

How the CDF Action Council Compiles This Congressional Scorecard

The 2010 Children’s Defense Fund Action Council® Nonpartisan Congressional Scorecard scores seven Senate and seven House votes in 2010 that affected the lives of countless children. The votes in the 2010 Congressional Scorecard cover a range of issues, including child health, education, employment, tax relief, and budget measures.

This scorecard also includes in the final tabulation whether individual senators and representatives were listed as taking The Taxpayer Protection Pledge for the 111th Congress. The pledge, promoted by Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), is a commitment to taxpayers and to the American people that a member will oppose: 1) any and all efforts to increase the marginal income tax rate for individuals and businesses; and 2) any net reduction or elimination of deductions and credits, unless matched dollar for dollar by further reducing tax rates. ATR lists 214 Senators and Representatives (210 Republicans and four Democrats) as taking the pledge as of 2010. CDF believes that those who commit to this no-new-taxes pledge are putting the future of millions of our children in jeopardy and has scored such a commitment as a “no” vote for children.

In compiling the scorecard, members not voting and votes cast as “present” are scored as votes against children. While we acknowledge that some missed votes are unavoidable due to member or family illness, it is not possible for us to objectively determine the reason behind each missed vote.

In the 2010 scorecard there were seven senators¹ and 13 representatives² who were only in office for a portion of the year and therefore could not participate in all the votes used in the scorecard. Congressional lawmakers are not penalized for votes for which they were ineligible. For example, in the House seat representing Hawaii, Rep. Charles Djou replaced Rep. Neil Abercrombie who left in May to run for governor and therefore was not eligible for the first two votes. In West Virginia, the seven votes were split among three senators in one seat. After Sen. Robert Byrd’s death in June, Sen. Carte Goodwin was appointed to fill his seat, and in November Sen. Bob Manchin was elected to assume the seat.

It also should be noted that the speaker of the House holds a unique position. Although entitled to participate in debate and to vote, she traditionally votes only when the vote would be decisive and on matters of special importance such as constitutional amendments.

The scorecard scores individual members and also includes state delegation scores, which are an average of the scores of the senators and representatives in the delegation. This again is where it is relevant that in Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, New York and West Virginia more than one senator or representative shared the same seat for a portion of the year in 2010. In the Illinois delegation, the scorecard scores Mark Kirk twice because he was a member of the House until a special election in November 2010 when he was elected to the Senate. There were also five states³ where there were members of Congress who served for a short period in 2010, but left before any of the scored votes were taken in Congress.

Information on how a representative or senator voted on each selected bill comes from the *Congressional Quarterly's* automated Internet legislative database (cq.com) and is based on the *Congressional Quarterly's* record of the votes. These votes are also checked by CDF against the House and Senate roll call votes to ensure they are consistent.

The CDF Action Council hopes this Nonpartisan Congressional Scorecard will serve as an important educational tool as you review the actions of your Members of Congress and urge those still here to support children now and in the next session of Congress. It presents an opportunity for you to judge for yourself how well your congressional lawmaker's votes and actions matched their rhetoric about protecting children. Call, write and visit your senators and representative in Washington, D.C., and in their district offices. To find out who represents you in Congress visit www.congressmerge.com. You can also sign up for Action Alerts from the CDF Action Council or CDF, its sister organization, to find out when Congress is making critical decisions about children and to let them know your views by entering your zip code and email in the "Get Email Alerts" section of our website.

This annual Nonpartisan Congressional Scorecard is part of the CDF Action Council's ongoing public education, policy analysis and advocacy for children. It should not be taken as an endorsement of any candidate for public office.

¹ Senators Burris (IL), Kirk (IL), Kaufman (DE), Coons (DE), Byrd (WV), Goodwin (WV), and Manchin (WV)

² Representatives Abercrombie (HI), Djou (HI), Wexler (FL), Deutch (FL), Massa (NY), Reed (NY), Murtha (NY), Critz (NY), Deal (GA), Graves (GA), Souder (IN), Stutzman (IN), and Kirk (IL)

³ Hawaii (Rep. Abercrombie resigned February 2010), Florida (Rep. Wexler resigned January 2010), Georgia (Rep. Deal resigned March 2010), Pennsylvania (Rep. Murtha died in February 2010), and New York (Rep. Massa resigned March 2010)