
32	Savage	H65 R	-19.3	70	Picard	S 20 D	-37.7	108	Blazejewski	H2 D	-45.3
33	Edwards	H70 D	-21.0	71	Johnston	H61 D	-37.7	109	Valencia	H39 D	-45.3
34	Jacquard	H17 D	-22.6	72	Gallo	S 27 D	-37.9	110	McNamara	H19 D	-45.3
35	Felag	S 10 D	-24.6	73	Nesselbush	S 15 D	-38.8	111	Ajello	H3 D	-45.3
36	Flaherty	H23 D	-26.9	74	Martin	H75 D	-38.9	112	Fox	H4 D	-45.3
37	McLaughlin	H57 D	-27.1	75	Winfield	H53 D	-39.2	113	Bennett	H20 D	-46.0
38	Malik	H67 D	-27.4	76	Serpa	H27 D	-39.4				

Average Scores

General Assembly: -25.4

House: -24.1		Senate: -27.9		
Democrats: -32.2	Republicans: 28.8	Democrats: -36.3	Republicans: 1	Independents: -18.3

Categories

Tax & Budget

House				Senate							
Top 10		Bottom 10		Top 10		Bottom 10					
1	Newberry	68.8	75	Silva	-67.2	1	Kettle	44.8	38	Pichardo	-59.5
2	Chippendale	68.8	74	Bennett	-62.5	2	Shibley	44.8	37	Lynch	-54.3
3	Watson	68.0	73	Fox	-62.5	3	Hodgson	44.8	36	Crowley	-54.3
4	Trillo	67.2	72	Ajello	-62.5	4	Moura	31.0	35	Tassoni	-51.7
5	Costa	66.4	71	McNamara	-62.5	5	Maher	24.1	34	Lanzi	-51.7
6	Gordon	66.4	70	Valencia	-62.5	6	Algiere	17.2	33	DaPonte	-51.7
7	DaSilva	54.7	69	Blazejewski	-62.5	7	Felag	10.3	32	Miller	-51.7
8	Morgan	43.8	68	Cimini	-62.5	8	Pinga	10.3	31	Perry	-51.7
9	Reilly	43.8	67	Mattiello	-62.5	9	Bates	10.3	30	Ruggerio	-51.7
10	Lima	43.8	66	Ucci	-62.5	10	Ottiano	10.3	29	Goodwin	-51.7

Regulatory Environment

House				Senate							
Top 10		Bottom 10		Top 10		Bottom 10					
1	Gordon	66.9	75	Mattiello	-66.9	1	Hodgson	-18.0	38	Miller	-76.3
2	Costa	55.2	74	Tarro	-66.9	2	Kettle	-23.1	37	Tassoni	-74.4
3	Watson	52.2	73	Naughton	-66.9	3	Shibley	-23.1	36	Lanzi	-74.4
4	Chippendale	27.2	72	Corvese	-66.9	4	Moura	-23.1	35	Lynch	-74.4
5	Newberry	23.5	71	Bennett	-64.7	5	Maher	-31.4	34	Perry	-74.4
6	Trillo	17.6	70	Fox	-64.7	6	Bates	-33.3	33	Ruggerio	-74.4
7	Ehrhardt	15.4	69	Ajello	-64.7	7	Algiere	-35.9	32	Goodwin	-74.4
8	Reilly	0.0	68	McNamara	-64.7	8	Pinga	-41.7	31	McCaffrey	-74.4
9	Morgan	-7.4	67	Valencia	-64.7	9	Lombardo	-43.0	30	Fogarty	-74.4
10	MacBeth	-7.4	66	Blazejewski	-64.7	10	Cote	-43.6	29	Sosnowski	-74.4

Constitutional Government

House				Senate							
Top 10		Bottom 10		Top 10		Bottom 10					
1	Costa	61.2	75	Hearn	-31.0	1	Kettle	29.7	38	DaPonte	-29.1
2	Gordon	38.8	74	Jacquard	-25.0	2	Shibley	24.3	37	Perry	-19.6
3	Chippendale	36.2	73	MacBeth	-22.4	3	Moura	18.9	36	Tassoni	-18.9
4	Newberry	32.8	72	Bennett	-19.8	4	Maher	18.9	35	Lanzi	-18.9
5	Morgan	12.9	71	Hull	-19.0	5	Pinga	6.1	34	Miller	-18.9
6	Palumbo	6.0	70	Fox	-17.2	6	Cote	6.1	33	Lynch	-18.9
7	Flaherty	6.0	69	Ajello	-17.2	7	Sheehan	-2.0	32	Ruggerio	-18.9
8	DeSimone	5.2	68	McNamara	-17.2	8	Ottiano	-4.1	31	Goodwin	-18.9
9	Trillo	4.3	67	Valencia	-17.2	9	Hodgson	-8.1	30	McCaffrey	-18.9
10	Schadone	3.5	66	Blazejewski	-17.2	10	Algiere	-8.1	29	Fogarty	-18.9

Notes: Insufficient votes were cast in the Education Reform and Public Sector Labor categories for meaningful comparisons. Category ranks were sorted first by percent-of-perfect score for the category and then, for ties, by Freedom Index rank.

Chart 1

General Assembly Freedom Index 2012 by Party

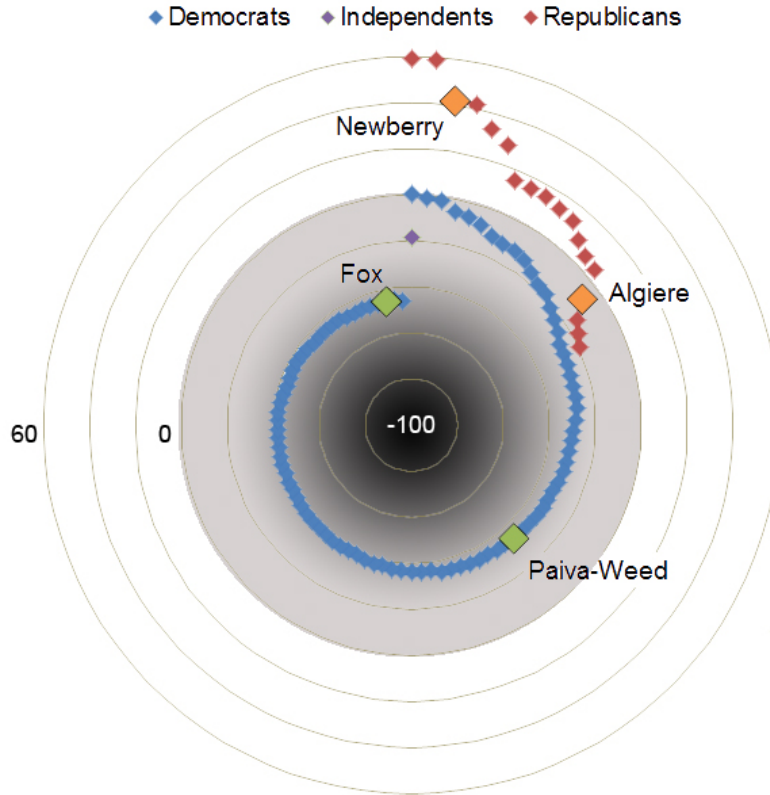
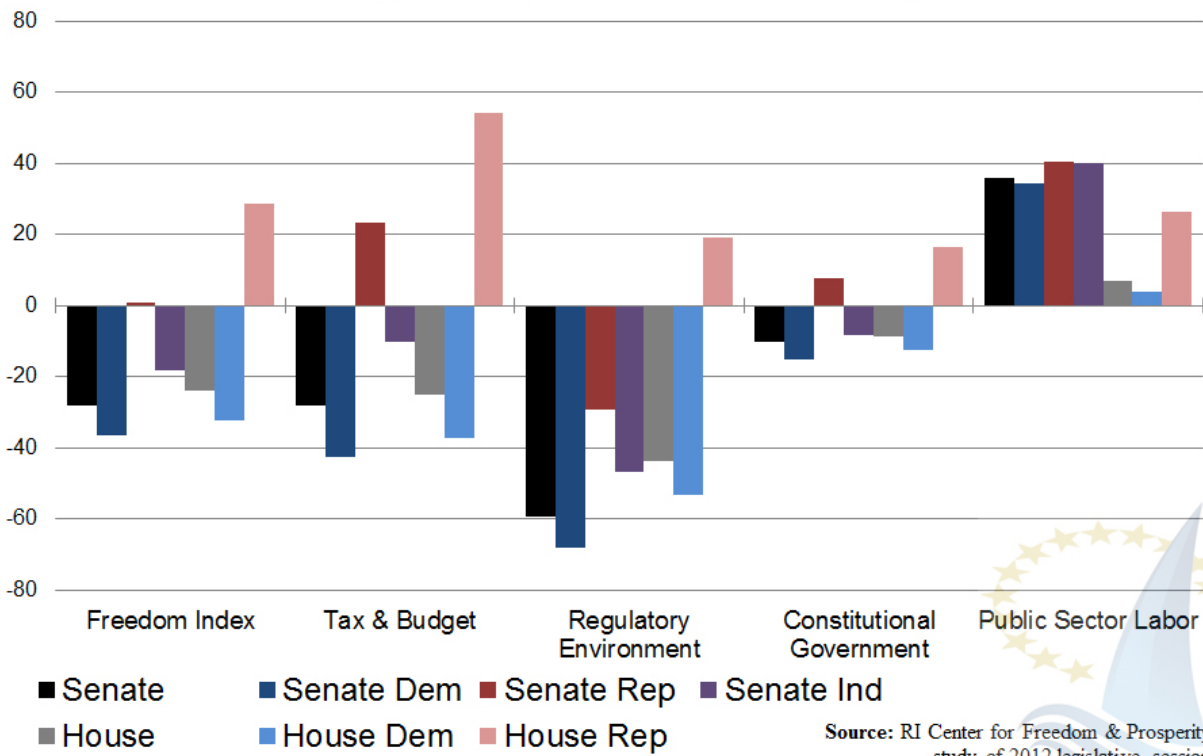


Chart 2

General Assembly Freedom Index 2012 and Categories by Chamber and Party



Source: RI Center for Freedom & Prosperity study of 2012 legislative session

Explanation

The first-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 roll-call vote by the full membership of either chamber and selected 96 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.

The Center further divided the 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 2012, the "perfect" scores are 106 for the House and 116 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.